



GOVERNMENT & CIVIL SOCIETY: A NEO-GRAMSCIAN FRAMEWORK FOR DISENTANGLING THE COMPLEXITY OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS.

CSI Flanders working paper 2

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Abstractm

Are we experiencing drastic changes in the way civil society and government are related to each other, and if so, how can we think about these changes and understand their impact on the role and function of both civil society and government? These questions lead to important topics such as the autonomy of civil society organisations; the 'steering' capabilities of government; marketisation of public services; the impact of formal rules on practices and strategies of organisations; the nature of 'partnerships' and 'networks' between government and civil society; the internal complexity and interweaving of actors from government and civil society; and certainly also the 'messy' reality in which politics and public service delivery take place. This paper deals with these questions by engaging with international literature and presenting the broad lines of a neo-Gramscian analytical framework.

This paper has two major parts (besides an introduction and a conclusion). In the first part we argue that in order to understand the relationship between civil society and government we must not look at them as monolithic entities but instead disentangle their internal differentiation. "The" civil society is thus not interacting with "the" government, instead this interaction is built on a diverse reality of mutually enforcing or conflicting relations with different actors across both civil society and government. This set of relations between the internally differentiated domains and actors of civil society and government constitutes the governance arrangement that we will focus on in our research.

In the second part of the paper we engage critically with the literature on public governance. The governance literature states that in the modern world there is no central position, institution or system from which the social and political order can be controlled. This is usually stated in contrast to earlier modern society wherein government still assumed a central position as the command-and-control centre of society. In the evolution of governance, this literature claims, hierarchy (the bureaucratic state) has been displaced by markets and networks. We propose a conceptual, a historical and a normative critique on this literature, on which we then build our proposal for a neo-Gramscian perspective on government and civil society. We do not set out to present a fully worked out theory, instead we bring different insights together from which we can then further develop our understanding of governance arrangements in future research.

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1 | Introduction

Understanding how civil society and government are related requires an understanding of society, in other words: a social theory. It is with the start of the ‘modernisation’ of society (usually situated around the end of the eighteenth century) that the fundamental issues of social theory were developed (Wagner, 2001). Much has happened in social theories since then, certainly concerning the way in which government and civil society have been conceptualised and understood. Contemporary literature on government and civil society captures much of the dynamic between these two entities under the notion of ‘governance’. This is at once a very distinct and a very vague concept. It is vague because in the enormous body of literature on governance it sometimes seems that it means everything, and thus suffers from concept-stretching beyond usability (6, 2015a). However, while some of these critiques concerning overly broad interpretations have some merit, the concept still has its own distinct contours because it is constructed on specific theoretical assumptions concerning the evolution of the modern world. The main assumptions are that in the modern world there is no central position, institution or system from which the social and political order can be controlled. As we will discuss in the third paragraph, various social theories speak of a qualitative change in modernisation that has led to this situation. This change entails a complex issue: if society has no distinct centre, how is social and political change then to be achieved? Is change then only possible in a haphazard way, emerging from the clashing of events scattered through society? Or can there still be some form of coordination in society through which social change can be achieved? ‘Governance’ literature is a collection of theoretical attempts to analyse societal efforts at social and political order (Ansell & Torfing, 2016). Not all authors agree on the extent of coordination possible, ranging from very minimal interaction (e.g. Luhmann, 1997) to the coordination efforts of an engaged state that brings together multiple interacting self-organising networks and systems (e.g. Jessop, 2016) and those emphasising the new yet still strong governing capacities of states (e.g. Bell & Hindmoor, 2009).

This very brief discussion is then how we will frame our analysis of the relationship of government and civil society: given their societal position (which we will discuss in depth), how can we understand the relationship between government and civil society? This immediately implies that this relationship stands at the heart of the debate on social order and change: if modernisation has resulted in a decentred society, ‘governance’ implies that new methods of coordination between government, civil society and other social institutions (most notably markets and the system of law) are required in order to be able to achieve collective social goals. However, some issues arise in the literature on governance that will be addressed in this paper.

First of all, two meanings of governance are at play. At its core, governance expresses the belief that collective coordination is still possible, without consideration for specific institutional designs. However, a specific meaning of governance is in some regards dominating the literature (Davies & Spicer, 2015): governance as specifically referring to “network governance”. *In this paper we argue that to study the first meaning (societal steering) social theory should not limit itself to the second meaning (network governance).* On the contrary, we argue that ‘network governance’ suffers from some considerable conceptual flaws that need to be addressed. We will argue that ‘network governance’ wrongly emphasizes a grand historical shift in the second half of the twentieth century whereby a ‘hierarchical

government-led' system has given way to the rise of networks as the new dominant forms of governance. This is based not only on a selective reading of historical research, but also on a misreading of the concepts of networks, markets and hierarchies. Instead of following the much-used distinction between these three 'modes of governance', we propose a more agnostic model for analysis (6, 2015a; Davies & Spicer, 2015). We do not propose to discard of these three concepts but to apply them more consistently.

In order to do so we will first have to consider the separate entities of government and civil society. In the second paragraph we will offer a basic description of the internal complexities of both entities. We consider both government and civil society as multidimensional concepts that should not be considered too easily as social domains that can be understood under a single narrative. Specifically, this means that civil society is not merely 'dominated' by governments or that civil society's main contribution to the social order is through resisting governmental actions - although many authors agree that when it comes to the coordination of social and political goals governments have more instruments and power at their disposal (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). We wish to emphasise how *both* civil society and government contribute to, influence and constrain social and political change.

We will present a Gramscian inspired framework in order to analyse this relationship. This conceptual framework sees governments and civil society as closely integrated entities of the state. From this perspective thinking about social order and change, and the role of government and civil society, immediately entails thinking about the production, distribution and functioning of power in society. More specifically this framework points to three dimensions of power relevant to the discussion of governance: the construction of hegemonies throughout civil society and governments, the use of coercive power, and the performative power of knowledge and techniques. In our research we will use this framework to focus on specific governance arrangements that are constructed around social issues or policy domains, whereby we will pay specific attention to the interplay between formal rules (legal and administrative rules and procedures, organisational rules, ...) and informal practices (norms, values, 'the way things are done').

This paper and our research is part of the research project "Civil Society Innovation in Flanders" ("CSI Flanders"), which was established in response to a series of public debates in Flanders in 2012-2013 organised by "de Verenigde Verenigingen" ("the United Associations"), an association consisting of key players of large Flemish civil society organisations¹. The participants in these debates were concerned that civil society in Flanders is facing new challenges in its political work and in its role of public service delivery in the Belgian welfare state. Historically, civil society in Belgium (and Flanders) has been crucial in the development of the welfare state, the evolution of the cultural and educational landscape and more generally in the construction of social consensus (Huysse, 2003; Vanthemsche, 2014; Witte, Craeybeckx, & Meynen, 2009). But social life has evolved from the time of 'general social consensus' (the immediate postwar period) to a time of economic crisis and political upheaval (in the seventies and eighties, and again today). The nineties brought with it the paradigm of 'new public management', and more generally a rise in (neo)liberal policies. And with the start of a new century new paradigms are taking hold, accompanied by growing critiques on the neoliberal political agenda. From these critiques new approaches to governance are being developed, claiming the rise of new forms of governance in which governments, civil society organisations and other societal actors form networks and partnerships based on trust and reciprocal relations. Throughout this historical development, the bureaucratic state is often relegated to a distant past, cast aside as an outdated and ineffective machine. But when looked at more closely, it seems that in reality a complex interplay between elements of 'network governance', bureaucratic government as well as new public management are at work. CSI Flanders was established

¹ <http://www.deverenigdeverenigingen.be/over-ons/wie-zijn-we> (only available in Dutch)

to assess the *claims of increasing marketisation, managerialism and depoliticisation* that are supposedly shaping this changing relationship between government and civil society. Therefore, while civil society is often acknowledged for its impact on social capital (Billiet, 2004; Edwards, 2014; Elchardus, Hooghe, & Smits, 2000), we will focus on its role in public service delivery and its political role (see box 1 below). *Our leading research question is how, concerning these roles, the interaction between civil society and governments is formed throughout specific governance arrangements.* The analytical framework we will develop here is therefore built on a critical discussion of governance and state theory and works towards unpacking the construction of governance arrangements.

Box 1: Politics and Service Delivery

When we talk about politics in this paper, we are using it as a multi-layered concept referring to the often used distinction between politics, polity and policy (Jessop, 2016; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2008; Palonen, 2003; Pennings, Keman, & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). The most narrow conception of politics refers to policy and policymaking: the 'art of the possible'. It concerns the specific collective choices to act (or not to act) concerning specific social issues. A second conception of politics is broader, and refers to politics as the setting of the collective goals, and is not immediately tied to specific policy decisions. Here, politics is tied to how actors in the state (among which governments and civil society) are related regarding the construction of these collective goals. Politics is thus a confrontation of different social forces and different interests concerning the form of the state. This confrontation takes place inside the polity: "the institutional matrix that establishes a distinctive terrain, realm, domain, field, or region of specifically political actions" (Jessop, 2016, p. 17). In sum, the role of civil society in politics can refer to all these dimensions: organising services to implement policies, the influence on the development of policies, political representation and advocacy of specific groups, and organising (agonistic) conflict.

This definition of politics also captures how public service delivery is always part of politics: public services are part of the specific policies that decide 'who gets what and how' and form an important part of the construction of the polity. The fact that organisations are only 'instruments' for service delivery, or on the contrary, that they are important partners in the policy development says something about the political process. In analysing service delivery by civil society organisations we have to pay close attention to how these services are constructed: is implementation dominated by government programs, is the policy made to match the concerns of civil society, or is the way services are organised driven by social processes that transcend the distinction government/civil society (e.g. individualisation, commodification, ...)? The key issue is to understand that public services do not occur in a political vacuum but actively shape the political sphere in which they operate.

2 | Internal differentiation of government and civil society

Before we can discuss the relationship between government and civil society in depth, it is important to discuss what these concepts mean and how they are to be used for our research. We will do this in two steps. In the current paragraph we will outline the contours of civil society and government. For conceptualising civil society we will build on Edwards' insightful synthesis (Edwards, 2011, 2014) of three different approaches: civil society as part of society (associational life), as a certain kind of society (a normative concept), and as the public sphere. For conceptualising government it is equally important to present it as a multi-layered and internally complex and differentiated social entity. In the next paragraph we will then proceed to a discussion of governance literature and use a Gramscian inspired framework to understand the dynamics between civil society and government. This is an important step, because while in the current paragraph civil society and government are discussed as separate entities, a Gramscian perspective will point to their close interconnectedness as the pillars of the 'integral state'.

2.1 Civil Society

When it comes to civil society it is clear that there is a wide array of literature on what exactly civil society is with many insightful contributions (Arato, 1994; Bunyan, 2014; Cohen & Arato, 1997; Edwards, 2014; Evers & Laville, 2005). Often the term "third sector" is used (Taylor, 2010), but also concepts such as nonprofit sector (Salamon & Anheier, 1998) or social economy (Evers & Laville, 2005; Moulaert & Ailenei, 2005). These different approaches all aim to capture the dynamics of a 'sector', social sphere or domain that is distinct from other social spheres, most notably 'government' and 'markets' (Cohen & Arato, 1997). Edwards' study (2011) on the history and development of the concept has led him to distinguish three different approaches, which we discuss further in this section.

2.1.1 Civil society as associations

The first approach considers civil society as a distinct part of society that consists of those associations that are not exclusively tied to the spheres of government, market or family (Edwards, 2014, pp. 19–20). This concept of civil society is often dubbed "third sector", and is a key concept in literature on public governance (Brandsen, Donk, & Putters, 2005; Evers & Laville, 2005; Pestoff, 1992; Taylor, 2010; Van de Donk, 2008). At their core, these associations are usually considered to be voluntary private formal non-profit organisations that have a certain public purpose (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016).

2.1.2 Civil Society as the 'good' society

The second approach to civil society is to regard it as "a shorthand for the kind of society in which we want to live" (Edwards, 2014, p. 44), constructed around shared ideals and norms. This vision on civil society is remarkably different from the first perspective. Whereas the first perspective is a *formal* approach to civil society, in this second perspective a *normative* approach forms the centre of analysis. This difference is important since it shows that associational life does not guarantee a shared set of norms and values of itself, and the normative integration of civil society is not purely a matter of forming associations (Edwards, 2014). At the same time, *normative* integration does not necessarily mean that the actors in this civil society pursue *progressive goals* (democratic agenda, equity, justice, etc.) or even

that they are acting according to certain notions of civility (Evers, 2010). As Edwards indicates, religious organisations are good examples of the diversity in normative integration, ranging from liberal to conservative, inclusionary to exclusionary, openness and prejudice (2014, p. 53). In a discussion on Gramsci's take on civil society, Buttigieg also explores the role of the religious movement in the US as an example of how conservative forces in civil society can achieve important social and political impact (Buttigieg, 2005).

2.1.3 Civil society as the public sphere

In this approach civil society is regarded as the 'public sphere': "the arena for argument and deliberation as well as for association and institutional collaboration" (Edwards, 2014, p. 67). Where the first perspective was *formal*, the second was *normative*, this third perspective offers a *political* take on civil society. There is considerable debate on how civil society functions as a public sphere. Jürgen Habermas' contributions have long dominated the debate (Edwards, 2014; Habermas, 1984, 1987). Habermas argues that actors are able to engage with each other in the public sphere through shared assumptions of the world, which Habermas calls the 'lifeworld': they share certain cultural assumptions, they assume that certain societal norms and rules will be accepted and followed by all involved, and they assume that each actor expects to be held accountable (Habermas, 1987).

This approach has been criticised for being more normative than analytical, a view summarised by Flyvbjerg: "This is the fundamental political dilemma in Habermas's thinking: he describes to us the utopia of communicative rationality but not how to get there." (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 215). Missing from Habermas' view on civil society is how power relations in society operate and how they affect social and political conditions. Antonio Gramsci takes a very different approach to civil society, focusing sharply on these power struggles in society (Gramsci, 2006). Gramsci's goal is to understand how political power is distributed in society and the crucial roles of civil society and government in this process. Focussing on civil society in this regard gives us the insight that a strong civil society (in the first and second meaning) does not in and of itself lead to social consensus. On the contrary, an active civil society entails different actors in different positions with different interests – which makes consensus even more unlikely. A strong civil society is the basis of the public sphere (Edwards, 2014) and because of this it only guarantees conflict (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Some authors even see conflict as a necessary condition of the political process (Mouffe, 1999, 2005; Rancière, 1999). Understanding civil society as a public sphere thus requires us to understand how conflict and power works.

2.1.4 Researching civil society

Our research focuses on associations in civil society in a very broad manner, drawing from the above discussed dimensions. In general then, in the context of the CSI Flanders project, associations in civil society are understood "as *organisations that aim to generate social change, perform a political or civic role in society and/or provide services that are not exclusively private to citizens*" (Oosterlynck, Hertogen, & Swerts, 2017)². First of all, we will focus on associations in civil society that have some form of *social or collective goals*. This certainly means the organisations discussed in the first approach, but also the normative dimension of civil society. Secondly, we will include associations that have a certain *political role and/or offer public services or goods*. These dimensions are not always clearly separated (as we have discussed in Box 1) since public services can be crucial in the development of social and political goals such as equality, equity, justice, health, education, etc. (S. P. Osborne, 2010). Thirdly, the associations that we include have to be initialised by actors from civil society and not from government. Since many associations have developed close connections to governmental institutions (through regulations, financing, oversight, etc.), this condition of voluntary existence of private initiative offers an empirical argument for demarcation

² CSI Flanders Working Paper 1

While this definition might seem clear, it is important to realise that any conceptualisation of civil society entails blurry boundaries between government, market and civil society, and that civil society organisations can and do cross these boundaries. A good example of blurring boundaries concerns the ‘social economy’ in Europe (Evers & Laville, 2005; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016), where the lines between civil society organisations and markets are not always easily drawn. These organisations are active on certain markets in the form of cooperatives, social enterprises or mutual-type organisations (providing services and goods for customers, e.g. health care, second hand goods, landscaping services, labour market integration, ...). Questions regarding increasing commercialisation, managerialism, or corporatisation are certainly relevant here and put pressure on any sharp boundary drawing. (Suykens, Verschuere, & De Rynck, 2017)³.

The complementary approaches to civil society discussed in this paragraph highlight the importance of developing an analytical framework that is able to deal with a high degree of complexity as well as conceptual boundaries that are not always perfectly clear in practice. Additionally, civil society does not operate in a social vacuum but has many ties with other parts of society. Indeed, our research is specifically concerned with how civil society is ‘related to’ government, which is a very complex concept in its own right, as we will discuss in the following paragraph.

2.2 Government

Government must be observed with the same attention for internal complexities as we have done for civil society. The point is that we should not only look at the relation between government and civil society from a perspective of (usually largely undifferentiated) social systems or spheres, but we must also pay attention to social actors (individuals and organisations) inside government and civil society *in relation to each other*. In order to achieve this, the internal complexity of governments has to be conceptualised. A good point of departure to understand government is offered by Heywood (2013) in his handbook on politics, where he distinguishes between three perspectives on “government” based on its function, its institutions and its narrow meaning of ‘executive’.

“Government in its broadest sense, refers to any mechanism through which ordered rule is maintained, its central features being the ability to make collective decisions and the capacity to enforce them. However, the term is more commonly understood to describe the formal and institutional processes that operate at the national level to maintain public order and facilitate collective action. The core functions of government are, thus, to make law (legislation), implement law (execution) and interpret law (adjudication). In some cases, the political executive (...) alone is referred to as ‘the government’.” (Heywood, 2013, p. 266)

2.2.1 Collective decision making

In Heywood’s approach to government we can see the fundamental connection between government and politics. Earlier we have argued that politics is to be understood “as the setting of the collective goals” (see Box 1). Thus, by arguing that government “in its broadest sense” refers to this same function, we can see here how Heywood almost equates government with politics. The main difference here lies in the added capacity of government to enforce decisions, which is of course the classical understanding of the distinctive monopoly on violence of government. While politics refers to the social construction of collective goals, governments “are authorized to express and enforce” collective decisions (Moeller, 2012, Chapter 8).

³ CSI Flanders Working Paper 3

2.2.2 The many institutions of government

The second dimension in Heywood's definition consists of the *institutions of government* that organise the different authorities of decision making. These institutions are the executive and the legislature, as well as police and military (as Heywood points out, 'government' is sometimes used as a shorthand for just the executive branch). Furthermore, there are also the many entities that administer specific policy domains (e.g. energy, infrastructure, health, education, culture, etc.).

The legislature is the institution that most symbolises the democratic character of the state (Devos, 2016). Together with the executive it is characterised by the continuous interplay between opposition and majority (Luhmann, 1990). This is a dynamic that gives particular importance to political parties who in many Western European countries are very much the dominating force in political decision-making. In Belgium political parties dominate so many aspects of government that the political system has been labelled a "partitocracy" (Dewachter, 2001; van Haute, Amjahad, Borriello, Close, & Sandri, 2013) where parties "can be considered the effective principals in the polity, and many actors of the parliamentary chain of delegation, such as MPs, ministers, and civil servants have been reduced to mere party agents." (De Winter & Dumont, 2006, p. 957). Historically, political parties have played an important role in integrating civil society and the political system in a so-called 'pillarised' Belgian society (Witte et al., 2009). While pillarisation no longer has the same reach as it once had (see Box 2), recent research still shows links between the historically 'pillar parties' and civil society (van Haute et al., 2013).

Political parties have been of particular concern in discussions on civil society: are they in or out of civil society? This debate has divided scholars, which leaves Edwards to conclude: "The only acceptable compromise seems to be that political parties are in civil society when they are out of office and out of civil society when they are in." (Edwards, 2014, p. 26). Jessop (2016) instead accepts the dual role of political parties and places them *between* civil society and government, constantly mediating between both: on the one hand they represent interests of social groups and are part of the public sphere, on the other hand they occupy positions in government from where they have considerable power over its institutions.

2.2.3 Different spatial scales

Thirdly, government, in all of its meanings (function, institutions, executive), operates on *different spatial scales* (local, regional, national and international or global). Government operates inside a certain territory in which it has authority, which is something that is not fixed but part of continuous social construction (Sassen, 2006). It is also not the same "government" at work in these different scales as institutions can vary greatly. As a system of decision making, multiple forms of government can be at play at the same time (for example a national democratic government that is dealing with an international technocratic government). Thus, it is important to consider the relationship between local, regional, national and international institutions of governments (as can be seen in the large literature on 'multi-level governance'). The practical reality of governing has led to complex relations between governments on these scales, creating a variety of agencies and partnerships between them.

2.2.4 Politics and administration

Fourthly, there is an important distinction to be made between the political dimension of government and the administrative dimension. In a strict interpretation of this distinction administrators would be considered as merely implementing policy under the full authority and responsibility of the elected political officials. In reality room for operational decision-making is built into governmental structures through deconcentration via internal and external agencies (De Rynck, 2016; Mewes, 2011). Besides collective actors (departments, agencies) individual administrators are also worth considering here. We know that administrators are not passive subordinates of the political executives, but that they have considerable discretion in carrying out their tasks (Lipsky, 2010), and can even have considerable

influence on policymaking. Administrators can even develop strategies that can have significant impact on the policy they are intended to implement (e.g. Prior & Barnes, 2011).

In practice, how rules actually operate in particular settings depends on the interactions not just of social structures and institutions, but also of the interaction between administrators, politicians as well as actors in civil society. This is often referred to as the difference between formal rules and “rules-in-use”, and highlights how important it is to develop a framework that extends beyond a formal institutional analysis (Lowndes, Pratchett, & Stoker, 2006; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013).

2.2.5 Observing government

So far we have presented various dimensions of government: its function (organising and enforcing collective decision-making), its institutions, its different scales of operation, and some of its most important actors. The result is once again a high degree of complexity that clearly shows how government is anything but a monolithic unidirectional entity. Inside governments contradictions, conflicts or mutual enforcements arise as much as they do in civil society – between local and national governments, between intra-governmental departments, between different agencies, between administrators, between departments and cabinets, etc.

When we ask how government relates to civil society, we have to consider this complex internal differentiation. The issue could be rephrased using the plural form (‘governments’), but this hardly seems a solution – if not for the fact that it seems as if we are trying to relate civil society to different national executives. Instead we argue that in order to take up this internal differentiation (of both civil society and government) the relationship between government and civil society should be considered in terms of *how ‘governance arrangements’ are constructed*. To clarify this more, we will have to turn to the literature on ‘governance’.

2.3 Using typologies

Before we move forward to present our approach for analysing the governance arrangements in Flanders, a moment is needed to talk about the use of *typologies*. The literature on the relationship between government and civil society organisations (CSO’s) offers several attempts at constructing typologies of the dynamics between both spheres (Coston, 1998; Furneaux & Ryan, 2014; Mcloughlin, 2011; Najam, 2000; Verschuere & De Corte, 2014; Young, 2000). We believe these typologies can be useful instruments in presenting some partial aspects of the dynamics involved, but in light of the previously discussed internal complexities of both governments and civil society typologies can also be overly reductionist and simplifying. The very nature of typologies results in an undifferentiated view of government and civil society that is also usually a static view which can only capture some relations at a certain point in time. Some authors also find that many of these typologies lack sufficient empirical testing (Furneaux & Ryan, 2014; Mcloughlin, 2011; Verschuere & De Corte, 2014). Moreover, we should consider the constraints of constructing typologies. If typologies only list the different types of relations according to a two-dimensional scheme, the resulting analysis remains firmly trapped in the specificity of the immediate observations. Typologies have a limited ability to capture the historical development of a relationship – although a possible solution might lie in the construction of overviews of how relationships have evolved from one ‘type’ to another ‘type’ or how different types have coexisted from time to time. While we consider some typologies to be useful as concise methods of conveying partial information, it is at the very least important that these typologies capture the internal differentiation of both government and civil society, which they usually do not do.

An example of a typology that is less focused on the internal complexities of governance-arrangements is the often-cited typology of Young (2000) which presents three 'idealtypical' relations between government and civil society (supplementary, complementary, adversarial). Young considers these relations not to be mutually exclusive (2000, p. 151), offering some degree of complexity. However, Young also explicitly abstracts "from some of the messy detail of the real world" (2000, p. 151) in order to construct a more abstract model wherein the relation between government and civil society is considered only as a relation between the two domains 'in general'. As such, while valuable as a tool to discuss possible general types of relationships, it offers little further information. However, we do find that some authors succeed in constructing typologies that consider the internal complexities of governments and try to integrate it. Two often cited examples are the typologies developed by Coston (1998) and Najam (2000). Another one is a recent effort by Furneaux and Ryan (2014), who propose a five-dimensional typology.

2.3.1 Coston: asymmetrical power relations

Coston (1998) developed a model in which relations between government and nongovernmental organisations are placed on an eight-point continuum. This continuum ranks the types of relationships according to the "government actor's relative acceptance or resistance to institutional pluralism, degree of formalization of the relationship, and the relative power asymmetry in the relationship." (1998, p. 362). She acknowledges that "Governments are not monolithic: regimes of all types may incorporate agencies and actors that are more cooperative or repressive than the overall regime." (1998, p. 363). Coston also emphasises that the power-relation between governments and CSOs are inherently *asymmetrical*: governments can dominate CSOs more than the other way around. The result is a continuum in which three types of relations are considerably more asymmetrical (repression, rivalry and competition), and five tend to have more balanced power relations (contracting, third party, cooperation, complementarity, collaboration). The value of Coston's approach lies in the attention it gives to different dimensions of the power asymmetry between governments and CSOs and the room it leaves for individual cases within the same sector to differ greatly. Her approach indeed takes into account how particular governments and CSOs are situated in a wider political and institutional context.

2.3.2 Najam: goals and strategies

Najam (2000) has constructed a typology based on the *goals and strategies* of the organisations involved and how they align. This way he constructs four categories which he calls the Four C's: *cooperation* (similar goals and similar strategies), *confrontation* (different goals, different strategies), *complementarity* (similar goals, but different strategies) and *co-optation* (different goals, but similar strategies). The value here is that Najam shows how specific organisations can relate to different parts of government in several ways, depending on what is at stake and how each actor tries to achieve their goals. Najam's typology thus brings into view how organisations "are driven not just by the grand scheme of sectors and politics, but by the reality and rationality of their institutional interests and priorities" (2000, p. 391). He also explicitly acknowledges that governments, like CSOs, are not monolithic entities: "different agencies and actors within the same government can nurture different types of relationships with a given NGO, and vice versa." (2000, p. 391). Thus, by explicitly focusing on a specific dimension of the interaction between civil society and government (goals and strategies), the model is able to communicate a more complex yet still concise view. In our research project this typology can be a useful tool for describing how mission statements and organisational strategies align with governmental policy views and strategies.

2.3.3 Furneaux & Ryan: multidimensional analysis

A last typology we would like to briefly discuss, is the five-dimensional model proposed by Furneaux and Ryan (2014) in their study of Australian civil society organisations. They conclude their paper with a *conceptual*, not yet empirically tested, model using five factors: *power asymmetry*, *conditions to funding*,

goal and value alignment, shared planning and decision-making, and criteria for accountability. Each factor can be scored (they propose using scores from 1 to 5) and the result is a web-like overview of each organisations overall scores. What's interesting about this model is that it aims to offer an alternative to the two-dimensional models that are mostly used. We think this can be a valuable approach since it combines the advantages of typologies with the strength of a more complex multi-dimensional analyses.

2.3.4 Typologies and the relation of power

While these different typologies take into account some of our concerns regarding the internal complexity of both governments and civil society, there is still a considerable loss of information in the construction of indicators. For instance in Coston's model the "degree of formalisation" is a useful descriptor, but the interaction between formal processes and informal practices is not captured. Indeed, *how* formal rules *operate* in the interaction between actors in civil society organisations and governments needs to be addressed in relation to informal practices as well as discourse. The degree of formalisation in itself, while being important information to obtain, says little about the processes of power that surround the construction and functioning of these formal rules, procedures, norms, contracts, and so on. Indeed, we would argue that the "degree of formalisation" in the relationship is already a part of the "relative power asymmetry in the relationship". We can see something similar in the models of Furneaux and Ryan, in which power is expressed as "*power asymmetry*" and treated on the same analytical level as the other dimensions in the model.

We believe that Najam's model can be useful in the wider framework that we develop in this paper. Because the model focuses on a specific aspect of the relationship between an organisation and parts of government (goals and strategies) it can result in some useful insights if one were to apply this across organisations or sectors. Even from a historical perspective, it can present different historical moments in succession to each other. Importantly, Najam's model can highlight if and how different types of relationships (in terms of goals and strategies) are at work between an organisation and different parts of government. This can then be used in a wider analysis of the relationship that links these strategies and goals to the social positions and interests of the actors involved.

2.4 Focussing on 'governance arrangements'

A complex picture emerges from these insights on the different dimensions of civil society and government and the use of typological classifications. In civil society there are many different types of organisations, from local to global initiatives: neighbourhood committees; grassroots movements; nonprofits that provide health care, education or social services; social enterprises; or even a 'global civil society' based on 'civility' (Jordan, ch.8 in Edwards, 2011). All these types of civil society represent different interests, values and ideas; they take on different forms and sizes, and occupy different positions in the public sphere. On the side of government we find different levels of government with different authorities, agendas and resources; different actors inside these governments, on the side of politics as well as administration, who can have conflicting interests or outlooks; and different types of relations (financial, regulatory, oversight, etc.) that can conflict with or reinforce each other. "Civil society" is thus not merely interacting with "government" but this interaction is built on a *diverse reality of mutually enforcing or conflicting relations* with different actors of both civil society and government. This set of relations between the internally differentiated domains of civil society and government constitutes *the governance arrangement* that we will focus on in our research.

Consequently, the next step we need to take is to show how we can analyse these relations. While certain typologies can offer useful insights in partial dynamics of the relationship between government

and civil society, we still need a more general framework for understanding this relationship – one in which the partial dynamics identified by typological research can be placed and understood in broader terms. In short, we need a wider theory of society.

In the following paragraph we will discuss the literature on ‘governance’ – a concept used to capture the dynamic between government and the rest of society in light of perceived changes in contemporary society. As we will discuss below, many authors believe that government’s role in society has changed drastically. The central idea is that government is dependent on other social actors to be able to fulfil its function of collective decision-making, also referred to as ‘steering’. Its relations with the domains of civil society and the market are key to this function. Some authors argue that government can no longer occupy a central coordination position. Others emphasise the opposite and argue that government remains the crucial social arena for societal steering, if not as a central commander than at least as the central coordinator.

3 | Government, Civil Society and Governance

This section explores how the relationship between government and civil society has been studied extensively from the perspective of *governance*. Before we discuss this concept further below, we can define it in general as:

"the process of steering society and the economy through collective action and in accordance with common goals" (Ansell & Torfing, 2016, p. 4).

The central idea in this definition is that actors in the political system together with actors in other societal systems (such as the market and civil society) piece together collectively binding decisions, thus involving processes of shared political decision-making and societally distributed public service delivery. A similar idea has been expressed by Meuleman:

"Governance is the totality of interactions, in which government, other public bodies, private sector and civil society participate, aiming at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities." (Meuleman, 2008, p. 11).

In academic literature, especially Anglo-Saxon literature, this relationship between the political system and civil society has been described in terms of a historical *shift* from 'government' to 'governance', meaning that in the course of the last century power over politics and public services has been transferred from central government to a wider range of public and private actors. In this literature '*governance*' appears in two meanings: on the one hand as a view on societal steering, on the other hand as a distinct form of societal steering, namely 'network governance'. In this paper we will argue that to study the first meaning (societal steering) theory should not limit itself to the second meaning (network governance). Indeed, the idea of a historical shift towards 'network governance' is built on historical, conceptual and normative misunderstandings of the concept of governance, especially in the context of European welfare states. This will be discussed in depth in section 3.3.

We will first explore how this idea of a 'shift' is based to a great extent on underlying theories of modernity. "Modernisation", a concept around which most of the early classical sociological science developed (Wagner, 2001), refers in general to the transition in the 18th and 19th century from 'Gemeinschaft' to 'Gesellschaft'. This transition is mostly defined in terms of one or more processes of *individualisation, secularisation, rationalisation, reification, cultural fragmentation, role differentiation and commodification* - and in general these processes also occur in descriptions of contemporary society that claim a 'second phase' of modernity (Laermans, 2003). According to many authors this process of modernisation has entered a new phase, starting from the last decades of the twentieth century. This new phase has been called 'postmodernity' (Lyotard, 2010 (1984)), 'liquid' modernity (Bauman, 2000), 'reflexive' modernisation (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994), 'risk'-society (Beck, 1992), or 'network society' (Castells, 2010b). We refer to these theories in general as "post-structuralist" (Marinetti, 2003a) or "post-traditional" (Lee, 2006), and will show that they have strong conceptual links to the academic literature on 'governance'. These post-traditional theories argue that society has become structured without a centre, that power has become diffused throughout a wide array of actors and structures, and that traditional institutions have become unstable and fluid. These claims are central to the development of the concept of governance, together with the idea of a large transformation in the way government and

civil society interact. Key to this idea of ‘transformation’ is the ‘displaced’ position of government. This is most obvious in the literature on “network governance” (e.g. as critiqued by Davies (2011b, 2012a, 2012b)), and while we do not wish to dispute the important role that networks play in contemporary society, we do wish to qualify its importance and present some important critiques on the idea of ‘governance as displacement’. Following the general definition we have presented at the start, we want to discuss governance as a way of capturing the relationship between government, civil society and markets as the construction of collective decisions - which is an inherently political relationship. As such, it is crucial to develop an understanding of how conflict and consensus is generated and managed by the relevant social actors (Pierre & Peters, 2005). After we have discussed the social theories underlying the development of the concept of governance, we will therefore turn to ways of understanding this important political dimension of the relationship between government and civil society. We will turn to notions of state, hegemony and governmentality; building on insights from Gramsci, Foucault and Jessop.

3.1 Post-traditional theories

The two central themes that combine these post-traditional theories are the decline of traditional structures and, related to this, the decentring of the modern state. We will present some of the central ideas of these two themes. The following discussion is not so much meant as an affirmation of these theories, but as an exploration of the themes that connect these theories to the conceptual development of ‘governance’. Through these linkages we can ground our discussion of governance more firmly in the wider sociological theory, building towards our own critical understanding.

3.1.1 The decline of traditional structures

In social theory the notion of society, and the place of the individual in it, has become increasingly problematic (Schinkel, 2007). Above all, the notion of a decline of traditional structures is an important frame for the debate on the relationship between government and civil society. A crucial theory in academic literature is that of “reflexive modernisation” (Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003; Beck et al., 1994; Lee, 2006), which states that society is fundamentally transformed in a ‘second phase’ of modernisation: traditional structures that once seemed fixed have become uncertain and fluid (Bauman, 2000), although this does not mean that structures have become entirely obsolete (there are still rules, expectations, values, identities, institutions, ...)⁴. Several causes are identified: globalisation, intensified individualisation, transformed gender roles, flexible employment, and risk politics (associated closely to the global ecological crisis) (Beck et al., 2003). This has important consequences for the role of government and politics in society. In a ‘risk society’ politics cannot be managed by experts alone but has to rely on other mechanisms for dealing with risks: decentralisation, public consultation, public-private partnerships, citizen involvement and participation (Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, & Mayer, 2000).

Already we can see here how an underlying view on contemporary society is linked to ways of organising the governance of this society. In this strand of social theory *modernity has become ‘reflexive’* in the sense that individuals have the ability to reflect more than before on the state of the social order and their place in it (Beck et al., 1994). However, in this view on modernisation, society no longer offers clear integrating narratives, but instead relies on ‘flows of communications’ in fast working networks, which means that it no longer has the traditional structures to offer stability of identity or meaning for modern individuals (Lash, 2001). Consequently, this loss of traditional structures means that individuals have to constantly build their own life-paths (Giddens, 1991). Important for our discussion here is that ideological, religious or cultural identification of individuals with civil society organisations is no longer

⁴ See also the discussion in CSI Flanders Working Paper 1 (Oosterlynck, Hertogen, & Swerts, 2017)

self-evident, and new organisations and movements can emerge that are not part of the traditional social order. In Belgium and Flanders, this has been described in research by Huyse (Huyse, 2003), Hellemans (Hellemans, 1990) and Billiet (Billiet, 2004). In Box 2 we provide a brief discussion of this process of “(de)pillarisation”.

This loss of stable formal bonds between individuals and organisations does not mean, however, that collective action has become impossible. For Giddens (1991) politics also includes “life politics” wherein individuals connect social issues with their own life-project of self-actualisation. Bang and Sørensen (1999) have described how from this setting the political figure of the “everyday maker” can arise, aimed at political action not in an overarching ideological sense but as part of specific issues in daily life. Again, we can see here how a described decline of traditional structures is linked to ideas of governance, in this case through the linkages between individual life-politics and collective political action.

3.1.2 The decentred society

The second idea that is important for our discussion is that of a decentred society - which is related to the above described decline in traditional structures. In abstract terms this idea has been formulated as *functional differentiation* which implies that society is essentially without centre (Esmark, 2009; Luhmann, 1997, 2013). In this view, society consists of function systems that operate autonomously from each other. This position reflects two ideas that are influential in many post-traditional theories. First, that society cannot be analysed as consisting of different ‘parts’ that are integrated in a ‘whole’ (Schinkel, 2007). Second, that no function system (e.g. politics, economy, religion) holds the societal centre from which an ultimate source of power emanates over all other systems. The implication of this theory is that the political system can no longer claim to be an integrating function of society. In its most extreme formulation one could claim that no political system (not even democracy) can include people into society because there is no society in which to include them. Without claiming an a priori position towards this claim, we wish to emphasise the link between these ideas and the discussion in governance-literature on ‘the shift from government to governance’, which we will discuss later. If one were to take up this theoretical position, this would imply a rethinking of how democratic politics function (e.g. Schinkel, 2012).

Another influential strand of social theory takes up this idea of a decentred society with the concept of “networks” where different actors (individuals, groups, organisations, institutions,) can become important “nodes” and analysis should mainly focus on the relations between the nodes (Marshall & Staeheli, 2015). This leads to thinking about “governing processes that are not fully controlled by governments. Policymaking occurs through interactive forms of governing that involve many actors from different spheres” (Lewis, 12/2011, p. 1222). The idea that “networks” are the defining characteristic of modern society is often attributed to Manuel Castells and his theory of ‘network society’ (Castells, 2010b), in which governments are only one of many possible actors in the networks to hold significant influence over power. Although, for the construction of political and cultural identities, according to Castells the local and regional governments have gained in importance, being “the closest point of contact between the state and civil society” (Castells, 2010a, p. 334) (which is related to Castells’ distinction between the ‘space of places’ and the ‘space of flows’). Despite this assertion, Castells is more concerned with the many sources of power and authority in contemporary society, “the nation-state being just one of these sources.” (2010a, p. 356). “Networks” can also be approached very differently, as can be seen in the explorations in literature on so-called “actor-network theory” (ANT). ANT as inspiration for governance theory seems to be taken up especially by researchers on urban planning and urban governance (Farias & Bender, 2010; Rydin & Tate, 2016). ANT focusses on the construction of ‘social entities’, most notably the so-called ‘nonhuman actants’, that other theories generally disregard. Through the lens of ANT, the city as an object of study “becomes a difficult and decentred object, which

cannot anymore be taken for granted as a bounded object, specific context or delimited site.” (Farias & Bender, 2010, Chapter Introduction). ANT is a view on society that turns the network-metaphor inside out: “Society is not the whole ‘in which’ everything is embedded, but what travels ‘through’ everything, calibrating connections and offering every entity it reaches some possibility of commensurability.” (Latour, 2005, pp. 241–242). Society, and with it the idea of government and state, becomes deconstructed, decentred, and finally, as Latour sets out to do, ‘re-assembled’.

A last theory we wish to discuss here is the work of Michel Foucault on ‘governmentality’, which still has significant impact on the analysis of the relationship between government and civil society. (e.g. (Anjaria, 2009; Anwar, 2012; Fyfe, 2005; Jaeger, 2007; Roy, 2009). Foucault analyses how historically differently forms of power have developed (e.g. disciplinary power and biopolitics) and how power is not limited to the institution of government but is at work throughout society. The governmentality approach highlights how all kinds of techniques and procedures govern the conduct of actors (Foucault, 2008; Schuilenburg & Van Tuinen, 2009). In a narrow sense, it refers to the forms of knowledge by which a state governs, in a broader sense this approach emphasises the diffusion of certain ‘rationalities of governing’ throughout society. As Dardot and Laval summarise it “[the] term ‘governmentality’ was precisely introduced to refer to the multiple forms of the activity whereby human beings, who may or may not be members of a ‘government’, seek to conduct the conduct of other human beings – that is, govern them.” (Dardot & Laval, 2013, Chapter Introduction). Some authors have expressed the idea that ‘neoliberal governmentality’⁵ is a dominant force in key domains of our contemporary personal and social lives – thus affecting all kinds of institutions, such as health care, education, labour, family life, etc. (Bang, 2016; Dardot & Laval, 2013; Triantafillou, 2012). The central idea here is the widespread use and application of all kinds of techniques of “self-governance”. According to Bang, in a neoliberal society the idea of self-governance can only succeed in “institutionally altering, modifying or adjusting individual behaviour and conduct so that it becomes more functional for the system and the variety of institutions that constitute it.” (2016, p. 70). In this regard, governmentality research raises questions on whether “life politics” (see above) can be capable of overcoming the supposed demise of traditional collective institutions. The governmentality research leads to insightful explorations of how these power dynamics are capable of contradicting or undermining the overarching claim of ‘self-governance’ as an expression of freedom and choice (Dardot & Laval, 2013).

These views on the decline of traditional structures and the decentring of the state all capture the idea of a *shift in relations of power* between government and civil society, which in turn is reflected in a *shift in vocabulary* in governance literature with concepts as ‘governance’, ‘networks’, ‘trust’ and ‘interdependency’ (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 1). In the following we will explore this governance literature more in detail.

⁵ Furthermore, discussions on Foucault’s own position towards neoliberalism still take up considerable space in the sociological debate. See the very insightful overview of recent discussions on the blog “An und für sich” (<https://itself.blog/category/foucault/foucault-and-neoliberalism-event/>).

3.2 Shifting governance?

It has become commonplace to start an overview of governance literature by stating that ‘governance’ is a complex concept which is developed through a large volume of literature that contains many different approaches to it (Cepiku, 2008; Pollitt & Hupe, 2011), and has become so complex and maybe even overused that it can be hard to see why it is still useful for guiding research (Frederickson, Ferlie, Lynn, & Pollitt, 2007). As Perri 6 has stated, “if governance is everything, maybe it’s nothing” (6, 2015a). However, whatever the many approaches to the concept, the fact remains that it is an important concept in the literature on the relationship between government and civil society (Ansell & Torfing, 2016; Bevir, 2007, 2012; Phillips & Smith, 2011) and therefore should be critically engaged with. Even more, we find the concept still useful for analysing how government and civil society are related vis-a-vis each other concerning the construction of societal collectively binding decisions and goals. In this manner we wish to begin our discussion here from a recently renewed effort at formulating a synthetic overview of academic literature on governance. In the *Handbook on Theories of Governance* Ansell and Torfing provide a definition of governance that serves as a useful point of departure for the discussion in this paper. Governance is defined as

“the interactive processes through which society and the economy are steered towards collectively negotiated objectives. The crucial insight is that no single actor has the knowledge, resources and capacities to govern alone in our complex and fragmented societies (...). Interaction is needed in order to exchange or pool the ideas, resources and competences that are required for the production of desirable outcomes.” (Ansell & Torfing, 2016, p. 4).

There are many ideas formulated here, and in the following we will unpack these through engaging with the academic evolution of the concept of governance. In the previous paragraphs we have already outlined how certain theories of society permeate this definition of governance, specifically theories that propose the decline of traditional structures and the decentering of state and society. Several developments in the literature on governance can be identified that take up these ideas. In a review of the use of governance in public administration literature, Cepiku (2008) identifies how most literature develops a concept of “governance” by contrasting it with notions related to ‘government’ and ‘new public management’. From a wider perspective, ‘governance’ literature is focused on distinguishing ‘governance’ as a steering mechanism in society that is uniquely different from “hierarchies” and “markets”. ‘Governance’ has become a response to certain perceived developments in contemporary society (which we discussed earlier). The literature on governance tries to offer a view on politics and public service delivery that set outs to be wider and more inclusive than the concept of government (Pollitt & Hupe, 2011). In this discussion the leading distinction seems to be that between ‘governance’ and ‘government’, which can be seen in how much of governance literature focuses more on the *process* of governing than on the *structure* of government (Klijn, 2008). Bevir offers a good summary of these core ideas of governance:

“Conceptually, governance is less orientated to the state than is government, and it evokes the conduct of governing at least as much as it does the institutions of government. Temporally, governance captures changes in government since the latter quarter of the twentieth century.” (Bever, 2007, p. xxxvii- our emphasis)

Contrary to Bevir’s statement that governance is “less oriented to the state”, we will propose in the following section of this paragraph that a theory of state is in fact necessary in order to understand how governance is a useful tool for analysing the relationship between governments and civil society. This is also reflected in how governance literature has shifted attention given to the role of ‘state’ – an evolution best described as the development of several ‘conceptual movements’: the move from government to (network) governance, and the move towards metagovernance and ‘bringing the state back in again’ (Bever & Rhodes, 2010) (Bever and Rhodes actually conclude with a ‘third wave’ towards decentred governance which chiefly refers to their own proposal for a renewed, ‘decentred’, governance theory).

At the hearth of our presentation of governance is the question of whether it is justified to speak of a shift from hierarchy to markets and networks (Bevir, 2012). First, we will present the basic idea behind the early literature on 'the shift from government to governance'. Second, the notion of "differentiated polity" will be discussed by briefly presenting the ideas of the so-called "Anglo-governance school". Third, we will then discuss how these ideas are used in a general 'model' in public administration, as presented by Stephen Osborne, which speaks of an evolution from bureaucracy over New Public Management towards a so-called "New Public Governance" (S. P. Osborne, 2006, 2010). Fourth, we will briefly discuss how the concept of meta-governance attempts at combining network governance with the crucial role of government and state in contemporary reflexive modernity. Fifth, we will conclude this section with three important critiques on governance theory, which will form the basis of for our discussion of state theory (section 33.) in which we will develop our focus on governance in light of the relationship between government and civil society.

3.2.1 From government to governance

Central to the discussion here is the aforementioned notion of a "decentred state", an idea that can of course only take form if one starts from a previously "centred" state. This is the position from which most overviews on governance in public administration commence, through presenting 'the base model' of how to steer society: the bureaucratic state (Hondeghem, Van Dooren, De Rynck, Verschuere, & Op de Beeck, 2013; Pollitt, 2003; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Pyper, 2015).

3.2.1.1 Bureaucracy and hierarchy (Public Administration)

Bureaucracy is a model of organising public policy and service delivery with a focus on predictable rules ('rule of law'), a clear hierarchy of competences, a central command structure, and a distinction between administrators and politicians (Eliassen & Sitter, 2008; S. P. Osborne, 2010; Pollitt, 2003) There are two important characteristics of the bureaucratic state that one must not overlook, especially in a European context. Firstly, the bureaucratic state is a state that carries out its own policies instead of relying on third party actors for implementation. Secondly, it has historically developed in tandem with the rule of law, securing both individual rights as well as mechanisms for collective solidarity. In the postwar years government expansion was built on the social consensus that social problems necessitated active government intervention (Judt, 2006).

In the bureaucratic state power over politics and public services is firmly situated in the government of a centralised state. The idealtypical description of a Weberian bureaucracy as a rational process based on a clear hierarchy of tasks, rules and competences is of course always situated in a complex social environment. This social complexity is taken up in Gramscian and Foucauldian literature which emphasise that even in a bureaucratic state governments needs to organise a power base outside of themselves in civil society (hegemony and domination) and build on specific power-knowledge connections with other parts of society (governmentality).

3.2.1.2 New Public Management

Starting in the second half of the 20th century, bureaucracy became increasingly evaluated in negative terms for being sluggish, dysfunctional, overly centralised, and inflexible (Frederickson, Smith, Larimer, & Licari, 2012; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Pyper, 2015). (Pollitt (2003) offers a good overview of these critiques of bureaucracy.) A 'crisis of the welfare state' unfolded as the promise of full employment and endless economic growth came under scrutiny, the demographic evolution put the pension-system under pressure, and economic crises disrupted the political balance (Judt, 2006). In a changing ideological climate government was now seen as the root cause of societal problems while simultaneously being redeployed as an active instrument for the implementation of the new liberal

strategies (Dardot & Laval, 2013; Wacquant, 2012). Liberal ideology, stemming from “an earlier generation of pre-Keynesian liberals”, had now “re-emerged, vociferous and confident, to blame endemic economic recession and attendant woes upon ‘big government’ and the dead hand of taxation and planning that it placed upon national energies and initiative.” (Judt, 2006, p. 537). Ideologically, governments were supposed to reduce the collective mechanisms of solidarity and welfare, and instead emphasise individual responsibilities, autonomous markets, and governmental deregulation. Privatisation of public services was seen as an answer to bureaucratic inefficiencies – in general the relations of government with the rest of society preferably relied on competition and contracting.

This ideological shift had a significant impact on public administration and management through the translation of these ideas into new concepts and policies under the umbrella term “New Public Management” (NPM) (Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew, 1996; Hood, 1991; Metcalfe & Richards, 1990; D. Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). An important consideration to keep in mind is that this movement to reform public management reached across the entire political party spectrum, from ‘new right’ to ‘socialist left’. The shared concern in New Public Management is the improvement of the three “E’s” of public services: its economy, efficiency and effectiveness. (Eliassen & Sitter, 2008; Fattore, Dubois, & Lapenta, 2012; Rhodes, 1994). In a seminal article Christopher Hood (1991) argued that NPM presented itself as a universally applicable model (across countries, organisations, sectors) and as *politically neutral* – in this way, it is not unlike Public Administration. Hood explicitly approached NPM as management system that is primarily concerned with the administrative values of frugality and economy (so-called “sigma” values”) (1991, p. 8) – leading to questions whether NPM could be reconciled with other values such as equity and security. NPM took aim at the way the bureaucratic state functioned, proposing alternative techniques and strategies: “contracting out, decentralizing, granting greater discretion to managers, increasing citizen or customer choices, deregulating, organizing so that there is competition, and determining effectiveness according to outcome measurement.” (Frederickson et al., 2012, p. 128).

However important and influential these ideas were, research shows that the actual implementation of NPM ideas and techniques varies greatly across states. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) compared reforms in public administration across European and Anglo-Saxon countries and synthesized their findings in four different strategies (the “4 M’s”). They identified *modernising* strategies (NPM-style reforms, but with a strong governmental role), *maintaining* strategies (safeguarding traditional mechanisms), *marketizing* strategies (NPM-style reforms with a larger role for private actors), and *minimizing* strategies (minimizing the role of public institutions). These are dynamic concepts in the sense that one country is not limited to one strategy: elements of these strategies can be found in different degrees (some more strongly present than others). Strategies also change over time, as well as the speed with which reforms are implemented; leading to very dynamic view of public administration reform. In their discussion, Pollitt and Bouckaert point out that despite some differences several European continental countries can be seen as having “a more positive attitude towards the future role of the state and a less sweepingly enthusiastic attitude towards the potential contribution of the private sector within the public realm.” (2011, p. 118). Belgium and other countries that have a strong corporatist tradition of government are less prone to radical changes in public administration (2011, p. 73) – which points to the important role of the close interaction between government and civil society in ‘buffering’ the impact of NPM reforms.

3.2.1.3 Differentiated Polity

Although NPM attacks the state for its flaws it can be argued that it is *itself mostly a top-down strategy* performed by a central government (Fattore et al., 2012), whereby NPM is thus not a complete rejection of state-led governance but can rather be seen as another form of it (2003; Pyper, 2015). In the early 1990s in the UK, however, a train of thought developed in which this movement towards NPM was

interpreted not as a continuation of state-led governance but as the opposite. According to the so called “Anglo-governance school” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010; Marinetto, 2003a) or “Differentiated Polity” model (Rhodes, 2007) government was becoming increasingly fragmented (Dunleavy & Rhodes, 1990; Rhodes & Dunleavy, 1995). Rhodes argued that the state was being “hollowed out” (Rhodes, 1994) because of privatisation and contracting out, increasing use of arms-length public agencies, the transfer of functions to the EU, and the limitation of public servants’ discretion by NPM techniques (such as performance measurement, managerial accountability, political control). The hierarchy that was seen as so characteristically of the bureaucratic state was supposedly giving way to markets and networks. Especially *networks* were perceived to be the new dominant organising principle, leading Rhodes to proclaim that governance should now be understood as *network governance* (Rhodes, 1996). In sum, the state was seen to be disintegrating into a patchwork of self-governing networks as a result of reforms implemented by that very same state.

In this “Anglo-governance school”, network governance can be summarised “as consisting of something akin to a *differentiated polity* characterized by a hollowed-out state, a core executive fumbling to pull rubber levers of control, and, most notably, a massive growth of networks.” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010, Chapter 5). This notion of “differentiated polity” has been highly influential in governance theory (Marinetto, 2003a; Marsh, 2008) and marks the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ in thinking about the role of government in politics and public service delivery. In this school of thought the decentring of the state is the core assumption around which the notion of governance is built.

3.2.2 The rise of networks

Networks are thus the culmination in thinking about the evolution of governance in modern states. Although there are many different approaches to this concept, it has reached a certain dominant status in governance literature (Lewis, 12/2011; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). According to Davies and Spicer a specific interpretation of networks dominates the literature: networks are assumed to ‘fit’ better with current macro sociological conditions of society (globalisation, decentred society, individualisation, ...); networks have supposedly expanded in multitude during the last few decades; networks supposedly operate on the basis of “trust” and are therefore well suited for open, flexible, democratic and ‘better’ governance (2015). Davies and Spicer also link this specific interpretation of ‘network governance’ to the large body of literature on reflexive modernity and network society that we have discussed earlier (see 3.1). However, network analysis has a long history in many academic fields and is not easily pinned down to a singular view. Lewis for example discusses a broad overview of network governance research that illustrates the wide variety of approaches, using examples of public administration, political science, sociology, social network analysis, and organisational studies (Lewis, 12/2011). Whatever the specific approach to networks, the fact that the concept dominates the research on governance is well established (Bevir, 2012; Bevir & Rhodes, 2010; Davies, 2012b).

At this point in the discussion it is useful to look at a schematic for understanding public policy implementation and public service delivery that has been proposed by Stephen P. Osborne. He has argued (S. P. Osborne, 2006, 2010) that since the late 19th century up to the start of the 21st century three ‘idealtypical’ regimes can be distinguished: public administration regime (statist, bureaucratic), New Public Management (privatisation, managerialism, market-based), and an emergent New Public Governance (networks, trust, relational contracts). These ‘archetypes’ are an analytical way of pointing out the changing position of state and civil society, and all three types can coexist with each other or overlap.

Osborne’s evolutionary overview is focused on public policy implementation and public service delivery, which he declares is “used here to denote the overall field of the design and implementation of public

policy and the delivery of public services” (2010, p. 1). Although this approach does not include the role of civil society organisations in politics in its wider meaning (see Box 1: Politics and Service Delivery), it still covers many dimensions of the relationship between government and civil society. Osborne’s proposed schematic is thus useful for our discussion not only because of its importance in academic literature⁶, but also because it succeeds in synthesising the historical development we have presented above. In Table 1 below the main differences between the different ‘regimes’ or ‘paradigms’⁷ are presented.

Table 1: Core elements of different governance 'regimes' (S.P. Osborne, 2010, p. 10)

<i>Paradigm / key elements</i>	<i>Theoretical roots</i>	<i>Nature of the state</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>
Public Administration	Political science and public policy	Unitary	The political system	Policy creation and implementation
New Public Management	Rational/public choice theory and management studies	Regulatory	The organization	Management of organizational resources and performance
New Public Governance	Institutional and network theory	Plural and pluralist	The organization in its environment	Negotiation of values, meaning and relationships
	<i>Resource allocation mechanism</i>	<i>Nature of the service system</i>	<i>Value base</i>	
Public Administration	Hierarchy	Closed	Public sector ethos	
New Public Management	The market and classical or neo-classical contracts	Open rational	Efficacy of competition and the marketplace	
New Public Governance	Networks and relational contracts	Open closed	Dispersed and contested	

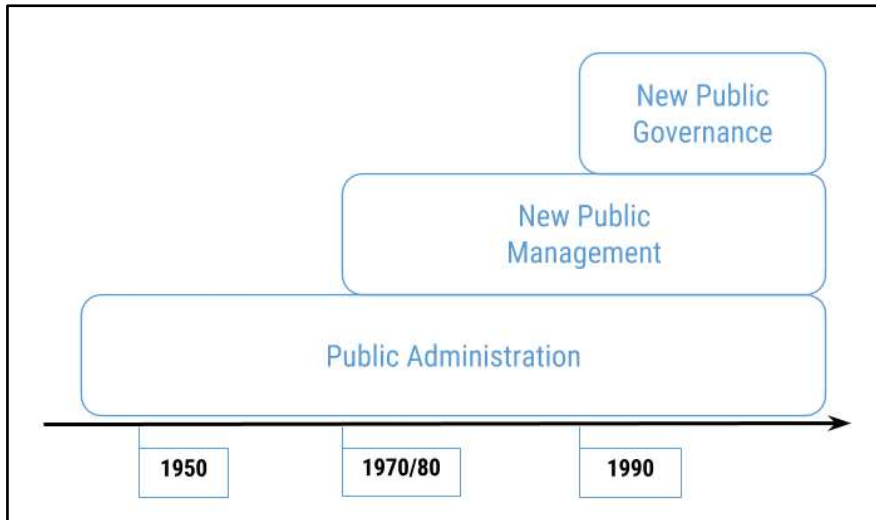
As is clear, Public Administration contains those elements we have discussed as ‘the bureaucratic state’. The core elements of New Public Management in the table can also be understood in light of our previous discussion – where we also indicated how NPM contains more elements of hierarchy than many of its proponents would have liked. We want to focus attention here specifically on “New Public Governance” (NPG). Osborne’s overview presents a very clear example of how the literature on governance has come to see “networks” as a new guiding principle of societal steering after markets and hierarchy. While for some ‘networks’ are then the new ‘dominant’ mode of steering, others approach these modes more as possible ‘mix’ strategies and institutions (Lowndes, 2001; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Following Osborne’s reasoning we approach this schematic overview as a ‘cumulative’ evolution, where different steering principles build on each other and are often at work simultaneously: “Inevitably, such a tripartite

⁶ The 2006 article metrics show 189 citations via Web of Science, Google Scholar gives 789 citations for the 2006 article and 801 citations for the 2010 book.

⁷ While Osborne used the term “paradigm” in his 2006 article, he explicitly steps away from this terminology in his 2010 book: “[PA, NPM and NPG] are then denoted as policy and implementation regimes within this overall field – thus neatly skirting the above, rather redundant, argument as to whether these regimes are actually paradigms or not.” (S. P. Osborne, 2010, p. 1). And again a page further down: “It must be emphasized that this book is not meant to propose “the NPG” as a new paradigm of public services delivery. It is neither that normative nor that prescriptive. The question mark in the title is deliberate.” (2010, p. 2).

regime model is a simplification – elements of each regime can and will coexist with each other or overlap.” (2010, p. 2). This is represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Cumulative evolution of governance regimes



New Public Governance is an expression of public administration in light of the aforementioned theories of “reflexive modernity” and “network society”: “It posits both a *plural state*, where multiple interdependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services, and a *pluralist state*, where multiple processes inform the policy-making system.” (2010, p. 9). The underlying thought is that because of the fragmented nature of contemporary society, policy making has become a matter of interorganisational *networks* through which resources, power, authority and accountability are distributed. This approach comes close to the idea that collectively binding decisions in society cannot be controlled by a centralised government but have to be organised through multiple self-governing autonomous social actors of which government is only one. In its own way, New Public Management was a response to this idea of decentring as well, by recasting citizens and public administrators in a new role and placing management and market-type mechanisms at the centre of public service delivery (Radnor, Osborne, & Glennon, 2016). New Public Governance is “a broader paradigm that emphasizes both the governance of interorganizational (and cross-sectoral) relationships and the efficacy of public service delivery systems rather than discrete public service organizations.” (S. P. Osborne, Radnor, & Nasi, 2012, p. 135). Where Public Administration and New Public Management focus on “administrative processes” and “interorganisational management” (S. P. Osborne et al., 2012), New Public Governance is framework for a broader systemic governance. This does not mean that ‘first order’ governing is no longer of concern, but rather that social complexity demands analyses of second or even third order. We recognise here some of the concerns taken up by the literature on ‘metagovernance’ (see section 3.2.3 below).

What becomes clear in discussing NPG is that it has the characteristics of what we earlier described as the ‘narrow’ definition of governance which targets ‘networks’ as the leading coordination principle. However, Osborne’s scheme in its entirety does point to the necessity of dealing with how manifestations of different paradigms can be at work simultaneously. Say for instance that organisations in social work are confronted by a government arrangement that is steering policy by both bureaucratic procedures as well as NPM-style performance management and public-private governance partnerships for some projects. What is then the impact on the organisation, on its clients, on the social workers? How do these different principles of steering function in relation to each other? And how can

organisations in social work be considered as partners in a network while simultaneously confronted with bureaucratic realities and NPM-practices and monitoring? Are these mutually exclusive ideas? If not, what mechanisms are at play through which the involved organisations and actors deal with this complexity? These questions are key for the research that we will set out to do.

Lowndes (2001) already emphasised how the idea of a shift from government (meaning 'hierarchy') to governance (meaning 'markets' and 'networks') was too simplistic. According to her governance should be analysed as an increasingly complex "institutional mix" of hierarchies, markets and networks and she stresses that networks, as "the new ingredient", should be taken under significant consideration (Lowndes, 2001, p. 1962). This also reflects our discussion of Osborne's cumulative evolution of different governance paradigms in public administration. However, in both Lowndes' and Osborne's view *the network is seen as the main mode of governance* – something that Marsh (Marsh, 2008) argues is characteristic for most governance literature. Both Lowndes' and Osborne's take on governance as an 'institutional mix' or 'cumulative evolution' are still important ideas that will return in our own research model. The main difference is that we will not focus on the 'network' as the *main* mode of governance, precisely to avoid *a priori* primacy of one the by now canonical three steering mechanisms. Furthermore, we will argue below (see 3.3.1) that 'networks', 'hierarchies' and 'markets' are theoretically very different concepts that should not be used on the same level of analysis (6, 2015a). This complexity of different principles of steering as well as discussions on the position of government in the complex web of actors, processes and social issues has also been taken up in governance literature with the concept of 'metagovernance', so we will first turn to a brief discussion of this literature.

3.2.3 Metagovernance: the governance of governance

There are numerous authors that disagree with the idea that 'governance' necessarily entails a "hollowed out state", but instead see government still as an important actor, albeit that it now has a different role to play: not as a command-and-control centre, but as a coordinating actor in a wider network. This is what Bevir and Rhodes identify as a so called 'second wave' in governance literature, focused on *metagovernance* and a re-evaluation of the role of the state (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010). Sørensen and Torfing describe it as a 'second generation' in governance literature that has accepted the spread of governance networks and is now focused on issues such as the conditions of failure and success, the regulation of governance networks and the democratic quality of networks (Sørensen & Torfing, 2005). In short, metagovernance concerns the 'governance of governance'.

Metagovernance is another answer to the complexity of governance modes, coupled to a concern for a renewed steering role for governments. Where the first literature on governance prioritised self-organising networks at the expense of the state, the concept of meta-governance 'brings the state back in': rethinking a role of government so it can still be a relevant and strong actor in politics, public policy and service delivery. As the 'governance of governance' it is concerned with balancing the three ideal typical modes of governance (hierarchies, markets, networks) – thus focussing on what we described earlier as the "mix" of governance modes. Metagovernance can best be understood as a higher order observation of governance. Meuleman summarised these characteristics in a useful working definition that can serve as a first understanding of metagovernance as an analytical concept:

"Metagovernance is a means by which to produce some degree of coordinated governance, by designing and managing sound combinations of hierarchical, market and network governance, to achieve the best possible outcomes from the viewpoint of those responsible for the performance of public-sector organisations: public managers as 'metagovernors'." (Meuleman, 2008, p. 68).

Metagovernance in this sense thus comes close to our understanding of governance in its general meaning of coordination of collective principles. Meuleman based this definition partly on the works of Jan Kooiman and Bob Jessop, both influential authors in the literature on metagovernance. In general *three schools of thought* on metagovernance occur in academic literature (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009), which we will discuss here. Summarising the literature, Sørensen speaks of three approaches: hands on, hands off and indirect governance:

“hands on through the facilitation of self-governance; hands off through political, financial, institutional, and discursive framing of self-governing networks, organizations, and groups; or indirectly through the presence of a strong shadow of hierarchy.” (in: Bevir, 2007, p. 230).

The first school of thought focuses on metagovernance as ‘managing of the network’. Crucially, in this theory networks are seen as self-organising entities, leading to the conclusion that metagovernance can only work through indirect means of influencing the self-organising capacities of the networks (Meuleman, 2008). In this theory networks are defined as a complex set of social relations defined in terms of different expectations, values, competences and resources. In order to prevent network failure, mechanisms are required that are able to manage this complexity, which is a characteristic specifically attributed to the state (Lewis, 12/2011). Network management in this regard entails “all the deliberate strategies aimed at facilitating and guiding the interactions and/or changing the features of the network with the intent to further the collaboration within the network processes.” (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016, p. 11).

A second school of thought, exemplified by Bob Jessop (Jessop, 2002, 2016), focuses on how governance in different systems can be coordinated. The four main modes of governance that Jessop (2016) identifies are *exchange* (markets), *command* (state), *dialogue* (network), and *solidarity* (love). These can be considered the first-order modes of governance which all have their own possibilities of failure. When failures occur, second-order governance modes try to address these failures by either focusing on issues with the steering mechanism itself (the different modes) or with the conditions in which they operate (Jessop, 2016, p. 170). A second-order response to failures in governance can occur within the first-order institutions (e.g. market expansion in response to lack of profit), but it is the state that according to Jessop is best suited for “collibration” (his term for metagovernance): managing the balance between the different modes of governance in light of society’s collectively constructed goals. Jessop uses Gramscian and Foucauldian literature to argue that metagovernance affects the relations between different social institutions (state, markets, civil society). Even more, while the state has a privileged position to engage in metagovernance, its ‘collibrative’ activities often evoke considerable reaction from competing metagovernance activities (Jessop, 2016, p. 177). Jessop’s approach is closely related to theories that assume a decentred society, and his model places the state in a sort of ‘central yet displaced’ position: while the state’s central position in the social order is disputed, it is somehow the only domain in society capable of achieving collibrative coordination. Of particular concern for Jessop in the construction of the state’s influence and power is the role of hegemonies and governmental techniques. This approach to the position of government and state is partly the reason why in his earlier work he emphasised how metagovernance is a process of “muddling through” (Jessop, 2002, p. 242), whereby the state has to rely on processes of persuasion and its influence in the construction of collective intelligence as much as on its control over money, finance and law.

A third approach to metagovernance, developed by Kooiman (2003) presents a systems-theoretical perspective on metagovernance. Kooiman takes a decisively normative approach, starting from the position that metagovernance concerns “governing how to govern” (2003, p. 188). Governance in the first order is concerned with the way “governing actors try to tackle problems or create opportunities on a day-to-day basis” (2003, p. 135). This social construction of problems and solutions are in their turn embedded in “institutional settings”, which are governed in a second-order mode of governance (2003,

p. 153). First-order governance is concerned with how problems and solutions are constructed and the mechanisms social systems have to reduce the complexity of this process. Second-order governance is concerned with maintaining an overview on how institutions (such as state, civil society and market) facilitate or limit the possibilities for the construction of problems and solutions. Metagovernance is then a third-order form of governance that deals with “normative governance issues” (2003, p. 170). Kooiman argues that this third order is not a higher order as such, but that it is an added normative dimension from which to reflect upon the whole: “Meta governing is like an imaginary governor, teleported to a point 'outside' and holding the whole governance experience against a normative light.” (2003, p. 170). Kooiman also emphasises that it is through metagovernance that the use of norms for reflecting on the different orders of governance are always susceptible to debate by those governed. This ‘meta’ reflexivity is an inherent aspect of his take on metagovernance.

These three theories all build on the notion of a decentred society in which government is no longer the central control centre, but still is the only domain in society from which collective coordination can be achieved. They thus look for ways in which government can still play a vital role in securing some form of control over collective societal goals and strategies, despite its displaced position in society. Overall, in metagovernance the preferred tactics are related to persuasive negotiation and other informal relations (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010). However, Davies (Davies, 2011a, 2011b) rightly argues that the state still has more coercive measures at its disposal. Sørensen’s indication (quoted above) of the shadow of hierarchy points of course to Scharpf’s analysis of how self-organising organisations operate “in the shadow of the state”, i.e. in the hierarchically determined framework set out by government (Scharpf, 1997). This shadow of hierarchy already contains the coercive powers at the disposal of governments, although at times in governance literature it seems to remain too much in the analytical shadows (Davies, 2011a, 2014a). Coercive measures taken by governments can of course also occur much more directly, as for example in the use of police force in reaction to the early protests by the so-called ‘Indignados’ in Spain, or in the forceful deportation of undocumented immigrants. Despite the fact that government can still rely on forms of coercive power in politics and public service delivery, metagovernance literature emphasises that its default position is that of coordination and persuasion.

In his extensive critique on network governance, Jonathan Davies claims that for those adopting the theory of ‘network governance’ “Metagovernance (the network governance of network governance) is the least-worst, necessarily imperfect, governmental solution to social complexity.” (Davies, 2011a, Chapter 1). Davies argues that metagovernance is another form of ‘network governance’, and in light of our previous discussion we agree with this assertion. Metagovernance is built on concepts that are well attuned to the theory of the reflexive modernity wherein individual and collective actors are able to act reflexively on their position in fast-expanding social networks, as well as to the idea of a network society in governing power is dispersed through these networks. This does not make the idea of metagovernance invalid, but it does make it susceptible to the critiques on ‘network governance’ which we will discuss in the section below.

3.3 Three critiques on ‘governance’ and ‘network governance’

We have argued that governance chiefly refers to the process of constructing collectively negotiated objectives in the interaction between different social spheres or systems, such as politics, economy and civil society. In this section we wish to present some important critiques on the dominant position of ‘networks’ in the current governance debate, as well as on the use of hierarchies, markets and networks as the main ‘modes of governance’ in governance literature. First of all, we will clarify some conceptual misunderstandings in the debate on networks, hierarchies and markets. Our main critique here is that these concepts refer to different levels of analysis and one should be careful to consider them as distinct ‘modes of governance’. Perri 6’s recent discussion (6, 2015a) on bureaucracies and networks will be a key source for our discussion. Secondly, the claim of a ‘historical’ shift towards ‘network governance’ does not fit with the actual historical developments of European states. We do not wish to dismiss the qualities of networks as a useful concept for analysis, but we do wish to highlight some important critiques on the dominance of network governance. In this way we want to “put networks in their place” (Davies & Spicer, 2015), and bring the complex interplay between different institutions to the forefront. Lastly, ‘network governance’ is often built on underlying normative assumptions that should be considered carefully. Specifically we will briefly discuss Jonathan Davies’ argument that network governance has a strong neoliberal bias (Davies, 2012a, 2012b; Davies & Spicer, 2015).

3.3.1 Conceptual critique on the ‘displacement of hierarchies’

Our first critique starts from the central claim in ‘network governance’ literature that networks have displaced hierarchies as the dominant institutional form. Even Bevir by now admits that this claim was overly dramatic: “hierarchical bureaucracies are still the dominant form of public governance” (Bevir, 2012, Chapter 4). Bell and Hindmoor argue that “states have not been hollowed out and the exercise of state authority remains central to most governance strategies” (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009, pp. 1–2). They present a wide overview of cases of hierarchical governance by governments (2009, pp. 71–92). For instance, despite the influence of the logic of privatisation, state-owned enterprises are still numerous in several countries and even where privatisation has occurred it has been accompanied by an extension of regulatory powers (2009, p. 75). In relation to many civil society organisations governments rely on extensive auditing procedures, further strengthening the argument that hierarchies are widely important (2009, p. 76). Arguing against the claims made by the UK-centred ‘differentiated polity’ school (see 3.3.1), Perri 6 states that in the UK hierarchy was still very strong in the same period that this school of thought developed its claims on a ‘hollowed out’ state and dominant ‘network governance’ (6, 2015a, p. 61). Davies (2000) also found that in the period between 1992–97 hierarchies and markets were still prevalent in UK local governments. Furthermore, Perri 6 argues that from the immediate postwar years up to the early 1970’s UK governments were frequently engaged in negotiations with trade unions, limiting the hierarchical powers of government through network strategies and tactics – thus before networks were considered to be important governance modes. (6, 2015a, pp. 61–62).

Bouckaert argues that at the turn of the 21st century New Public Governance consisted of a combination of network and hierarchical governance (Meuleman, 2008) – as we have seen Osborne also places NPG in a continuing cumulative evolution of ‘governance modes’ (see 3.2.2). This is not to say that hierarchies are still operating in the same way as in the immediate postwar period and that states have not undergone any reforms. After considering several programs of ‘modernisation’ reforms in European and Anglo-Saxon countries, Bouckaert and Pollitt (see also earlier 3.2.1.2) propose that for some (mainly European continental) states the model of “neo-Weberian state” (NWS) could be a better model for showing how hierarchies are impacted by recent reform movements: “In essence, [NWS] was an attempt to modernize traditional bureaucracy by making it more professional, efficient, and citizen-friendly.” (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011, p. 19). NWS is thus a model wherein government systems operate with hierarchical principles combined with certain standards of professional capacities, efficient management and the consultation of external actors (civil society, market actors, ...). Furthermore, we

argue that this NWS-model also leaves room for the possibility of a coercive state power – from an optimistic perspective as a guarantee for collective solidarity or individual liberties; from a pessimistic perspective as a safeguard for specific elite interests.

When comparing NWS to NPG and NPM (as Pollitt and Bouckaert define them) it becomes clear these models do not operate through an exclusive ‘mode of governance’: NPM does not exclusively operate through markets, NPG not exclusively via networks, and NWS is not an exclusively hierarchical affair (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Contracts and marketisation can be pushed through by hierarchical authorities; networking partnerships can be established by centralised regulators and incorporate varying contractual agreements; hierarchies themselves often rely on informal networks and trust in order to achieve policy goals. Accordingly, the empirical reality of national governments cannot be simplified by assigning each government to a single model. Distinct policy domains might be in some regards attributed to a certain model, but the overall view of the public sector is a messy complex reality (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Again, the nuanced and complex mix of governance modes and institutions comes into view, on a conceptual level (models themselves are mixed) as well as the empirical level (reality is not a model).

Furthermore, the idea that networks have displaced hierarchies also implies that ‘markets’ have not managed to take over the role that hierarchies once had – as was claimed by New Public Management literature and the accompanying liberal political ideologies. As we have seen in an earlier section of the paper (see 3.2.1), markets were believed by many to be the answer to bureaucracy’s failings and the ‘crisis of the welfare state’. However, hierarchical intervention often occurs when confronted with market failures, such as in the management of scarce resources, public health and social security (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009, pp. 79–80). The “shadow of hierarchy” also points to the fact that many forms of ‘privatisation’ are acted out under state oversight and control. The key issue is that these marketisation strategies and NPM-policies have been designed, implanted and controlled by governments, positioned under its ‘shadow of hierarchy’. Bell and Hindmoor refer to Moran who states that the current hierarchical modern state is “characterised by stronger central controls, and extensive auditing and quantitative measurement of performance” (2009, pp. 88–89). This last claim is also supported by Perri 6, who cites the rise of new regulatory agencies in the UK that are constantly monitoring and assessing the delivery of public services (6, 2015a).

Perri 6 argues that claims about the displacement of hierarchies stem from a “theoretical misunderstanding of hierarchy” (2015a, p. 58). Hierarchies have often been confused with bureaucracies and coercion-based governing, while instead they are essentially rule-based systems and as such they can be coercive or bureaucratic but not necessarily so. He argues that hierarchy is an “ordered division of labour”, a distinct institutional form based on integrating values, norms, roles and expectations more than that it’s based on domination and control (2015a, p. 67). Consequently hierarchies can manifest itself in many different ways and should not be reduced to instances of commands and control. Hierarchical systems, according to this view, can function without issuing many commands or establishing strict control procedures.

Furthermore, Perri 6 argues that hierarchies, markets and networks are analytical concepts of a different order. Whereas a hierarchy is a distinct institutional form in this view, “markets” are empirical descriptions of any event of *exchange*, which can thus occur in different institutional forms (2015a, p. 69). Markets are events of exchange between buyers and providers and can thus manifest as well in, among others, hierarchical settings. Consider for example the prolific use of government contracting of services and goods, “to the point that government procurement across the range of domestic public services is as hierarchical as it has ever been and probably more than it used to be, even in defence procurement during the great wars of the twentieth century” (2015a, p. 70). He makes the similar

argument that “networks” are not a distinct institutional form. As opposed to markets they are not ‘empirical events’, but are an analytical tool for describing events in which nodes are related in sets of ties (2015a, p. 70). Consequently networks are not exclusively tied to organising principles as ‘trust’ or ‘self-organisation’ – these principles can be very well at work in hierarchies as well as in markets. According to Perri 6 this theoretical misunderstanding between the concepts thus undermines any claims of a historical shift (see also our discussion in section 3.3.2) which in turn leads him to dismiss the notion of metagovernance as irrelevant (2015a, p. 71).

6 has written several articles in which he explores an alternative framework for analysing the institutional diversity of governing, which he builds on an Neo-Durkheimian institutional framework (6, 2014, 2015b, 2016). Using Durkheim’s concepts of social integration and regulation he proposes different types of institutional settings in which policy decisions take place (6, 2014), whereby each institutional form functions as a ‘horizon’ of possibilities and constraints in which decision-making takes place. While these articles offer a coherent theoretical framework to replace the conceptual inconsistencies of the ‘hierarchy-market-network’ thinking, they focus primarily on the internal processes of government based on historical cases in the British core executive and administration.

For our research, we take 6’s critiques into consideration while staying focused on the relationship between government and civil society. In the following section (3.4) we will therefore present a Gramscian-inspired view on the state, which emphasis how the relationship between government and civil society is formed by a continuous struggle of social forces throughout different institutional settings – thus also avoiding the fallacy of assigning certain normative imperatives to specific institutions. This does not mean that ‘networks’, ‘markets’ and ‘hierarchies’ become irrelevant concepts, but they are not considered the main modes of governance. Instead, the analysis of how governance arrangements are contextually is our focus of attention. In this regard, network analysis can still offer important insights, for example in analysing the role of informal practices in settings with a formalised division of labour.

3.3.2 Historical confusion

Our second critique is aimed at the claim of a ‘historical shift’ from hierarchical governance towards network governance, and follows from the insight that governance through networks is not a new phenomenon in the context of European welfare states. The idea that states have mostly relied on ‘hierarchies’ before networks came along rests on two fundamental confusions. First, as we have discussed above, the distinction between the three ‘modes’ is theoretically inconsistent. Secondly, this idea ignores significant parts of the historical reality of politics and public policy – some of which we have already discussed in our first critique (as argued by Bell & Hindmoor (2009), Davies (2011a) and Perri 6 (2015a)). Many historians also point out that as far back as the Roman Empire networks between state and private actors shaped important domains of the state (6, 2015a), such as the grain trade (e.g. Kessler and Temin (2007) argue that private merchants actively used their connections with state actors to ensure large-scale grain imports) or in organising tax and toll road collections (as Forrer et al. (2010) point out in their discussion of public-private partnerships).

Beyond public-private partnerships, network-based interactions between government and civil society also have a long history in European countries – certainly in the case of corporatist traditions as for example in countries such Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany, and Austria (Bode, 2011; Evers & Laville, 2005; Pierre, 1999). In his study on elderly care in Germany, France and England Bode finds that “inter-agency collaboration as such is nothing new in this field so that *viewing (co)governance as a substitute for hierarchical government or market governance does not make sense here*” (Bode, 2006, p. 551- our emphasis) Furthermore, considering the possible expanding role of market-driven reforms in public services and the non-profit sector, the so-called dominance of networks has even less empirical footing. Bode argues that this is precisely what is occurring internationally in welfare policy and health

care (Bode, 2011). Moreover, in light of the previously discussed distinction between markets as empirical settings and networks as analytical tools, it is not hard to see how networks are not *a priori* free from profit motives or market-type governance techniques. Networks and markets are not new phenomena – so analysis of the changes indicated by Bode should focus on how profit-driven exchange institutions can become the norm in public policy, and not whether these changes should be categorised as ‘markets’ or ‘networks’.

Not only in service delivery but also in the field of politics and policy-making governments have since long actively engaged with nongovernmental actors. A clear example is the governance of labour policy through dialogue and negotiations between labour unions, business associations and governments (Cantillon, 2016) – long established in many countries. In broader terms, many European welfare states have historically developed through the socio-political integration of government and nongovernmental actors. Specifically for Belgium, and especially from early 20th century up to the 1960’s, this integration took shape in strong “pillars”: vertical integration of organisations along certain societal fault lines, leading to a compartmentalised society, whereby individual member’s lives are taken up from “the cradle to the grave” (Hellemans, 1990, p. 26) (see Box 2 below). A crucial element in this process is the close integration of political parties (and the political elite) with these pillars (Billiet, 2004). These pillars were resilient institutions, since during times of the decline traditional structures (among others due to individualisation and secularisation – see 3.1.1) pillars still functioned as strong institutions mediating between the political system and civil society organisations – despite the fact that individual citizens were no longer as tightly integrated into the pillars as before. This has been described in terms of a transformation from “pillars” to “political concerns” (Huyse, 2003) or “neo-pillars” (Hellemans, 1990). The result was a state system in which political power was organised through a complex institutional setting, wherein these ‘neo-pillars’, via political parties and elite networks, took up a key institutional position between governments and civil society. In short, from its inception the Belgian state has developed around the historically altering integration of government and civil society interaction. Again, we propose that a Gramscian inspired framework fits better with the historical developments of the governance arrangements between these complex institutions.

Box 2: History of pillarisation in Belgium

Civil society organisations have been closely integrated in the development of the welfare state in Belgium, which is most notably described as the ‘pillarisation’ of Belgian society. A “pillar” is a strong coupling between civil society organisations, political parties and government representatives that is constructed around shared values or interests. (Billiet, 2004; Huyse, 2003). The Belgian state has historically evolved around the evolution of three societal ‘fault lines’: religious-ideological (clerical vs. anticlerical), socio-economic (labour vs. capital) and ethno-linguistic (Flemish vs. Walloon) (Devos, 2016; Dewachter, 2001; Huyse, 2003; Witte et al., 2009). Around these fault lines networks of organisations have evolved, ranging from organised labour and employers’ organisations to cultural organisations, schools and universities, media (especially newspapers) and banks (Devos, 2016). Pillarisation is then a vertical integration of these organisations along certain societal fault lines, leading to a compartmentalised society, whereby individual member’s lives are taken up from “the cradle to the grave” (Hellemans, 1990, p. 26): “Pillars spanned the whole person. One was born in this ‘world’ (e.g in a catholic maternity) and a large part of life took place within the confines of the same pillars: school, youth movement, hospital, mutuality, sport association, cultural association, labour union, library, health care at home, elderly associations, political parties, were organised on a philosophical-religious ground. Contact with dissentients was minimal.” (Huyse, 2003, p. 41- our translation).

The key element here is the close integration of political parties (and the political elite) with civil society organisations (Billiet, 2004). In Belgium three ‘pillars’ (a christian-democratic, a socialist and a smaller liberal

pillar) organised the state, especially in the period 1930-1960 (Huyse, 2003). The roots of pillarisation can be traced to much earlier in the development of the Belgian state, as Billiet states: "Pillarisation is a structural alternative for the failure of the catholic majority to keep control over societal life under a regime of separation of Church and State" (2004, p. 133- our translation). Thus, the catholic pillar originally occupied a position as a private initiative outside of governmental control. However, gradually, and with the rise of other social pillars, this position gave way to a position whereby the state would provide financial and structural support for these initiatives (in education, culture, health care, ...) in return for a 'contained' social conflict (Huyse, 2003). The power dynamic between different social groups resulted in a state system that was particularly adapted at containing social conflicts in these pillars, more than solving the specific policy issues at hand (van den Bulck, 1992). It is important here to remember that the underlying social fault lines ran through these pillars, connecting members across different social positions: "It means that potential enemies were confronted with one another within each pillar, a situation that led to more moderation" (Witte et al., 2009, p. 414). Thus, the crucial issue is not that conflict did not occur (in or between pillars), but how conflict was managed by a state system that could selectively deal with social issues, never confronting all three fault lines at once, resulting in a balancing and stabilising state hegemony.

Starting from the 1960's however, these social pillars evolved towards a new position of power. Gradually, organisations became more entrenched inside the political system by positioning more and more of their members in parliament, ministerial cabinets and government administration (Witte et al., 2009, p. 414). According to Huyse the primary characteristics of the pillars that were constructed around *philosophical differences* and *social closure* disappeared. These gave way to the dominance of their, until then, secondary characteristics, of which the most notable was the central position of pillars in the state (2003, p. 375). Pillars thus became '*political concerns*' (Huyse, 2003) or "neo-pillars" (Hellemans, 1990): integrated professional networks of organisations (political parties and civil society organisations), occupying key positions in the institutions of the state. As such the Belgian state became characterised by a highly professionalised civil society (through the yearlong structural support of government) and a government that is tightly connected to civil society organisations and networked political parties (Hellemans, 1990).

This integrated organisational network explained why these 'neo-pillars' could survive in a period of increasing secularisation and individualisation. While at the level of the organisations' elite the coupling with specific political parties remained strong, this was not the case at the level of the individual members. The members' connection with the 'pillar' was shifting from an exclusive, sustainable and formal membership to a set of selective, changing and informal connections with different organisations (Billiet, 2004). An important part of this evolution was the expansion of the identity of the 'pillars' towards less strictly defined values (from 'catholic' to 'Christian', or from 'truth' to 'value'). More and more the 'service' and 'quality' of the organisations were being touted instead of their philosophical identity, with more focus on professional integration than on the integration of its "clients" (Billiet, 2004; Hellemans, 1990). During the 1980's and early 1990's the position of these civil society organisations in the state system became increasingly evaluated in negative terms because of their clientelism, their pre-occupation of state power, and their lack of openness towards other organisations or social actors (Billiet, 2004; Huyse, 2003). In 1995 this led to a report in the Flemish parliament by a "task force De-pillarisation", stating the goal of "reducing the party-political and philosophical pillarisation" (Vlaamse Raad, 1995, p. 127).

At the same time however, extreme-right politics in Flanders was on the rise, and in academic literature part of the problem was identified as lack of "social capital". In Flanders, this led to a reframing of the role civil society: no longer as 'political concerns' occupying state power, but as praised social actors providing society with the necessary means for restoring social capital (Billiet, 2004). Symbolic for this reframing of its role was the coining of the term "middenveld" ("midfield") instead of "pillars" for the many 'networked' organisations that were deemed suitable to take up this role.

3.3.3 Normative pitfalls of network governance

A third critique considers the possible ideological and normative bias in models of ‘network governance’. In her review of the governance concept in public administration literature, Cepiku finds that there is often confusion in international literature between the normative and analytical dimensions of ‘governance’, and that more attention should be given to separating the two (Cepiku, 2008, p. 110). One bias that can often be found is the equation of governance with the idea of a ‘retreating’ government: a government with less influence than before, either as a deliberate political strategy or as a consequence of contemporary societal complexity. The ‘retreat’ of government is often framed as ‘neoliberalism’ whereby government gives way to market forces. However, neoliberalism should not be considered as a simple retreat of government from society, but as the active redeployment of the state in reforming society according to principles of the market and security (Dardot & Laval, 2013; Wacquant, 2012) (This critique on ‘neoliberalism’ occurs quite frequently in critical articles on governance (see also 3.1 and 3.4.2); we find it therefore useful to add a brief discussion of the main characteristics of “neoliberalism” in Box 3 below).

Jonathan Davies (2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2014b; Davies & Spicer, 2015) has been especially critical of ‘network governance’ literature, linking the centrality of ‘networks’ in the literature on governance to neoliberal ideology. Building on insights from Boltanski and Chiapello, he argues that ‘networks’ are a crucial part of the neoliberal hegemony in the age of informational capitalism where the “connectionist paradigm” and the “citizen-entrepreneur” is celebrated and legitimised (Davies, 2011b). On the level of local policies, some authors connect this network ideology with the spread of competitive development strategies aimed at the facilitation of economic growth and the flow of capital (Peck, 2002)— as for example in Harvey’s work on the “entrepreneurial city” (Harvey, 1989). Davies’ critique on the network model is focused on the role it plays in the construction of the ‘neoliberal hegemony’ in informational capitalism. He therefore develops a Gramscian framework of analysis to argue that networks have become the dominant paradigm across the political spectrum – which he discusses in the context of urban governance in the UK. This neoliberal paradigm as Davies sees it entails a belief in the inherently positive force of networks which through both competition and cohesion shall lead to ‘inclusive’ governance. Davies then argues that as a hegemonic strategy these governing networks eventually almost always fall short, often resulting in the reestablishing of coercive hierarchies to ensure hegemonic integration (Davies, 2011a). This brings us then to the supposed link between networks and neoliberalism. Davies argues that in neoliberal society hierarchies take over where networks fail in order to ensure the hegemonic consensus, proving at once that hierarchies were never gone to begin with and that networks are mostly ideological vehicles (2011a). We argue that this is a clear example of the conceptual confusion we pointed out above. Hierarchies can be coercive, but are not necessarily so – and hierarchies can integrate elements of exchange and profit (markets) as well as function in networked settings. Our view is that Davies observes governance arrangements too much in terms of a tension between hierarchy (coercion, domination) and networks (hegemony, ideology). We argue instead that focussing on how contextually situated institutions interact with each other offers more analytical flexibility than focussing on predetermined modes of governance. To use Davies’ own words in one his later articles: instead of “fetishizing” any particular form of governance, “a more agnostic approach to governance research” should be adopted (Davies & Spicer, 2015).

Box 3: Neoliberalism?

In the literature on governance several authors have argued that contemporary society can be characterised as 'neoliberal', if not in its totality than certainly in many areas of politics and social and economic policy (Bang, 2016; Bevir, 2011; Dardot & Laval, 2013; Davies, 2011a, 2014b; Geddes, 2005, 2006; Ilcan, 2009; Jessop, 2002; Lang & Rothenberg, 2016; Perkins, 2009; Wacquant, 2012; Williams, Cloke, & Thomas, 2012). When reading the rich literature on neoliberalism one is faced with the complexity of the topic and the multitude of different approaches. As is the case with 'governance' and other concepts, the term 'neoliberalism' has been defined in different ways and as such has given rise to a large debate on what it actually is (Dean, 2014). Here, we do not wish to present this debate, but instead present an approach to 'neoliberalism' that is most suited for the analysis of governance in this paper.

It is through the concept of governmentality that research on governance and neoliberalism has been most successfully developed. As Bevir notes, governance and governmentality both share a common concern: "(...) they disaggregate the state, drawing attention to the diffusion of political power and political action, and exploring the porosity of the border between state and civil society." (Bever, 2011, p. 457). The concept of governmentality has been used to describe a certain set of techniques, practices and knowledge (what Foucault called *dispositifs*) that are so widespread in society that it is possible to speak of a 'neoliberal governmentality'. Central to these ideas is that neoliberalism constitutes a form of 'self-governance' by which competition becomes the norm in all aspects of personal and social life, and personal freedom can only be appreciated through an 'entrepreneurial' approach towards life (Bang, 2016; Dardot & Laval, 2013). Crucial in these approaches is that neoliberal governmentality is considered to be a "global" rationality: "By this we mean that such a rationality is global in the two senses of the term: it is 'world-wide' in that it obtains on a world scale; and, far from being confined to the economic sphere, it tends to totalize – that is, create a world in its own image through its power to integrate all dimensions of human existence." (Dardot & Laval, 2013, p. 11).

Neoliberalism is thus more than an economic project of laissez-faire or capital accumulation, but it is considered a deeply political set of beliefs and strategies that impacts all aspects of life: "[The institutional core of neoliberalism] consists of an articulation of state, market, and citizenship that harnesses the first to impose the stamp of the second onto the third." (Wacquant, 2012, p. 71). Neoliberalism should not be equated with the 'retreat' or 'diminishing' of the state, but rather it concerns how the state is an active mechanism in strengthening the reach of neoliberal ideas and strategies. The exact nature of these changes can vary with the concerns and focus of the authors. For example, Wacquant (2012) emphasises the penalising and disciplining aspects of neoliberalism, Bang (2016) illustrates how sets of institutions can 'empower' or 'nudge' individuals into doing what is most suited to the societal equilibrium, while Davies (2014b) focuses on how neoliberalism is closely connected to the coercive power of the local state.

3.4 State theory: government, governance and governmentality

We have shown how the concept of governance captures the dynamic between government and other social spheres, among which civil society, concerning the construction of societally collective goals. In the literature, as we have shown, some authors have claimed that governance has come to mean 'network governance' – a claim that we have criticised in the previous section. In order to analyse the relationship between government and civil society it is important to answer these critiques and present a framework that captures the continuous struggle of social forces throughout different institutional settings – thus also avoiding the fallacy of normative assumptions regarding specific institutions. We will therefore present a Gramscian-inspired framework which integrates government and civil society in the construction of 'the state'. A key insight in this perspective is that this close integration of government and civil society in the state emerges through the construction of concrete institutions – it is not an abstract process but one that become visible in the institutions of social and political life. Consequently, the specific institutions on which this integration is built becomes the focus of attention. In our research we will focus on specific governance arrangements around defined socially constructed issues or policy domains. In this framework governance arrangements are the concrete manifestations of hegemonic processes around socially constructed issues or policy domains.

At this point it is important to emphasise that this paper distinguishes between the *analytical tools* developed in the work of these authors and the large literature commenting on it, from the *ideological assumptions* of some authors working with these concepts. Specifically we are referring to the tendency to regard 'civil society' as a positive, progressive force and 'government' as a negative, limiting force in society. A good counterexample of this tendency is Buttigieg's discussion of the rise of the American religious-conservative movement (Buttigieg, 2005). Moreover, while not always explicit, this underlying assumption is reflected in the attention given to the internal differentiation of civil society without doing the same for government (e.g. Agustín & Jørgensen (2016)). In the following, we will argue that in order to understand the hegemonic dynamics between government and civil society we must avoid a homogenous view of government and civil society and construct a framework that captures *both* spheres as internally complex differentiated realities. Earlier, we have already outlined the central dimensions of this complexity (see: 2 | Internal differentiation of government and civil society).

In the following section we will briefly explore the well-known thesis of the *integral state* developed by Antonio Gramsci. This will, firstly, allow us to understand how in general terms collectively binding decisions are always set in a social struggle of forces, related to certain positions and interests. Secondly, we will use the notion of hegemony and domination to point to the mutual roles of both government and civil society in governance processes.

3.4.1 Hegemony and domination

In this paragraph we now present the Gramscian argument that even a bureaucratic government needs to organise its power base outside of itself in civil society, in a relationship that Gramsci called "hegemony". The same applies for the other models of governance that we have discussed, be it steering by markets, networks or some form of higher order steering: the fundamental power dynamics between government and civil society are the heart of Gramsci's analysis. Of course, Gramsci's claims are made in a different time, a different state and comes with a specific concern for 'class struggle' and the 'subaltern'. However, the fundamental insights from Gramsci can still guide us for a general understanding of the role of government and civil society in contemporary states, as we will show. Gramsci's ideas have been taken up by a large body of literature contextualising his ideas for contemporary society (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2016; Davies, 2012a; Jessop, 1997; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014)

In Gramsci's view government and civil society are both part of the state. Analytically he separates them in order to investigate more clearly the dynamic of power between them, as Gramsci-scholar Joseph Buttigieg notes:

“Gramsci regarded **civil society as an integral part of the state**; in his view, civil society, far from being inimical to the state, is, in fact, **its most resilient constitutive element**, even though the most immediately visible aspect of the state is political society, with which it is all too often mistakenly identified. He was also convinced that the intricate, organic relationships between civil society and political society enable certain strata of society not only to gain dominance within the state but also, and more importantly, to maintain it, perpetuating the subalternity of other strata.” (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 4) - *our emphasis*.

Political society here refers to 'government' in a broad sense, or the 'state' in a narrow sense: the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, the police, administrative systems, etc. (Buttigieg, 1995, 2005; Simon, 1991). In terms of power, government is the sphere of coercion which can force people to act according to a set of rules and norms either by direct violence or by the implicit threat of violence. This is of course the classic understanding of 'monopoly of violence' or monopoly of coercion. Gramsci's goal was to understand how political power in modern liberal societies is distributed (Buttigieg, 2009) and the use of coercive power is not enough to explain this. It is in civil society that a more stable base for power is constructed on the basis of hegemony. (Buttigieg, 1995). Consequently Gramsci writes: “State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion” (Gramsci, 2006, p. 80).

One of the key issues in which we follow a more neo-Gramscian approach, is Gramsci's concern for class struggle which shapes his thoughts concerning the important role of the 'ruling classes', 'the subaltern', the 'domination' of the state and most notably the 'war of position' (Gramsci, 2006). The state for him refers to mechanisms of political power in government and civil society that are deeply connected with a corresponding economic base (Coutinho & Sette-Camara, 2012; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). In contemporary analyses this Gramscian formulation of the state is not bound to the idea of a 'class project' (Hall, 1986; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014), but can be related to different forms of social domination and hegemony, such as "gender, ethnicity, 'race', generation, religion, political alignment, or regional location" (Jessop, 2016, p. 59). Gramscian theory of hegemony can very well “[accept] social complexity as the very condition of political struggle and (...) [set] the basis for a democratic practice of politics, compatible with a plurality of historical subjects” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, pp. 105–106). Laclau and Mouffe argue that it is Gramsci's growing concern with the 'intellectual and moral' dimensions of hegemony that creates this room for expansion beyond 'class' (even though Gramsci himself in the end remained within the boundaries of the 'class project'): “It is in this movement, from the 'political' to the 'intellectual and moral' plane, that the decisive transition takes place towards a concept of hegemony beyond 'class alliances'” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, pp. 103–105). This is however only part of the analysis, since one of the key aspects in this theory of hegemony is the *fundamental role of institutions and organisations*, more than an abstract struggle of ideas: hegemony concerns the establishment of dominant ideology and institutions through leadership and consensus (Buttigieg, 1995, 2009). A good historical example of such institution building is discussed in Box 2: History of pillarisation in Belgium.

To be sure, hegemony should thus not be understood as a conspiracy or a preconceived strategy for social domination by a certain class or group, but as a set of existing social relations that are more beneficial to specific social actors than others. A social order is the outcome of the forces at play in society, of the dynamic between coercion and hegemony, that is not simply 'controlled' by a social class (Simon, 1991). These social groups then 'exercise' hegemonic power in the sense that through their participation in *certain institutions and organisations* they reproduce the existing social order. This is a crucial insight in Gramsci's writings: “Ideology is not identified with a 'system of ideas' or with the 'false

consciousness' of social agents; it is instead an organic and relational whole, embodied in institutions and apparatuses, which welds together a historical bloc around a number of basic articulatory principles" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, pp. 103–105). Thus, from Gramsci we take the concern for the hegemonic relation between government and civil society not as a concern for an abstract system of ideas but as a concern for the *concrete social processes in institutions, organisations, techniques, etc.* On the side of civil society, the institutions and organisations where this hegemonic process plays out are mainly the press, the media, schools, churches, trade unions, cultural associations, political parties, business associations, etc. (Coutinho & Sette-Camara, 2012). On the side of government, we are then concerned with the central and local government organisations such as parliament, councils, ministries, cabinets, departments, agencies, police, and other public institutions. The at times close relationships between individual actors and organisations from both 'sides' strengthens even more the importance of hegemonic analysis. While the primary focus of our research is the relationship between government and civil society, other social systems can also be important regarded as part of the state, most notably the economic system. Another important social sphere to consider is the legal system (note that Gramsci includes the courts on the side of 'political society' or government). We are thinking here for example of legal procedures against governmental policies or urban development projects, or more generally the role of the courts in the system of checks and balances. Analysis of governance should then focus on the nature of the relations between the different spheres of the state, both coercive and hegemonic. Governance of the educational system is for instance influenced through coercive government policy (e.g. legal age of attendance, curriculum), hegemonic consensus (e.g. learning of norms and values, sometimes conflicting) and even economic positions (e.g. reproducing inequalities). Labour unions are another example: In Belgium they are linked to the economic positions as representative organisations and play an important role in the public sphere, they take part in the labour policy process, they deliver unemployment benefits and as such thus also implement government policy.

This does not mean however that the dynamic between government and civil society is determined by a single ideological hegemonic force – although Gramsci's notion of the 'historical bloc' does imply it. While in Gramsci's view civil society is to be seen as the domain of hegemony, at the same time it is the place where possibilities for alternatives to hegemony can be formulated – often referred to as *counterhegemony* (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2016; Katz, 2006; Loopmans, 2008), although Gramsci himself does not use this term (Buttigieg, 2009; Gramsci, 2006). The idea of counterhegemony thus points to the role civil society plays in challenging hegemonic dominance and as such can form the basis for political and social change. However, we would argue that in light of our discussion so far it is analytically more fruitful to replace this idea of 'counterhegemony' for the idea of multiple *hegemonies*. This is more than a semantic change in the use of concepts, but refers to the role both government and civil society play in the hegemonic dynamic. Such an analysis makes use of more nuanced models that moves beyond 'government vs. civil society' narratives and instead focus on interactions in different social arenas or coalitions consisting of actors from different social spheres (both civil society and government). Good examples can be found in literature on urban governance where planning conflicts are often built on converging and conflicting imaginaries (Vanhellemont, 2016) or visions (Vermeulen, 2015) that are constructed in interactions between actors across governmental institutions, civil society and markets. We wish to emphasise that this construction of hegemonies is not exclusively tied to civil society – contrary to the classical Gramscian view. Governmental actors are not to be reduced to a single analytical narrative of enforcers of policy. Many governmental actors are active in civil society themselves (De Rynck & Verschuere, 2014) or take action inside their departments that does not always converge with official policy (Barnes, 2009; Lipsky, 2010; Prior & Barnes, 2011). Even when staying inside the domain of government one can see important differences between governmental institutions, as for example between urban and central governments – see discussions on issues such as climate change (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2005, 2013) of refugee policies (for instance the debate on 'sanctuary cities' – e.g. Bauder (2017)).

However, this makes it easy to forget that while hegemony is built on consensus the use of coercion is not absent (Davies, 2014a). In Gramscian terms: hegemony is never without its 'armour of coercion'. Examples of this can be found on the level of urban governance, with the use of coercive managerial procedures and norms in urban planning, despite collaborative rhetoric and techniques. Davies argues that local governments in the UK have a wide array of coercive techniques at their disposal that can result in an "administrative domination": "Depending on state-specific divisions of labour, these include juridical enforcement, policing, incarceration, school inspection and traffic and housing management (bailiffs, traffic wardens and rent collectors)." (2014b, p. 8).

To conclude, we take from Gramsci's theory the hegemonic integration of government and civil society through the construction of concrete institutions. This is a form of power that has the ability to stabilise the governance of the state; hegemonic institutions and ideologies create stability that mere coercive power could not achieve. However, we argue that this stability is not to be regarded as the expression of a single overarching hegemony, but as the socially situated temporary convergence of multiple hegemonies around social issues. Furthermore, the notion of multiple hegemonies is analytically more consistent in light of our understanding of contemporary 'decentred' society (3.1). We therefore argue that in order to analyse the relationship between government and civil society we need to bring into view which institutions are at play and how they are related to the hegemonic dynamics of the specific governance arrangement.

3.4.2 Governmentality

Already visible in the concept of 'hegemony' is the insight that certain ideas can be productive for maintaining a certain social order. With the notion of "passive revolution" Gramsci identifies how political questions can be transformed into technical and bureaucratic questions, disengaged from any political discussion (Gramsci, 2006). The notion that forms of knowledge (including accompanying methods and technologies) are connected with forms of power is more extensively explored by Michel Foucault (2008). In the third paragraph of this paper we have already stated how his notion of "governmentality" has inspired a large body of work concerning the relationship between government and civil society. As with Gramsci's notion of hegemony, power and knowledge in this line of thought are not linked through ideology, and they cannot be reduced to each other (Triantafillou, 2012). Governmentality is a useful notion for the discussion in this paper, because it focuses our attention to the myriad ways whereby modern society is characterised by '*governance through self-governance*'. Foucault approached governance in a broad sense as "the conduct of conduct" (2008), by which he referred to "a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons" (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991, p. 2). This notion sits very well with the idea of decentralised governance coordination inside the state (Marinetto, 2003b). Jessop even sees governance as always encompassing some form of governmentality (Jessop, 2016).

With this concept Foucault draws attention to the decentralised working of power in the state. It is a portmanteau of "government" and "rationality" that expresses the insight that governmentality concerns a modern form of power as well as a way of knowledge-construction. As a form of power, governmentality operates besides other forms of power such as sovereign power, disciplinary power, hegemonic power, etc. (Bevir, 2011, p. 457; Burchell et al., 1991; Foucault, 2008; Triantafillou, 2012). As an expression of knowledge-construction it highlights how "the technologies of government are dependent upon human-based knowledges (sociology, criminology, economics) and intellectual technologies such as social statistics, census studies, charts and so on. It is only by generating or attaining knowledge that governmental technologies are able to direct the conduct of individuals, groups and the population as a whole." (Marinetto, 2003b, p. 633). Some authors use this concept to speak of forms of *neoliberal governmentality* (2016; Triantafillou, 2012) as the way in which the self-governing

capacities of individuals (and civil society in general) are encouraged in modern society in such a way that it stimulates the larger neoliberal societal order. However, governmentality is not to be understood as a class project, since the power-knowledge coupling is not to be reduced to certain specific group or class interests (Triantafillou, 2012).

Again, we see here a form of power constitutive for the relation between government and civil society. Starting from the idea that government has limited reach as the central command-and-control centre of society, the question then becomes how any form of integration of society can take place. Besides hegemonic power (through leadership and consensus) and disciplinary or coercive power, Foucault points to a more diffused form of power, one that permeates civil society as well as government. Bell and Hindmoor refer to it as “governance through persuasion” (2009), but this would seem more fitted for the power of hegemonies. Instead, governmentality focuses on the use of knowledge and governing ‘techniques’ that are established as powerful institutions guiding much of social and political life. The key insight is that as governments ‘lose’ their central position, social actors are not guided through direct governmental intervention but through a variety of techniques that aim to ensure their conduct falls within the boundaries of the state. As we have illustrated in Box 3, “neoliberalism” literature uses the concepts of hegemony and governmentality to analyse how neoliberalism has permeated social and political life. Not only does neoliberalism concern specific policies and reforms, the production of capital, and the diffusion of ideas and ideology, but also certain type of self-observation and self-governance. Governmentality research thus show how self-governance is not just a question of making ‘free’ choices and autonomous decisions, but also that it is in many ways influenced by hegemonic beliefs and power dynamics.

3.4.2.1 Governmentality and functional differentiation

Triantafillou and Esmark have confronted the perspectives of governmentality and functional differentiation with each other (Esmark & Triantafillou, 2009), and show how both perspectives can supplement each other. They argue that while the governmentality approach focuses more on the evolution ‘self-governance’ as such, functional differentiation is more suited to observe the ways different programmes and mediums are combined. The evolution of governance from the perspective of functional differentiation can be seen in terms of how government (as organisation) operates more and more not only with the programmes, scripts and media used by the political function system, but also with those used by other function systems, such as the economy and science (see also Esmark (2009)). When combined however, these perspectives can offer insights into the workings of governance:

“(…) the introduction of HRM-techniques, seminars and the self-development of the modern employee can be described as strategically nursing and increasing the freedom of the employee as well as the coding of modern management in the medium of love and the appropriation of the programmes and discoursed of the family. The introduction of benchmarking, evidence-based policy, naming and shaming so central to current public governance can be described as normalising power beyond discipline, as well as copying and emulation of scientific mediums and routines by public authorities etc.” (Esmark & Triantafillou, 2009, p. 37)

This also means that in analysing governance arrangements we will have to reflect whether observed techniques and beliefs (e.g. competitiveness, performance measurement, or standards in public services provided by nonprofits) are produced by a government that uses programmes and mediums from science and economy (as proposed by the hypothesis of functional differentiation) or rather if these observations point to how actors in civil society and government ‘govern themselves’ (as can be observed through the lens of governmentality). The governmentality approach also works in studying how governmental actors and institutions are internally organised, as another study by Triantafillou

(2012) shows. Specifically focusing on “those who govern” (2012, p. 71) (public agencies, public managers and civil servants) Triantafillou also argues how specific techniques in government have gained wide influence, specifically *incentive systems, contracts, performance measurement and standards* (2012, p. 53): “they are not only significantly changing the ways in which civil servants are governed, they also – more or less directly – imply new ways of governing citizens and social groups.” (2012, p. 68). Not only are these techniques widely spread, the perspective of governmentality shows that they are not easy to ignore or escape. If one were to point out that standards and indicators don’t succeed in correctly measuring performance, this would “only serve to reinforce the quest for more and/or ‘better’ performance measuring and management.” (2012, p. 69). Underlying these techniques there is thus a general acceptance that some specific form of incentive, standard or measurement is necessary. Triantafillou argues that it is hard to identify a specific hegemonic way of governance *strategies*. There does however seem to be a more general hegemonic *belief* surrounding the governance debate, in Western European countries at the least: “How – by what means – can we stimulate the self-governing capacities of individuals, groups and public administrations?” (2012, p. 170).

4 | Conclusion: analysing governance arrangements

We have set out to develop a framework for analysis in order to understand *how the interaction between civil society and governments is formed by the institutions of specific governance arrangements, concerning the role of civil society in political work and civil service delivery.*

The relationship between government and civil society has been discussed in terms of three main concerns: developing a framework that captures the internal complexity of both domains as well as their interaction; providing an alternative to the hierarchy-market-network model of analysis; and understanding the dynamics of power in the construction of governance arrangements. In order to achieve this we propose a Gramscian inspired framework for analysis. The complexities we have outlined in the second paragraph are captured by this framework, given that we follow contemporary neo-Gramscian approaches that do not link hegemonic dynamics to specific 'classes'. Instead, we proposed a more nuanced model that looks at the multitude of actors on the side of both government and civil society without losing the perspective of their integration in the wider construction of the state. We have argued how 'networks' and 'markets' cannot be considered institutions in the same vein as 'bureaucracies' (6, 2015a), and propose a more 'agnostic' approach to governance institutions. Indeed, bureaucracies are still very much part of state organisation and should not be too easily considered as "displaced" by the mechanisms of exchange (markets) or the dynamics of complex ties (networks). The framework we propose instead focuses on the construction of governance arrangements in different social arenas or coalitions consisting of actors from different social positions. We believe that this framework gives a central position to power in the analysis. This not only concerns the coercive power that lies behind rules and norms, which of course should not be ignored. We also focus on how hegemonic beliefs, knowledge and techniques of self-governance are constructed by and have an impact on actors and institutions in both government and civil society.

The key issue that we will have to develop further is how this framework can be further operationalised in terms of the specific interactions between government and civil society. Our analysis needs to be able to bring into view the specific processes of power in the governance arrangement (hegemony, coercion, governmentality), and it has to be suited to capture the institutional complexity of the governance arrangements. Insights from institutional theory as proposed in recent work by Lowndes and Roberts (2013) offers insights that seem worth exploring further. An institutional approach offers insights into how constraints and limitations of possible actions (such as through different forms of power) are precisely the key to understanding *why* and *how* institutions work. In general, institutions are stable configurations of generalised expectations that constrain the possibilities of events (Baraldi, Corsi, & Esposito, 1997; Luhmann, 2013). It is precisely because possibilities are constrained that any communication or action can occur. If there were no constraints, the complexity of social events would be so great that it would be paralysing. Thus understood, institutions unburden social relations from constantly having to develop new ways of operating. The institution of "family", for example, bring with it certain 'expected expectations' around which all members can interact: mutual support, safety, solidarity, etc. This is precisely what makes institutions so powerful: they reduce complexity and make action possible. In order to understand how institutions function we must be able to analyse *how* these expectations are visible for the actors involved. We differ however from the somewhat more narrow take on power of Lowndes and Roberts. While they have a rich understanding of the institutional effect

of power, they relate power ultimately to the action of an (individual or collective) actor against another actor (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013, pp. 78–79). Thus, institutions are seen as enabling or constraining these actions, but are not considered as instances of power themselves. Regarding the earlier discussions of hegemonic power and governmentality, we argue that power of certain social actors is not only built on their actions against other actors. The diffusion of certain techniques and types of knowledge in themselves have constraining and enabling effects that affect some social groups more than others – in this sense it can be said that these groups ‘have’ a certain power, although it concerns a diffused set of events and occurrences. Building on the insights of Gramscian and Foucauldian literature we argue that institutions themselves already reflect the power relations of governance arrangements.

Our discussion thus ends somewhat open ended. Instead of proposing a fully worked out theory to continue our research, we have instead brought together different theories on governance and sought out encounters between theories that can mutually reinforce each other. In the following phases of our research we must now use build on these encounters to develop a conceptually consistent approach that can guide our understanding of governance arrangements.

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