

CULTURE GOVERNANCE: GOVERNING SELF-REFLEXIVE MODERNITY

HENRIK P. BANG

Political and administrative analysis is today said to be taking a narrative turn: to learning by telling and listening to the different stories that constitute political life. However, this new approach to studying the decentring of politics and policy as multiple discursive practices carries a new grand narrative too. A new connection between political authority and political community is taking shape outside the spheres of modern government and representative democracy. Political authority is becoming increasingly both communicative and interactive in order for it to be able to meet complexity with complexity. It is employed for reforming institutions by opening them towards the culture and by tying them to the political attributes and capacities of self-reflexive individuals and to the transformation and self-transformation of their conduct. I call this development *culture governance*. Culture governance is about how political authority must increasingly operate through capacities for self- and co-governance and therefore needs to act upon, reform, and utilize individual and collective conduct so that it might be amenable to its rule. Culture governance represents a new kind of top-down steering; it is neither hierarchical nor bureaucratic but empowering and self-disciplining. It manifests itself as various forms of joined-up government and network governance and proclaims itself to be genuinely democratic and dialogical. This I shall show by a study of local Danish politics and policy in Copenhagen. Culture governance, I shall argue, constitutes a formidable challenge and threat to democracy, in attempting to colonize the whole field of public reason, everyday political engagement, democratic deliberation, and so on, by its own systems logic of success, effectiveness or influence. It seeks to take charge of the working of the more spontaneous, less programmed and more lowly organized politics of the ordinary in political communities, thus undermining the very idea of a non-strategic public reasoning as founding the practices of freedoms.

INTRODUCTION

Governance analysis is moving in the direction of decentred models, in which public administration appears 'as the contingent product of political struggles, embodying competing sets of beliefs' (Bevir 2003, p. 15). The decentred approach underscores the significance and importance of narrative as 'a form of explanation that unpacks human actions in terms of the beliefs and desires of actors' (ibid., p. 2). It encourages research to take a communicative turn to learn by telling and listening to the different stories that constitute organizational life (Currie 1998; Czarniawska 1998).

Henrik P. Bang is Associate Professor in Comparative Politics and Director of the Center for Studies in Public Organization and Management at the University of Copenhagen.

I welcome this shift in political and administrative research from the old notions of 'preference' and 'institution', to new, more discursive and cultural ones, where rule is considered 'the contingent products of diverse actions and political struggles informed by the beliefs of agents as they arise in the context of traditions' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, p. 23). No societal system can today afford to ignore the power and knowledge inherent to the everyday construction of narratives. Political and administrative research must move beyond the concepts of government and state in order to listen to and learn from the various stories that people tell in their lifeworlds about how to do politics and govern themselves in the 'runaway world' of reflexive modernity where continuously expanding structural transformation forces societal actors to become progressively freer from structural constraints (Giddens 1990; Beck 1992).

However, I do not consider communicative public administration as leading in the direction of decentred approaches to political decision and action only. The rapidly growing interest on the part of expert systems in empowering lay people (as consumers, customers, users or citizens) and in partnering with civil society cannot simply be unpacked in terms of the contingent and competing beliefs and values at play in the constitution of a political system. A new 'great narrative' for connecting governance and direct democracy is taking shape outside the arenas of political parties and organized interests in representative democracy (Newman 2001). A new top down leadership and management for empowering and partnering across old boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors is forming new 'governmentalities' for ruling society indirectly by designing, facilitating and moderating processes of self- and co-governance (Dean 1999; Rose 1999). This new rule embodies a new view of the welfare state as linked to empowerment and self-disciplining as much as to the protection of economic, political and social rights (Bang, Pfau-Effinger and Jensen 2000). It recommends citizens and civil society to replace their old emancipatory struggles with new modes of partnering for expanding practices of freedom everywhere in society:

In deciding where to act on behalf of the national community, whether as regulator or provider, governments must be acutely sensitive not to stifle worthwhile activity by local communities and the voluntary sector. The grievous twentieth century error of the fundamentalist Left was the belief that the state could replace civil society and thereby advance freedom. The New Right veer to the other extreme, advocating wholesale dismantling of core state activity in the cause of 'freedom'. The truth is that freedom for the many requires strong government. A key challenge to progressive politics is to use the state as an enabling force, protecting effective communities and voluntary organizations and encouraging their growth to tackle new needs, in partnership as appropriate. (Blair 1998, p. 4)

With Mitchell Dean (Bang 2003; Dean 2003), I call this new kind of top down leadership and management *culture governance* (hereafter CG). CG refers to a new steering situation in reflexive modernity where the expansion of self- and co-governance is becoming a prerequisite for welfare states (and all other kinds of expert systems) to supply them with the wholeness, coherence and effectiveness that they no longer can obtain by directly commanding and exercising control over their members and environments. Most new constructs of 'good governance', 'interactive governance', 'corporate governance', 'human resource management', and so on (Kooiman 1993; March and Olsen 1995; Scharpf 1999; Pierre 2000; Heffen, Kickert and Thomassen 2000; Pierre and Peters 2000; Behn, 2001; Newman, 2001; Storey, 2001), I will hold, are just so many conceptions of CG as a new steering imperative in all highly modern systems. They fit well into the new metadiscourse of CG, communicating how effective rule becomes ever more dependent on the ability of leaders and managers to incorporate and involve ever more people, communities, institutions and organizations in the systematic articulation, organizing, programming and implementing of collective decisions and actions.

Expert systems in reflexive modernity face a degree or amount of internal and external complexity, dynamics and diversity that they have no possibilities for mastering directly from a uniform steering centre (Scharpf 1999). They must invent new modes of indirect steering for empowering their members and environments and in such a way that they freely, willingly and self-reflexively can help them solve their problems and deliver desired outcomes in an effective manner. Hence, when experts systems of any kind increasingly speak about learning from, listening to, and empowering members, customers, users, citizens, and so on, it is not only or even primarily because they have suddenly become bottom up in nature or are disintegrating into centreless systems governed from below (Bogason 2001). Rather, it is because the survival and success of systems today require the introduction and spread of new, more communicative and cooperative modes of recentring from above. These *do* allow for the bottom up articulation of decisions and actions. However, at the same time they reveal 'the way in which key relationships – between organizations in the public, private and voluntary sectors, between professionals and managers, and between the state, users and citizens – are being reimagined and re-drawn' (Newman 2001, p. 9).

The occurrence of CG, I will hold, is a major reason why political and administrative research pays increasing interest in finding out: (1) how systems problems and solutions are formed within the framework of particular narratives, ideologies and assumptions in the lifeworld (Newman 2001, pp. 6–7); and (2) how political science is linked to conventions manifest in thought, language or symbolization (Gunnell, 2003, p. 17). As Bevir and Rhodes put it:

Although we can offer only provisional knowledge, this awareness of our limits does not render such knowledge useless. If we cannot offer universal

solutions, we can define and redefine problems in novel ways. We can tell policy makers and administrators distinctive stories about their world and how it is governed. The language of networks challenges the language of managerialism, markets and contracts. The language of decentering and narratives challenges the language of positivist political science. (2003, p. 28)

However, methodologically speaking, I will argue, CG is not a decentred approach; nor is it institutionalist for that matter. Indeed, one cannot reduce beliefs and meanings to mere intervening variables between a system and its environment. Nor, however, can one derive the overall functionality of a system from such beliefs or meanings. A system cannot be a constituent of itself; nor can any one of its constituents *be* the system. No system is more than or equal to the sum of its constituent parts. It is simply different from them. CG does not explain decision and action by given rules or procedures (institutionalism) nor by the multiple, diverse ways in which people understand such rules and react to them. It merely manifests the generalizable, transformative capacity of systems that makes it possible for institutions to occur and for their constituents to articulate rules in the light of their diverse beliefs.

CG incorporates the awareness in systems that complexity must be handled with complexity (Luhmann 1995) and that this can be done by enabling more and more people to transform themselves into self-reflexive individuals who can, are willing, and understand how to, exercise a difference or practice their freedoms in and through the processes whereby binding decisions are made for a given society, terrain, field, domain or grouping of people (Bang, Hansen and Hoff 2000). I shall in this paper try to show how CG as a new rule first of all manifests itself as a new, more politicized administration, forging partnerships, creating deliberative bodies and involving citizens on the output side of political processes.

Today, many administrators are beginning to feel overly restricted, constitutionally and actually, by the very architecture of liberal democracy and the gulf between limited state power and self-regulating civil society (Hirst 2002). CG-administrators are inventing new, more connective, communicative and cooperative modes of political authority for engaging ever more citizens, users and voluntary organizations directly in issue articulation and the implementing of rational decisions. They become new governors at the operative level of political decision and action for monitoring, guiding, facilitating, incorporating, moderating and disciplining new deliberative forums and spaces of public participation in the direct and systematic articulation, programming and organization of politics and policy (Kickert *et al.* 1999; Heffen *et al.* 2000; Bang, Hoff and Hauxner 2001; Bang and Hoff 2002).

The cases I describe here are Danish public administration, both national and local. After describing how CG is beginning to take hold as a new discourse or 'truth regime' at the national level, I will show how CG is put to

work in an integrated urban development project at the local level. Finally, I will first indicate how CG poses a new threat to democracy by its colonizing of public reason, everyday political engagement, democratic deliberation, and so on, by its systems logic of success, effectiveness or influence. Then I will end by arguing that despite the undeniable successes of CG at the operative levels, there is a growing need in reflexive modernity for new modes of political representation beyond the constitution for protecting and providing new spaces for a more spontaneous, less programmed and more lowly organized politics of the ordinary realm, where people can practice their freedoms relatively independently from the new CG or democratic network governance of the system.

A MINIMAL FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING CULTURE GOVERNANCE

Today, top-down steering is changing from the hierarchical (Hobbes) and bureaucratic (Weber) type into new more 'heterarchical' (Jessop 2003) and communicative forms (Luhmann 1995). The welfare state, for example, is no less centralized than it always has been, but its leadership and management are beginning to recognize that it cannot govern itself exclusively through threats, commands, constitutions, procedures or appeals to its legitimacy (Newman 2001). It must prove it can connect and deliver by establishing a sense of urgency for what has to be done and a common imagination regarding how outcomes are to take effect in society.

It is obvious that CG requires a new notion of political authority in which hierarchy is only one possibility. David Easton provided such a notion many years ago (1955). He defined authority loosely as a type of political communication, which occurs: (1) when B receives an explicitly communicated message from A that intends to get B to do or refrain from doing something; (2) when B then accepts to carry out A's message; and (3) when B's grounds for acceptance are his or her practical recognition that a political communication received in this way must or ought to be carried out without evaluating the merits of the proposed conduct in the light of one's own standards of judgements (cf. Easton 1955, pp. 28–29). Political authority thus allows for the specialization of political discourse as strategic communication on the part of A. At the same time it conditions A to pay regard to B's non-specialized considerations on how to act upon the message and thereby to B's everyday narrations and transformative capacity as an ordinary member of a self-reflexive political community.

It would require a major re-assessment of Easton's political system to demonstrate its relevance and significance for studying politics and policy in reflexive modernity (Bang 1998). Here I shall only indicate how Easton's notion of a political system can be fitted into my definition of CG. For Easton includes an aspect of the everyday and of civil society into his political system by describing the structuring of that system as calling attention to the political regime as both the medium and outcome of the situated interactions

between political authorities and lay people in the political community (Easton 1965a, b; Giddens 1979). Distinct from most other political systems concepts, Easton's political system includes a notion of political community as involving a reflexive division of political labour. On his view, the identification of the political system with the state or government does not simply conceal the political nature of civil society and the lifeworld as a reflexive community for engaging in solving common concerns (Easton 1953). It also distorts the communicative and interactive nature of political authority, as represented by political authorities acting within the limits of their political role (Easton 1965b).

Political authorities is the term that refers to the occupants of positions of authority in society whose roles may be more or less formalized. Positions of authority can express a variety of different roles from the global role as the President of the USA to the local role as an elder in a nomadic band and it can be occupied by a variety of different identities from the most cruel to the most benign politician, administrator, judge, councillor, spin doctor or whatever. At times, authorities may be occupants of highly specialized roles, such as in modern political systems; but in many less specialized societies, where everyday communication plays a more prominent part than in modern systems, occupants may not perform a specifically rationalized political role (Easton 1965b, p. 212). In any case, however, they may be said to conform to the following criteria. They must engage in the daily affairs of a political system; they must be recognized by most members of society as having the responsibility for these matters; and their actions must be accepted as binding most of the time by most of the relevant members, as long as they act within the limits of their role (Easton *ibid.*).

The political regime refers to 'the general matrix of regularised expectations within the limits of which political actions are usually considered authoritative, regardless of how or where these expectations may be expressed' (Easton 1965b, pp. 193–4). It consists of values (goals and principles), norms and structure of authority. The values serve as broad limits with regard to what can be taken for granted in the guidance of day-to-day policy without violating deep feelings or important segments of the political community. The norms specify the kinds of procedures that are expected and acceptable in the processing and implementing of demands. The structures of authority designate the formal and informal patterns in which power is distributed and organized with regard to the authoritative making and implementing of decisions (*ibid.*, p. 193). A specific regime at any moment in time will be the product of the accommodation among the pressures for new goals, rules, or structures stimulated by social change and the limits imposed by existing conventions and practices (*ibid.*, p. 194).

The political community concerns that aspect of the society that consists of lay people seen as a group of self-reflexive individuals, who are drawn together by the fact that they participate in a common political structure and set of processes, however tight or loose their ties to these structures and

processes may be. It does not matter whether people form a community in the sociological sense of a group of members who have a sense of community or a set of common traditions. A political community may well have different – even antagonistic – cultures and traditions or they may be entirely separate nationalities (Easton 1965b, p. 177). But regardless of how low the degree of political cohesion in society, as long as people are part of the same political society, they cannot escape being linked by a common division of political labour. Furthermore, however high the actual degree of oppression in a political community, the participation of people in authority relations will show how they practice their freedom to provide themselves with a political identity in relation to both political authorities and one another.

The notion of political community may be the reason why Rousseau holds that authority is ‘one and simple, and cannot be divided without being destroyed’ (1987, p. 153). In Easton’s conception, political authority is not only, or even primarily, a distant and subjugating Leviathan but a communicative connecting mechanism, enabling and conditioning even the most democratic vision of a political society in which political authorities and citizens in the political community co-operate democratically in their mutual acceptance and recognition of their differences. Authority is not just a toolkit in the hands of A, nor does it link to a universal norm or abstract liberty which unfolds itself behind the backs of A and B. Authority makes A’s rational exercise of her or his power directly dependent on B’s self-reflexive *doing and refraining*.

One might question, then, whether Easton’s conception should have been called something other than a political system – perhaps a *political society*. In his definition, the political is identified not only by the production of politics and policy, but also by the interaction between political authorities and lay people in the political community. Political authority is thus both regime and community oriented in its outlook. Members of a political community are chronically and logically involved in the structuring of the political regime via their communicative relationship with political authorities. Analysing democratic governing from the point of view of system and lifeworld would therefore mean recognizing the irreducibility of political authorities, political regime and political community as constituents of political society.

CG as a governmentality analytics for connecting regime and community

The idea of CG fits well into Easton’s specification of political authority as connecting the strategic communication of authorities and experts in the regime with the everyday communication of lay people in a political community. CG does indeed portray a new strategic type of political authority, which, distinct from the hierarchical one, is empowering and dialogical rather than protective and commanding. It forms networks and partnerships among political authorities and political communities across the old wall between state and civil society; it creates a vision and a mission for them; it

induces common values and a feeling of a common destiny for them; it facilitates and moderates their interactions, and so on (Mintzberg *et al.* 1998, p. 339). And CG does all this way beyond the constitutional limits of the democratic regime, fighting globally against terrorism and for human rights, joining in transnational partnerships, experimenting with network governance and political participation on the net and in various localities, and so on.

Easton's conception of political authority resembles the notion of governmentality in sociology, according to which to 'individuate a rationality is not to construct an ideal type against which a non-ideal reality can be calibrated, but to diagnose the moral, epistemological and linguistic regularities that make it possible to think and say certain things truthfully' (Rose 1999, p. 275). However, Easton would link governmentality more explicitly to its receivers and users in the political community. He would argue that any regime of truth, to be successful, must also pay attention to the irreducibility of *lay peoples'* forms of commonality; *their* modes of reflexive (but not necessarily rational, calculative) thinking; *their* 'politickings' of avoiding, questioning or resisting; *their* characteristic ways of forming events and states (cf. Mulhall 1998; Botwinick and Connolly 2001). Easton would deny that individuation is only about rationality and doing things truthfully as political authorities or experts. Identifying the political with the communicated message of authority, he said as early as 1947 (page 5), is to recognize that 'the people have a genius which they contribute to the community as a whole and above all, it is their efforts, not those of the governing class alone, which are essential for a healthy, progressing society'.

In the sociological version, CG could be put to use only 'in the shadow' of governmentality, that is of how we conduct government and how government governs conduct (Dean 1999, p. 27). CG would here appear as derivable from 'the intrinsic logic or strategy of a regime' and as constructible only 'through understanding its operation as an intentional but non-subjective assemblage of all its elements' (*ibid.*, p. 22). CG in other ways would reflect the different ways in which a regime, as a set of institutional practices, 'can be thought, made into objects of knowledge, and made subjects to problematizations' (*ibid.*, p. 21). Easton would qualify this argument by pointing out that CG expresses the logic of political authority as such, which includes the political community as 'that aspect of a group of persons as represented in those acts through which they contribute to a common political division of labor' (1965, p. 185).

In a political systems model, governmentality is inseparable from all those practical relations between beliefs and traditions that make up a self-reflexive political community. What goes on in a political community cannot be immediately derived from one's institutional location in the regime or from one's belonging to a certain class of regimes. One's beliefs, together with the conventional actions that one performs as a member of a political community, do not have to express the institutional logics of the regime at all. 'Real'

novelty in political systems does precisely occur when meanings and sub-cultures appear as new narratives and ways of 'politicking' in the political community, which are articulated in relation to and yet relatively autonomously from the regime's hegemonic discourse and penetrating strategies (Shotter 1993; Certeau 1997).

CG seen as forms of political authority should thus be regarded a feature of political authorities, the political regime and the political community. It exhibits a concern with the ways in which political beings actively construct their experiences, whether they do it as rationally acting elites, operating in the routinized and ritualized ways of the governing regime, or as 'ordinary members' of the political community, inventing new beliefs and traditions which may be applied to construct a range of 'small' interventions which might become practical exemplars for elites rationally to 'bind' political communication as new regimes of truth. The logic of political authority makes clear that no political practice or institution can itself fix the ways in which its participants will act, let alone how they will innovate within it in response to novel circumstances (Bevir 2003, p. 4). In an authority relationship, any political practice is radically contingent, lacking any fixed essence or logical path of development (*ibid.*, p. 5).

However, when leaders and managers today increasingly choose to connect and empower, I shall argue, it is because they have come to recognize that in an increasingly 'glocalized' (global and local) world in which governing failure is inevitable, one must pay explicit attention to how to use ethical-political communication strategically for involving civil society and citizens in governing the system. No kind of organization in reflexive modernity can afford to ignore how to nourish and expand the transformative capacities of individuals and groups in their various lifeworlds (Du Gay 1991; Barker 1999; Esselbrugge 2000; Hendriks 2000; Klijn and Teisman 2000; EU White Paper 2001; Marchington 2001; Salaman 2001; Smismans 2002; Taiclet 2002). Without strategies for empowering and involving citizens and civil society, political systems would not be able to make decisions and deliver in an effective manner. Nor would they be able to get acceptance and recognition for what they do by most members of the political community, at least most of the time.

From the point of view of CG, even the 'smallest' and most 'insignificant' narrative in the political community can prove itself decisive to systems survival and development. Looked upon from the top-down, therefore, decentering is a means for coping with increased complexity, dynamics and diversity. It reflects the growing awareness in highly modern systems that no system can today function successfully by sealing itself off from the conventional practices of its ordinary members or environments or by trying to reduce complexity solely by issuing commands and exercising one-way control. Systems must increasingly connect with their members and environments in a non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic manner. Their survival and development rely increasingly on their abilities to empower lay people

and to affect their identities in such a way that they act effectively and self-responsibly and for the sake of the effectiveness, coherence and integration as a whole of expanding systems.

The workings of CG in the Danish political context

I shall here provide no more than an outline for studying how CG implies a new role and identity for not only citizens and administrators but also for politicians. I consider the new politician role and identity that is developing in CG, and which is very different from the conventional party based one, the most critical to get across. The politician's role and identity in most cases is taken over by administrators and managers in networks and projects. This is not necessarily because they want to be politicians. In most cases it is simply because there have been no 'real' politicians present who could or would fill out the new role and become exemplars of how to connect the particularities of exercising CG with the development of a more general political identity which can be supported by reflexive individuals who want to do things themselves and preferably on their own conditions.

The story I am going to tell is about the development towards CG in Denmark as an ongoing effort to deal effectively and successfully with growing complexity. My narrative unfolds within Easton's systems framework and with the assistance of the notion of governmentality, according to which an analytics of governing must include (Dean 1999, p. 23):

- (1) Characteristic forms of visibility, ways of seeing and perceiving;
- (2) Distinctive ways of rational thinking and questioning (regimes of truth);
- (3) Specific operational ways of acting, intervening and directing (expertise, know how);
- (4) Characteristic ways of forming selves, subjects and actors.

First, I shall show how New Public Management in Denmark is perceived from a more republican than liberal point of view and is consequently re-articulated to include a new kind of political institutionalism for the decentring of authority as multiple, autonomous institutions (1 and 2). My case will here be an influential report from The Danish Ministry of Finance called 'New Perspectives on the Public Sector' (1993, hereafter NPPS) which has become an exemplar of decentralization in many municipalities.

Second, I shall illuminate how NPPS is operationalized in local administrative practice and then turned into CG as a new strategy for forming selves, subjects and actors through their empowerment and involvement in the systematic articulation, programming and organizing of collective decision and action (3 and 4). My case is an integrated urban development program in Copenhagen, and my material consists of about 50 qualitative interviews with politicians, administrators and project managers at the municipal and neighbourhood level (of which I only use 8 here). This case will be supplemented with a group interview conducted in 2002 with top administrators

from the Ministry of Social Affairs, indicating how administrative discourse in Denmark may be turning into a fully 'matured' form of CG for enabling the decentring of authority all the way down to the single reflexive individual. This change is crucial to understanding my story about the employment of the integrated urban renewal program in the subcity of Kgs. Enghave in Copenhagen. The Kgs. Enghave case is unique in the sense that it is the only case that I have heard of where local politicians have been present and have taken active charge of such a project through the whole process. When I refer to the unique in this case, it is precisely because it indicates that politicians do have an important role to play in CG though not as party politicians but as facilitators and moderators of a more communicative and interactive political authority relationship (Bang, Hauxner and Hoff 2001; Bang and Hoff 2002).

Obviously, my small cases serve more as illustrations on a theoretical problematic than as empirical proof. Yet, they indicate how a change towards CG seems inescapable for governing political societies in reflexive modernity. However, in my conclusion I shall warn against letting this steering development pass by unnoticed in democratic discourse. CG poses an enormous threat to conventional political and societal democracy by expelling the boundary between strategic and everyday communication in its attempt to improve systems effectiveness and success (Habermas 1997). Under conditions of unlimited CG, there would not be a single free space in the political community where one can enjoy the practice of one's freedoms freed from strategic interference. CG thus calls for new theories of discourse and deliberative democracy beyond constitutionalism as well as for new modes of resistance and struggle, which recognize that the most imminent threat of systematized political power lies in its enabling more than in its coercive characteristics.

From New Public Management to CG in Denmark

Until now, the public debate in Denmark about 'user participation' has focused to a great degree on achieving a more efficient public administration. The user is to be able to exercise his free right to choose, and in so doing his right to 'vote with his feet' in the event there is something that he, the user of a public service, is dissatisfied with. 'Denmark Inc.' is to produce greater profits by constantly involving the users of public services as customers and consumers who, via their free choice, shall insure a more efficient utilization of scarce resources in relation to hospitals, day-care institutions, cultural institutions and so on (Klaudi 1996; Ejersbo 1997; Bogason 2001).

What is required, according to the dominant governmental discourse is a strong political leadership who can guarantee that the free choice can function in the administration and in the Danes' everyday environment (Klausen and Ståhlberg (eds) 1998). This point of view represents the new NPM wave imported to Denmark from the USA, placing politicians and users in the centre to create (increased) democratic efficiency. The 'old' bureaucracies

are to be dismantled, or made 'flat', and the politicians must return to determining the overriding objectives and framework. The users of public services must be deculturalized as customers who can freely and rationally choose between goods in the public market place. The administration is to be de-politicized and a new border is to be drawn in the political system between politicians and civil servants. The administration, in conjunction with the leaders of the local institutions and other professional actors, is to be held to the task of impartially and objectively administering rational operations which match the overriding political objectives with the users' preferences (cf. Behn 2001).

However, when NPM's mantra often functions in a Danish context, I shall show, it is *not* primarily due to the kind of depoliticization of administrators and citizens in the 'boutique Denmark' which seems so dear to party politicians acting from a hierarchical and rational goal model. On the contrary, it is because both the administration and the users have recognized that creating the desired results requires that they expand self-governance and enter into partnerships, providing for the very kind of wholeness and coherence that their politicians strive for but cannot obtain directly by their abstract models of hierarchy and rational goal attainment (Newman 2001).

NPM, like CG, springs from the recognition that the system in order for it to survive and cope with its complex tasks in a successful manner has got to involve lay people in its rule. However, whereas NPM puts confidence in the abilities of leaders to set the goals and of lay people to calculate their preferences, CG insists that this matching of goals and preferences requires that institutions and practices are articulated in a particular discursive modality which is cultural and not that of the rational choice. The reform of institutions and practices must be tied to the attributes and capacities of individuals as reflexive human beings who are always in a process of becoming, which means that their goals and preferences like all other parts of their identity are mouldable and capable of continuous change. To the extent that NPM works in Denmark, it is mostly due to the implicit recognition of CG in a more republican than liberal Danish praxis. Without using CG, whether prematurely or maturely, it would not have been possible for public leaders and managers in Denmark to deal with the tension that is built into the NPM-strategy between overriding political leadership, which is to be economically responsible, and a user influence that is supposed to have an optimal range of options from which to freely choose between (Andersen *et al.* 2000; Bang, Hansen and Hoff 2000).

NPPS as a Danish adaptation of NPM

A report from the Danish Ministry of Finance entitled 'New Perspectives on the Public Sector' (hereafter NPPS), opens with the cry, 'The steering of the public sector must not build on hierarchy and bureaucratic solutions. It must build on dialogue and cooperation' (1993, p. 2). NPPS set a process in motion that in many ways has played a role in sketching the image of the

reconversion in Danish municipalities, firstly towards institutional self-regulation and more recently in terms of developmental politics and CG.

Most of the key ideas from NPM can be recognized in NPPS:

- Public institutions ought to strive to provide high-quality service as prioritized by the users;
- Public leaders must be granted greater autonomy – particularly from the powers of the central state;
- Organizations and individuals in the public sector must be evaluated and rewarded in terms of their ability to produce results;
- Leaders in the public sector must be able to count on access to the necessary human and technological resources to create results;
- Leaders in the public sector must be ‘conversion-friendly’ and prepared for competition and not be afraid of contracting out public services to the private sector, if it can pay to do so (Behn 2001, p. 20).

However, NPPS does not accede to NPM’s call to de-politicize the administration and the lifeworld, defend free market forces against all undue political intervention as well as provide a guarantee for the legal framework and conditions for action to exercise a strong political leadership with a minimum of utilization of physical force. There is a value concerning political democratic efficiency that is part of the basis for NPPS, which is relatively absent in NPM, but which is very characteristic of Danish republicanism (Bang 2001).

NPM celebrates a de-politicization approach that will reinforce the market and the overriding political leadership against all irrational and power-mongering forces. NPPS, on the other hand, which has roots in popular traditions in Denmark, is far more sceptical towards this classic liberal idea that democracy is merely a matter of combining a small, strong and protective state with free reign for market forces. NPPS does not have faith in politicians’ ability to oversee and regulate the goings-on in a hyper-complex high-risk and networked society, such as Denmark. ‘New perspectives on the Public Sector’ states:

Traditionally the public sector has been arranged on the background of a conception that the politicians can oversee and steer the public sector and all its details from above. . . . This prerequisite is no longer present and the renewal of the public sector must occur in this light. (NPPS, p. 6)

From the outset, then, the difference between the NPPS approach to steering and that of NPM is disbelief that governing risks and problems can merely be calculated and predicted by a strong political leadership with consequent goal- and framework steering. They are principally heterogeneous and unpredictable, for which reason they are to be refuted in different ways by different regulatory actors on different levels (Kickert *et al.* (1997); Heffen *et al.* 2000). The core in the NPPS model for conversion is providing institutions with greater room to manoeuvre. ‘The political and economic regulation

of the public sector', it is said, 'shall be adapted to the many – and very different – public institutions and corporate needs for precise objectives and sufficient room to maneuver' (1993, p. 87). This may sound much like NPM, but that is not entirely the case.

In NPPS the institution shall have administrative room to manoeuvre *from* the central level. But it is also supposed to have political room to manoeuvre *to* establish a form of dialogue and cooperation between leadership, personnel, corporations, citizens and users that traverses the old borders between public and private, and so on. The aim is not merely to create a 'new balance between political and operational responsibility' (NPPS, p. 88), where it is the 'old' politicians that 'determine the political objectives and the framework for the operational responsibility' (*ibid.*, p. 87). The aim is also to provide 'the individual institution [opportunity to] in dialogue with the politicians [to] make clear which objectives are to be met within the given framework, and in dialogue with the users create clarity concerning the users' needs and expectations' (NPPS, p. 56).

NPPS does not express the same anxiety about the exertion of political influence in the institutions as would seem to be the case with NPM. The sense of institutional autonomy as a new meta-principal for democratic efficiency that is a part of NPPS indicates a far greater faith in political steering as well as the political capacities of the ordinary members of society than the proponents of NPM would be prepared to allow for. The objective is not to de-politicize the institutional operations, but rather, to make the *political* steering more precise and to provide the institutions with greater freedom to handle their responsibilities. What NPPS would seem to be leading up to is therefore not so much a reinforcement of the fence between politics and non-politics, but rather, drawing a brand-new border between the 'big' state politics and the 'little' institutional or network politics. This border is clearly illustrated in figure 1, which depicts the 'old' and the 'inverted' pyramids.

At the core of the 'old' pyramid was the argument that only a hierarchically organized constitutional state is able to guarantee both individual autonomy as well as (a certain degree of) social solidarity. A state that attempts to legitimize itself without granting consideration to its economic capacities would not be efficient. On the other hand, a state that prioritizes efficiency ahead of ensuring the population's support for its overriding legal foundations – the constitution and the ongoing debate thereof – would not be legitimate. What is particular and interesting about the inverted pyramid is that the state is no longer alone in its capacity as societal unit, which serves as the central link between efficiency and legitimacy.

Instead, the public institutions are at the center, whose leaders and employees are to provide the services and quality that the citizens and private enterprise want. They demand that the political steering of the public sector is tailored to the tasks of the individual institution. (NPPS 1993, pp. 10–11)

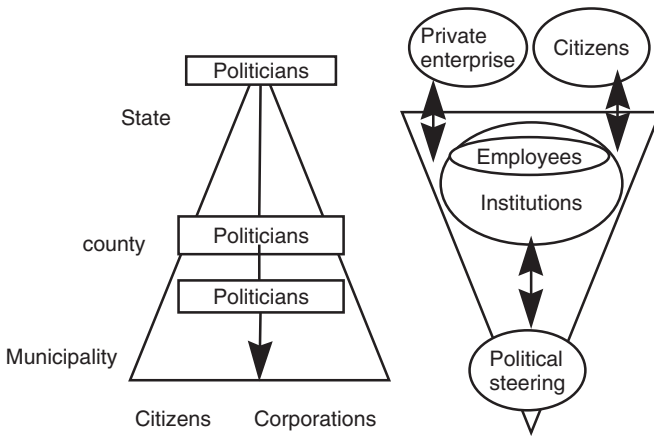


FIGURE 1 *From hierarchy to network (NPPS)*

Hence, NPPS repoliticizes the connection between the public institutions and everyday life. This is in sharp contrast to the attempt made in the NPM-model to achieve an air-tight separation of politics and operations. The purpose is not so much to eradicate politics in the implementing stages as it is to inhibit hierarchy and 'noise' from party politics from undermining the more precise definition of objectives and the more substantive processes on the operative levels: 'Not only do precise objectives have significance for the institution's total efforts; objectives are important on all levels in the institution. The objectives are to be developed via dialogue between leadership and employees [and all other participants] the whole way through; otherwise it is not possible to achieve the engagement necessary to create results' (NPPS 1993, p. 63).

NPPS's challenge to democratic steering

What is interesting about NPPS is its active adaptation of NPM to the Danish context, which is not merely influenced by a strong tradition for top-down steering but also by a long tradition for self- and co-regulation from below:

- The formulation of objectives is to be conducted on all operative levels, not only on the overriding political level;
- Creating results does not only depend on competence, but also on social and political capacities that are a prerequisite to engage institutions, employees, private enterprise, users and citizens in the regulatory processes;
- Public administration is not merely supposed to be a 'neutral' instrument of leadership to deal with operations. It has a concrete task in terms of design in which it is to play a part in actively tailoring the political steering of the public sector to match the individual institution's tasks;

- Governance risks cannot merely be rationally calculated from above and then be legitimized with reference to scientific management techniques; rather, they require a sustained and intensive political dialogue between leadership, employees, private enterprise, users and citizens about the process and its intended – as well as unintended – results.

NPPS thus has an entirely different ‘governmentality’ (Dean 1999) than does NPM: any- and everyone must be prepared to play a part in political steering and assume an active responsibility. But although NPPS hereby shatters the NPM framework and provides the cornerstone for what I have termed CG, it nevertheless contributes with a sharp distinction between the ‘old’ hierarchical politics and the ‘new’ institutional politics to reinforce the coupling problems between ‘big’ and ‘little’ politics.

NPPS has seriously shifted the old democratic chain-of-command. Democratic steering is no longer only about defending the constitution, reinforcing party competition, ensuring free parliamentary debate and its connection to a critical public, holding the governing powers responsible for finding a balance between efficiency and responsiveness, guaranteeing just treatment of the citizenry, encouraging an active citizenship that engages itself in the maintenance of common affairs, and so on. It is also a renewal in terms of the independence and legitimization of the local political agenda, ‘the purpose of which is to provide the institutions and their employees with the maneuvering room necessary for them to be able to provide quality for corporations and the citizenry’ (NPPS, p. 88). The aim here is not to clarify where the sovereignty of the state and the people begins and ends, but to the contrary, ‘how far the political steering must go [in the institutional networks], and where the independent operational responsibility begins’ (ibid.).

Thus, NPPS reveals an insight into the fact that governing reflexive modernity means moving to more network oriented forms of strategic communication, which transcend the boundaries of the old representative model for protecting and serving the nation (authority and bureaucracy). These address themselves explicitly to empowering and involving institutions and their environments for increasing the prospects for systems survival and development. In this way NPPS contributes to reinforcing the de-coupling of the local institutions from the parliamentary institutions, thereby undermining NPM’s prerequisites. Instead of a clear border between politics and operations a situation emerges where:

- The role of the ordinary (party) politician is emptied of its content, as the determination of the overriding framework and objectives is left to a narrow group of top politicians in committees and other phases of negotiated economics;
- The responsibility for the concrete political renewal is left to a diverse range of institutions, organizations and networks that are involved in flushing out the content for the overriding framework and objectives that have been determined from above;

- The administration is politicized and reinforced in relation to the politicians, because the administrators themselves must assume primary responsibility for the sense of wholeness in everyday politics, which rests on dialogue and cooperation instead of representation based on interest politics or the compromises of negotiated economics;
- The politicians are cut off from learning about politics as something other than party-political representation and steering, which also prevents them from criticizing and actively relating to the new forms of politics and risks that occupies the citizen's everyday, the public leaders and their employees;
- The politicians are caught in a cross-fire between having to forward economically responsible policy and at the same time living up to their objective of allowing the individual member of society to play a role in prioritizing the level for public service (Andersen, Berg and Jensen 1998, p. 330).

CG AS A LOCAL DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY

CG, as exemplified by NPPS, opens new alliances between a politicized administration and lifeworld in order to diminish the gap between everyday politics and systems politics. The Integrated Urban Development Program in Denmark (hereafter IUDP) is a good case in point. The IUDP, which was initiated by the Ministry of Urban Affairs in 1997, was an outcome of earlier governance failures with urban renewal programmes, in particular in Copenhagen. These programmes had been defined, planned and controlled bureaucratically and hierarchically with little concern for stakeholders, the particular locality, citizens, users, and so on. The outcome was in many ways disastrous both economically, socially, politically and personally, leaving many scars in the relations of local businesses, professionals, voluntary organizations, citizens and users to public authorities. So the IUDP may be viewed as a 'never again local development without local stakeholders' outcry (Engberg *et al.* 2000). It did not follow the traditional sector-specific boundaries in local administration, but operated and coordinated activities across such boundaries in order to pay due respect to the whole problematic of urban development. Urban development should be regarded as an integrated enterprise, which considers the single apartment, building, or bloc of buildings a part of the neighbourhood and layered into the complex of economic, social and employment problems that defined this neighbourhood in relation to the city as a whole.

Coherence between problems across sectors, their definition in relation to the interests of all relevant stakeholders in the neighbourhood, and the call for proactive involvement from below, thus produced a strategy where housing issues are connected with problems of work, leisure, sport, immigration, health, culture, and so on.

The program is specified as:

- Policy and result oriented;

- Learning by doing oriented;
- Wholeness and coherence oriented (Dietz 2001, p. 268).

Central elements are:

- The overall infrastructure between various parts of the city shall be planned in such a way that these parts can develop their own identity and become 'subcities in the city' and at the same time feel themselves as part of the whole metropolis of Copenhagen;
- The urban development process shall include real democracy for citizens and users in the city;
- A subcity plan shall be developed on the basis of the registration of the neighbourhood's identity and history, providing possible solutions and visions of the future;
- Architecture and building-technical quality shall be considered together with ecological policy in order to guarantee development with regard to sustainable growth, resource savings and green building techniques;
- Traffic policy shall guarantee citizens access to public transportation and to replacement of traffic in order to protect the city from excessive traffic through the subcity;
- An active work policy shall enhance local employment, and an interactive culture policy shall give identity and progress to 'the living subcity', boasting cultural, sports and leisure activities;
- A locally based project organization and subcity-centre shall be founded, and professional consulting of stakeholders shall be provided in order to carry out the subcity-plan;
- An organizational and steering plan shall lay down responsibilities and the structure of incentive;
- Public regulations, subsidiaries and holistic economic thinking are crucial to heighten development in the subcity to a level where sustainable growth can take over;
- The process is a long-term one and needs continuous re-adjustment in relation to local wants and needs. It is therefore decisive that planning is process and negotiation oriented (Dietz 2001, p. 267).

The IUDP thus comes close to my notion of CG as a new re-centring strategy and also contains much of the rhetoric from NPPS. Its literature proclaims the following:

Generally speaking the Urban Regeneration projects are aimed at specific areas and not towards individual citizens or properties. The Urban Regeneration project is oriented to the whole, in other words, based on a coordinated and integrated effort. It is a guided process the focus of which is to expand democracy.

The task is clearly defined by the system as one of creating wholeness and coherence by expanding citizen involvement and by 'reworking' their

identities so that they become more amenable to its rule. As an administrator from the ministry put it: 'in terms of the bigger picture... you can't really expect that of people... that they can see that immediately'. Citizens must be given the power to decide themselves on what has to be done in their neighbourhood, but they must also be conditioned to decide and act in the name of the whole. This is done by allowing the citizens to join working groups of their own choosing, but then make consensus in each working group an imperative for getting money from the system to do the jobs:

In reality it's a kind of consensus model. Because the individual working groups with the citizens are told that they must reach some kind of agreement about this distribution, because if we can't agree, well then there isn't any money, is there? So in other words there is a form of pressure on them to reach some kind of agreement.

As to why this kind of CG often works, our central program administrator continues, 'Well, that's simply because it gets so close'. Successful governance is defined as governing at close range, not merely efficient but also facilitating so that citizens can experiment with and expand their practice of freedom, develop a feeling of 'common destiny' and joint ownership over the processes:

The basis is the people that live there, with the problems and visions and opportunities and resources that are present. And that brings us to civic involvement as well – but that does not just mean citizens alone. It also means those who are working in the area – the local forces. In other words, we use the local actors, local forces. All those working or living in the area.

Local forces can consequently be private enterprises, voluntary organizations, ordinary users and citizens, and so on. This represents civic involvement crossing the lines of division of party politics and the old borders between state, market and civil society. But the central leadership of The IUDP is well aware that they will require support 'from above' to get these local actors involved and assume responsibility for regulation:

So firstly: the political level. Or the leadership, the political-administrative top. Generally the way it is, is that they must be able to support it. The other thing is that, how do you say it? Ownership. And that is also a little banal. But it's just that it can play a role that the people who are sitting there and doing the actual work with a project... they must feel a sense of collective ownership over a project like that. That Parks and Roads feel a sense of ownership, for example... that the former Directorate for Planning feels a sense of ownership for a project; that the economic administration feels a sense of ownership; that the cultural administration feels a sense of ownership; that the labor market administration feels a sense of ownership.

The leadership of the IUDP perceives itself, in a typically Danish manner, as a coupling mechanism between system and lifeworld. The IUDP is coupled upwards to 'a kind of general welfare politics' and 'action-oriented planning'; sideways to 'an integrated effort', where 'one counts on one area instead of placing stakes on numerous different areas'; and downwards to the citizens' own identity development (or empowerment in the objective and subjective senses) – to 'it is possible to make a difference. People can learn to do something themselves. Or positive anthropology, or whatever you want to call it'.

The exclusion of party politicians from IUDP

In the IUDP, one does not conceal that administrators have a political role. But one is keen to stress that it is not a party political role, where one orients oneself in relation to ideologies and interests, but an everyday political one, where the rationale is that of overriding democratic values, about creating opportunities for development for the individual as well as for the community via continued dialogue and cooperation. As its central leadership proclaims:

It is political, an education in democracy that can be quite revolutionary in reality. I feel that the IUDP has a chance – I don't want to say that it is always the reality – but there is a chance of being able to lift the entire political level. Because you go from everyday [orientation] to being an actual politician or 'articulator' or whatever you want to call being a political actor. That's an exciting coupling. Between the big politics and the little politics.

It is striking that when administrators and project managers form project teams to put the IUDP into practice in the locality one often does one's best to keep party politicians at a distance. An example is here an IUDP program in the neighbourhood of Holmbladsgade in Copenhagen, where one local manager expressed it as follows:

Interviewer (I): 'if there had been elections... maybe there would have been some representatives from different parties, which had been elected to a steering group. Do you think that it would have been different then?'

Interviewed Person (IP): 'It could have been. I don't think that one should do it. I don't think so, because it would become too political. And by that I mean that it would probably end up being different politicians from the political parties who would come to sit in the steering group. And then they forget to think locally; they forget to think about the grassroots, thinking too much in terms of party politics instead. It would have been easy for that to happen, I think.'

I: 'What does that mean – to think too much in terms of party politics?'

IP: 'Well, then they would sit and hold one another in check, you know? The Social Democrats would sit and hold the Liberals in check and the

opposite. And then they would always have to check with their party base about every last detail, don't you think? It would have become too much of a political struggle, I think.'

There is a general understanding among project managers and stakeholders in the IUDP that party politicians are potentially 'dangerous', because they will make political struggle out of what should be ongoing dialogue and participation. My interview materials indicate that the local administrators involved in the projects have not at all been enthusiastic about getting the party politicians too involved.

Administrators have apparently been quite satisfied with keeping party politicians at a distance, and the party politicians we interviewed reacted very differently to their *de facto* 'exclusion' from the programme. One of the local politicians we interviewed would seem to have 'bought' the argument that it would generally be detrimental for the projects if the party politicians were to get mixed up in them:

But it is absolutely not (because I am a politician), that I am sitting in the IUDP, and I never mention it. I would rather say that we are of the opinion that we try to keep the politicians a little ways away from this, because this is fair enough; because it's in the interest of the neighborhood. It would be a pity if they were to become political interests. Naturally there is a subtle difference there.

One of the other politicians we interviewed had the opposite reaction – he had tried to become involved, had been close and engaged, but was rejected by both the citizens and the local administrators:

I: 'Are you in a working group now?'

IP: 'No. it's kind of funny, because I felt that as soon as the different groups began to work, they were no longer interested in the politicians' participation – they weren't interested in the participation of those who were politically active. And I thought "OK, then it's hands off".'
(Interview 30)

The democratic threat of administrative CG

New information about local experiments with steering and participation seldom reach the level of consciousness of the 'big' party politicians. But then there are always central administrators to pick it up and to make use of it strategically. New, more political CG-administrations are taking shape everywhere; these recognize the potential inherent in empowering and involving ordinary citizens. A series of interviews that we conducted with top administrators in the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs in 2002 clearly show how the new political institutionalism, which characterized NPPS and thereby the truth regime envisioned by the Ministry of Finance in the early 1990s, is today losing ground to more full-fledged visions of CG as a new steering imperative in reflexive modernity for moving beyond the constitution

and its major actors to communicate more directly with individual citizens right where they are, in the family, at the work place, in various social settings, in the local political community. As a top manager in the ministry expressed this move:

If we take the short run, and if we know what we want and have made a decision in one way or the other, then our actors are the other ministries, the major interest organizations, the municipalities – our conventional environments. But if you consider it in a longer perspective, then I would say that these actors are not our actors at all. Our actors are the individual citizens.... To say a little more about the long run. What I have been working with in the last few years, not in my first years, is first and foremost the citizens. The municipalities occupy a smaller and smaller place in our world concurrently with the growth in voluntary organizing and the growing role of private organizations, international influences, etc. Our interest in the municipalities diminishes in the long run. Instead it is the citizens, the small grouping of families, the individuals, that is, the children, the handicapped as single individuals; they become our new key actors.

Obviously, this envisioning of new kinds of citizen politics and civil society policy beyond the terrain of the state with its constitution and play of organized interests will come more easily to a ministry dealing concretely with citizens in their lifeworlds rather than to, say, the Ministry of Justice. But the lesson to be drawn from the administrative operations of CG seems evident. If political parties are to reverse the trend and be able to activate even a small amount of the huge governing potential that is drifting around in political society, they must re-enter central and local CG-processes and take charge of them as ethically and politically responsive representatives. This requires them to go beyond constitutionalism for governing at close range and beyond partnerships in the locality. It is not enough to introduce direct democracy into the politics of ideas protected by hierarchical government, by having more referendums, citizen jurors and other forms of direct citizenship in the democratic regime. However, nor can the cultural and political problems of representative government be dealt with solely economically by a political market place, expanding the rationalization of users as individual customers or consumers who vote with their feet. One has to find out how to bridge the gulf between: (a) those who shall represent and be directly responsible for securing the free and equal *access* of preferences and interests to the democratic regime; and (b) those who shall represent and be directly responsible for promoting the free and equal *recognition* of difference in a self-reflexive political community, dealing with the more concrete, ethical-political concerns of identity and delivery of ordinary citizens.

As it is today, (b) has been handed over to the CG of public, private and voluntary managers or administrators. As I have shown, CG encourages

individuation and self-governance. At the same time CG carefully attempts to induce in individuals a sense of self-responsibility and commonality for handling those particular problems of marginalization, powerlessness, exclusion and care of the self that will always appear in a highly differentiated political community. However, this cannot conceal the fact that when managerial and administrative systems increasingly involve ordinary individuals in their rule it is primarily to expand their own effectiveness and success. Such systems are not at all geared to representing more spontaneous and lowly organized processes, increasing the kind of reflexive understanding, mutual recognition, sense of engagement, and so on, which is characteristic of any viable democratic political community.

This brings me to the IUDP's implementation in the subcity of Kgs. Enghave. As distinct from the other localities in Denmark which are experimenting with the IUDP, an integrated urban development program was here from the beginning, layered into representative democracy and surveyed by party politicians selected to form the steering group via the local subcity council. As we shall see, this made a difference.

POLITICIANS RE-ENTERING IN KGS. ENGHAVE

Kgs. Enghave was one among four of Copenhagen's 14 subcities, which was selected in 1996 to undertake a five-year experiment with publicly elected subcity councils with substantial autonomy over their own territories. The focus was on reform of administration and service through increased decentralization, employee influence, employee development and new modes of interplay between politicians and administrators on every level of the public decision-making process in the four subcities.

In many ways the whole process reflected the clash between the discourses of NPM and NPPS. The politicians in the Kgs. Enghave area insisted from the onset that politicians do matter to IUDP since prioritizing is a task for the politicians. The dilemma as they saw it was that if politicians are to play a role locally – be close to the problems of everyday life, be attentive and engage in dialogue with citizens on their own level, and so on – then they must give up being politicians in the traditional sense, in other words, party politicians. They must become 'politicians of presence' (Philips 1999; Bang, Hauxner and Hoff 2001). Only in this way, it was recognized, could they hope to be able to cope with the many different interests in the Kgs. Enghave area and prevent administrators and project managers from taking the political lead. Were they to be both recognized and included in the local networks, they could not assume a traditional party political role and identity. They would then be excluded. As one politician phrased it:

We've been quite conspicuous, because we've been in the front line in these projects. [We] were the ones who started the IUDP. The civil servants haven't been the pivotal point for what has gone on. We were the ones who got out and shouted at the citizens, telling them what to do.

We're the ones who were out at meetings to motivate them to be a part of this process. And there's a big difference in the way we conduct politics and the way politics are conducted in Copenhagen. If one had just regarded them as a supplement to one another, and if one had been able to get things to work together, then maybe... things would have looked a lot differently today – as opposed to the results of that election.

The subcity council politicians do exercise CG, but with a view to NPM and to giving participants a sense of being represented. They express a feeling for the need to balance deep conflicts in the area, and a feeling of urgency with regard to solving severe social problems. As one of the active citizens in the IUDP says:

I think it has been exciting. Firstly, you learn something about how many different people really live here. When you don't know that many, then it's just a few old people or people on disability or students, you think. But really there are a lot of other people out here. And I think it has been fun to experience that the distance – that one has been able to see that the things that one has had a hand in deciding have also been carried out. Of course this also has something to do with the community council and they have been close and we have gotten to know them and you can go and say 'Goddammit Finn, why did you say "no" to that?' And then you could get an answer, if they have changed anything or if you could convince them that it should be like the citizens group had decided from the beginning.

Politicians in the Kgs. Enghave area identified the presence of a 'small' developmental politics which was more direct in its implementation, closer to citizens and more attentive in terms of everyday problems, than the 'big' politics at City Hall either can (or should) be. However, one senses a trace of frustration that they were never able to reach the ordinary voter with a message about creating wholeness and coherence via dialogue and cooperation. On the other hand this is understandable since it was first and foremost those who were already active in the community – 'the usual suspects' – who were recruited to the Urban Regeneration projects and the other political work in the community. Another source of irritation in the Kgs. Enghave area has been the feeling that the municipality has never really appreciated – or perhaps never even noticed – the significant work done towards anchoring developmental politics to citizens' everyday lives. There was, for example, a case where the municipality had imposed a veto against a walkway project that a citizens group had previously decided would beautify the neighbourhood. A politician provided the following view:

At what point do I step in? I mean, it's a different way of conducting politics. They have to figure out what they want and say: 'Well, is it incredibly important for Copenhagen and for the technical community that we choose these Copenhagen-tiles?' That can't make for a great

political discussion? And I feel one ought to consider that before inviting people 'indoors', because they get a bad experience from sitting and working with this in the event that the influence they have been given isn't concrete – just some kind of pacifier, you know? They have to figure out for themselves how long they will go.

The everyday politicians' in the community councils were irritated over more than just being treated as a 'sandbox democracy' by 'big brother' in the City Council. They were also irritated by the fact that City Councillors were 'wiping their everyday problems off on them'. The same politician recounts a meeting of the City Council:

If you look at the City Hall – have you ever been in there? No. It's kind of like the parliament – a mini-parliament – where normal citizens can't get very close. It's kind of like they're sitting up in the bleachers – they can't get too close to the politicians. But in our community council they sit... right in front of me. And when 250 people come in shouting and stuff – they're pretty damned close! Those guys in City Hall never have to experience that. This happens at the preparatory meetings, where they're really close. They can get up and stand right in front of you and say whatever they want. I mean, I'm not protected by anything when I'm sitting up there. In City Hall they can't come into the room like that. Citizens in dialogue with a committee. Members of the community councils... we could request audience. And even though we are an actual part of the Copenhagen Government, we were only entitled to an audience of 15 minutes... an unsustainable way of working together.

There are many good reasons for sympathizing with local politicians' frustrations over not being paid proper attention to by City Hall. Despite their scarce resources and limited authority they were able to demonstrate the difference that a 'politics at close range' in the locality can make in integrating a relatively split community and in getting strong interest groups – which otherwise would compete against one another – to move in the same direction. The fact that there were locally elected politicians sitting in the IUDP's steering group gave the project leadership impact in terms of mediation and the solution of deeper conflicts and problems in the community. The impact was far greater than would have been the case if the project management and administrators had not had politicians to gain support from but had to maintain the overall responsibility themselves. The same politician again:

That's why I say that just being elected gives you competence to get some things done. At least if you have some strong citizens groups, which we happen to have. Some of them are really able to kick doors down, and act in a manner that would frighten some ordinary citizens away in this context. In those situations we have been able to put on the brakes and say, 'This is the way it is going to be!' We've had conflicts – with the culture

house, among others. We have had conflicts where we have had to say: we can go along with this but we can't go along with that. And that is the framework for what we can go along with. And you need someone to make the decisions. You need someone who can decide when it has been enough, you know? Isn't something supposed to come out of all of this? Aren't there supposed to be some results?

Even the project managers and administrators themselves recognize the difference that politicians have made to the IUDP. As one of them said:

My experience [as] manager in a housing association, where we were involved in urban regeneration and project coordination and local cooperative endeavours, it has been that the steering groups have been 'consensus organs', meaning that in those instances where there was real conflict, no decision was made, because there wasn't anyone with the mandate to do so. Sometimes the steering groups were also influenced by a kind of mediocrity, because everyone knew that we could only carry through the stuff that we could agree on – I knew that if you said 'no' to this and 'no' to that, then I can't bring it off. So on one level or another – it just didn't have impact. So there were two confrontations in this – with the one you could go out to the citizens groups and say, 'try to figure out what we have to do, but you have to know that if you can't come to agreement, then we'll assume responsibility to make a political decision'. Because we actually had a politically competent organ to do it. And it was closer to the citizens in an entirely different way than the economics committee in the Municipality of Copenhagen can ever be.

Representation thus makes a difference in 'little' politics as well; but additionally, the role of the politician provides the opportunity to combine the development of method with ethical responsibility, both in terms of the operations and the long-term consequences of the projects.

The politicians in Kgs. Enghave worked constantly to legitimize and create support for themselves both from the personnel and from citizens who were affiliated to the interactive processes in the community where concrete development and enterprise were to be created and take place. They knew that they could only attain support to the extent that the participants felt a sense of ownership over the processes and in that way make a real difference to the course of events. The politicians recognized that making both personnel and active citizens independent as well as involving them in the processes was a condition for getting them to voluntarily assume responsibility for their steering and operation (Bang 2001b; Marchington 2001). They *wanted* to be the driving force and they *wanted* to keep an eye on development in relation to the greater whole. This commitment to a new representative kind of CG – which is not only technical but also ethical in its political orientation and pays respect to the creative capacities of ordinary citizens – is the precise reason why the 'small' developmental politics of the subcity

politicians could make a difference from the 'old' party politics. Where the latter is in charge, there is a tendency for the driving force and responsibility for development to slip away from parliament and the city councils and over to technically-oriented ministries and specialized committees and networks, bodies which are not designed to think in terms of a greater whole. The developmental politics invented by the politicians in Kgs. Enghave seems far more appropriate as a way of motivating personnel and citizens to participate themselves and to cooperate in relation to areas that traverse old boundaries – activities that might be able to lift an entire area on all levels, and not just in terms of integration, housing or other individual areas.

In Kgs. Enghave, developmental politics acts as a 'container' for the creation of identity, both personally and in relation to its immediate environments. It is therefore decisive that leaders be attentive and present during these processes (Bang, Hansen and Hoff 2000; Klijn and Koppenjan 2000; Spano 2001). This also means making a difference with regard to setting the agenda. Right from the beginning, the politicians in the UIDP have forwarded statements about what they regard as significant uses for it. They have made proposals for solutions and have promoted the common value-base about wholeness and coherence via civic involvement – not as dictates from above, but as challenges and signals that are to be acted upon and interpreted 'from below':

It was simply to avoid being dominating, to avoid pulling it in the direction that we wanted. But the funny part was that we were in total agreement with what the citizens wanted, you know? We had talked about it amongst ourselves and said: 'Well, what is it that we want to put in motion here?' And there we were in total agreement with the citizens.

CG AND THE DEMOCRATIC IMAGINATION

The politicians in Kgs. Enghave did not attempt to control the agenda and twist the arms of citizens behind their backs. On the other hand, they did not merely lie back and surrender everything to the citizens' own preferences. They were constantly aware that too much distance between the overriding economic operational responsibilities and the citizens' desires and expectations would be fatal for dialogue and cooperation and at the same time trap the politicians in a cross-fire that would be impossible to escape. For exactly that reason it was important for them to demonstrate their readiness to engage in active teamwork and to provide responses – especially with their own personnel, but also with involved citizens – in relation to the more substantial matters. Their practical experience had taught them that as a politician one must be willing to learn from what was going on in the actual processes, at least if one wanted these processes to contribute not only to effectiveness but also to securing coherence and wholeness (cf. Bruijn and Heuvelhof 2000).

The politicians in Kgs. Enghave challenge the conventional democratic imagination by speaking about democratic discourse, deliberation and participation in civil society as relying on the presence of representatives who are 'available as politicians as cooperative partners all the time'. They deny that democracy implies a clear separation between state and civil society, steering and participation, authorities and non-authorities, political power and the general public, and so on. On the contrary, they insist that a new political role and identity for politicians should be constructed if democracy is to meet and make use of the challenges from an increasingly empowered, self-governing and self-reflexive citizenry. Political representation today, as the politicians in Kgs. Enghave experienced, goes well beyond the constitutional consensus politics of organized interests in the state. It requires:

- concrete conflict resolution close to everyday life, where one takes the time to listen to the nature of problems;
- face-to-face legitimization that can motivate participation and shared responsibility, and thus to partners accepting and acknowledging differences in the processes of interaction;
- agenda-determination that is created on a basis of dialogue and common values, without dictates from above;
- developing methods that do not merely provide qualified partners and adversaries to the substantial considerations concerning how one best programmes the processes, but also one that is open for feedback from the concrete learning processes;
- ethically responsible selections and implementations of the development projects that exhibit optimal consideration to the sense of wholeness in the citizens' proposal for solution, and which are in optimal accordance with the values and interests that the citizens themselves wish to be attended to and advanced;
- expedient initiation and completion of the chosen projects via continued contact with them during the entire process (cf. Klijn and Koppenjan 2000; De Bruijn and Heuvelhof 2000).

Unfortunately, at the municipality and national level, the politicians in Kgs. Enghave never managed, with their new, imaginative work, to break through to the old party politicians. I consider this to be a big shame, because party politics, in my view, has simply got to change into new, less hierarchical, less procedural and less career-oriented forms. If political parties are to survive and develop in reflexive modernity, the challenge of CG seems to be that they must be able to connect with, appeal to and involve ordinary, self-reflexive individuals at all stages of political decision making, not the least in the implementation and evaluation stages.

The story about the subcity council has an unhappy ending, something which may say more about the ongoing uncoupling of party politics from the everyday life of ordinary citizens than about the 'small' developmental politics conducted in Kgs. Enghave. In a referendum held on 28 September

2000, 66 per cent of the citizens in Copenhagen voted 'no' to introducing subcity councils in all of their 14 neighbourhoods. As a consequence, in 2001, the ongoing experimentation with the 4 subcity councils was brought to a halt. How could this happen? One explanation is that the ordinary citizen in Copenhagen had received comparatively little information about the workings of the 4 subcity councils. Citizens in Copenhagen therefore generally feared that the introduction of such councils everywhere would increase the level of expenditure in Copenhagen. In particular, citizens were very much against the idea of having to pay for so many more local party politicians (Klausen 2001).

The whole story about the subcity council is somewhat ironic, since it was explicitly designed to: (1) expand the interest of citizens in getting involved in solving their own local democratic concerns; (2) improve local services; and (3) increase central effectiveness (PLS Consult 1999). Furthermore, what was learned during the process was that above all new modes of local political representation are needed which are less party bound, more individually and communicatively oriented, and more concerned with the production of concrete political outcomes than with input politics (Bang, Hoff and Hauxner 2001; Bang and Hoff 2002). The subcity council acted as the 'playground' for experimenting with many new steering and participatory forms: CG; citizen issue groups; subcity town meetings with central politicians from Copenhagen; new alliances between network administrators and issue oriented politicians; and new boundary crossing employment projects involving private, public and voluntary organizations.

It is problematic, I think, that 'big' politics and mass media seem rather ignorant of, or at least quite unwilling to discuss, the new problems for democracy implied by CG for steering an increasingly 'glocalized' network society, which relies increasingly on the ability, readiness and willingness of citizens and civil society to engage in its rule. On the one hand, one thereby closes one's eyes to the new alternatives of governing without market, hierarchy or solidarity (the three conventional models of modern steering) but rather with a self-reflexive political community, in which one works together and yet shows tact and respect of difference. On the other hand, one cuts oneself off from making public and debatable the ways in which CG also tends to undermine the building of self-reflexive, political and democratic communities by subjecting conventional political decision and action to its imperatives of effectiveness and success.

The good thing for democracy, I think, is that CG makes it obvious that democratic governing is not only about securing and deepening pluralism at the level of political authorities and of protecting and expanding the abstract liberties of people at the political regime level. Democratic governing equally concerns the pluralization and development of the concrete *practices of freedom* of individuals and groups at the political community level. That is to say, in CG, citizens cannot function as a permanent thorn in the side of centralized, bureaucratic authority simply because in CG there is no

such kind of hierarchical authority. Nor can citizens be considered innocent victims to an arbitrary 'will to power' for that matter (Keane 1988; Held 1996).

In CG, every citizen, however marginalized he or she may be, is thought of as bearing *some* responsibility for why things are as they are – or happen as they do – in political society as a whole. CG thus warns us against falling prey to the liberal steering presupposition that 'citizens who live together under democratic conditions must be obliged to submit themselves to a highly centralised authority, without the rational domination of which they would fall into confusion and disorder' (Keane 1988, p. 237). To individuate a rationality or analytics of authority as regimes of truth, CG shows, goes well beyond the hierarchical model of authority. It compels everybody to recognize that in an authority relationship, if citizens fall into confusion and disorder, then not only the political system but also the whole of society will do so as well.

Adopting CG thus means discarding the modern view of political authority in democracy as being only hierarchical and protective in nature and as having no further roles to play other than as a weather vane, oscillating between being an instrument of individual preference calculation on the market place and being an institutionalized medium for securing the autonomy and normative integration of civil society. Rather, CG politicizes market, civil society and their 'innocent' individuals and collectivities, by involving them all in its rule. But CG hereby threatens to dissolve an essential distinction in liberal democracies, where, as Habermas puts it, 'the normative expectation of rational outcomes is grounded ultimately in the interplay between institutionally structured political will-formation and spontaneous, unsubverted circuits of communication in a public sphere that is not programmed to reach decisions and that is not organized' (1995, p. 485).

In CG, media and NGOs are transposed from the level of political community to the level of networking political authorities where 'joined-up problems need joined-up solutions' (Blair 1998). This politicization and incorporation of conventional practices of civil society, the lifeworld and the democratic public as domains of strategic communication between political authorities (or elites) in the regime does not only threaten the modern role of representative political institutions, such as parties, parliaments and 'big' interest organizations, as those political authorities primarily responsible for structured political will formation. It also undermines the modern images of media and voluntary organizations as nodal points for guarding and facilitating the kind of public reasoning in the political community, which is not pre-programmed to contribute directly to improving systems effectiveness and success (Habermas 1997).

I do not think that the challenge and threat of CG towards the everyday life of citizens in their reflexive political communities can be exaggerated. CG is an all-pervasive form of systems colonizing of the lifeworld, breaking down all barriers between private, public and voluntary. Certainly it

comprises risk management and other kinds of technical rationality for strategically managing individual and collective conduct. But it also explicitly incorporates the awareness and rationalization of what governmentality analysis calls *ethico-politics* – ‘a reluctance to govern too much, that minimizes codification and maximizes debate, that seeks to increase the opportunities for each individual to construct and transform his or her own forms of life, that validate diverse ethical criteria and encourages all to develop and refine their practical and experimental arts of existence’ (Rose 1999, p. 193).

However, a small irony here is that this ethico-politics is just one more constituent of CG, where it is put to use for successfully governing complexity with complexity. This, I think, is why not only sociology but also political theory is very much needed in political and administrative research. Political theory has always had its foundation in the kind of everyday discursive practices in which one can feel engaged, express and discuss common concerns, deliberate on the authenticity of public discourse, and so on (Saward 2001). Hence, political theory can be employed to show the democratic threat of pre-programming citizens strategically in their political communities to contribute only to systems effectiveness and not to nourishing and expanding their own kind of conventional narration and small ‘tactical’ interventions.

CG attempts to turn the democratic public and political community upside down. It seeks to take charge of the modern role of media and voluntary organizations as those primarily responsible for helping lay people in the political community with creating new critical images of politics and policy, imagining and deliberating new public values and norms, forming associations and experimenting with new kinds of political participation. In CG, media and NGOs become new institutions of political authority for rationally governing the free flow of autonomous and spontaneous communication in the political community strategically and administratively on demand. CG thereby undermines both the hierarchical authority of traditional political institutions and the politics of the ordinary, which expresses the multiple ways in which lay people practise their freedoms relatively independently from political authorities, and without feeling the pressure of being directly responsible for increasing systems performance (Habermas 1996, p. 489). CG thus constitutes a formidable challenge to democratic government and governance, in theory as well as in practice.

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Date received 25 June 2002. Date accepted 2 June 2003

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