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Rethinking network governance: new forms of analysis and the implications for IGR/MLG [1]

Michael Farrelly, Stephen Jeffares and Chris Skelcher

Abstract

Our position is that network governance can be understood as a communicative arena. Networks, then, are not defined by frequency of interactions between actors but by sharing of and contest between different clusters of ideas, theories and normative orientations (discourses) in relation to the specific context within which actors operate. A discourse comprises an ensemble of ideas, concepts and causal theories that give meaning to and reproduce ways of understanding the world (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Consequently, network governance can be understood as the inherently political process through which discourses are produced, reproduced and transformed. Democratic network governance thus becomes the study of the way in which the core challenges of democratic practice are addressed – how is legitimacy awarded, by what mechanisms are decisions reached, and how is accountability enabled. Three approaches to the discursive analysis of democracy in network governance are considered - argumentation analysis, inter-subjectivity, and critical discourse analysis – and their implications for the study of intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance (IGR/MLG) are discussed. Case examples are provided. We conclude that the value for the study of MLG/IGR is to complement existing forms of analysis by opening up the communicative and ideational aspects of interactions between levels of government and other actors.

Introduction

This chapter considers three approaches to the discursive analysis of democracy in network governance and the implications for the study of intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance (IGR/MLG). The focus is on the conceptual, theoretical and methodological aspects of recent developments in network governance, in particular what has been termed the second generation of network governance literature (Marcusson and Torfing 2007). This literature is particularly concerned with the democratic analysis of emergent institutions of interactive policy formulation, as well as some of the methodological issues that are involved. It has both an analytical and normative dimension, offering prescriptions for institutional

design especially in relation to the engagement of citizens and civil society actors in the policy process.

The concept of ‘network governance’ has been important in the analysis of multi-level governance in Europe and, to a more limited extent, inter-governmental relations in the US. In Europe, scholars have found the concept useful when confronted with a system of European governance that is not ordered as a spatial hierarchy; that is, governmental authority is not graded downwards from the highest spatial scale. ‘Network governance’ offers a way of understanding the interactions across supranational, national, regional and local tiers of government, and of explaining the public policy process in this partly integrated and still evolving entity. In contrast, the federal system in the US is a relatively stable spatial hierarchy of government and thus traditional approaches to the analysis of inter-governmental relations have not been challenged in the same way as in Europe. Consequently, ‘network governance’ has had a more limited impact, largely involving the analysis of public programme delivery and collaborative public management (e.g. Agranoff and McGuire 2003). Nevertheless, there have been some initial collaborations between European and US scholars within the research agenda of third generation network governance (e.g. Bogason and Musso 2006). These collaborations show that there is scope for the ideas of network governance to be applied more widely in a US context and potentially to contribute to the study of IGR.

One of the challenges for scholars is to push forward the research strategies and methods that can be used to analyse network governance. Existing approaches tend to draw on social network analysis, qualitative research, or hypothesis testing using quantitative data sets. Our study is exploring the potential for strategies based on different approaches to discourse analysis. In particular, we are interested in understanding what these different approaches can add to the study of network governance. This chapter presents an initial analysis from our work.

At the core of our approach is the conceptualisation of network governance as a communicative arena in which actors cooperate, contest, or are co-opted in a continual process of sense-making about the world they inhabit.[2] Sets of understandings constitute a ‘discourse’ – a relatively coherent cluster of ideas, causal connections, and interpretations that enable actors to negotiate their world. Large scale discourses, for example, include ‘the welfare state’ and ‘neo-liberalism’. Discourses, therefore, have both an interpretive and normative dimension. They assist actors to understand events, and provide a frame for reference for guiding action. This normative dimension is particularly important when we consider MLG and IGR, since it acts on the process of institutional design and adaptation.

The chapter starts by outlining the main features of network governance theory, and identifies the key characteristics of the third generation approach. It then reviews three approaches to discourse analysis – argumentation analysis, inter-subjectivity, and critical discourse analysis, in the light of our empirical research in European cities. The chapter suggests ways in which these approaches might contribute to the enhanced understanding of MLG/IGR in a contemporary European and US context.

Network governance: predominant understandings

Network governance offers a way of developing theoretical insights that do not privilege the formal institutions of government, the constitutional, legal and fiscal frameworks within which they operate, or the separation between state, market and civil society. In other words, it moves beyond the 'old' institutionalism of classic public administration and into a world populated by actors who interact across and around the formal structures of representative government (Klijn and Skelcher 2007)

Network governance contains a number of precepts (Stoker 1998). First, public policy is developed, determined and delivered through structured sets of relationships that transcend the formal institutions of representative government. Legislatures, political executives, and public bureaucracies are supplemented by institutionalised relationships through which civil society and business engage in the process of public policy making and implementation. Second, the actors involved in a governance network are not involved in a hierarchical relationship with each other, but are autonomous or at least quasi autonomous. Third, the autonomous property of actors and the absence of hierarchical authority means that policy is made interactively, through bargaining and negotiation rather than the exercise of centralised authority.

A number of these characteristics are present in the IGR and MLG literature. For example, IGR recognises the role of bargaining and negotiation in the resolution of jurisdictional issues, as in the case of the problems of fiscal federalism or the implementation of federal programmes. Similarly, MLG notes the key role of networks in the development and implementation of European public policy. For example, well-established policy networks operate in the field of agricultural policy and ideas about epistemic communities (another form of network) have influenced the development of the open method of coordination. However, the codified theoretical position of network governance, outlined above, means that it forms a distinct framework despite some overlaps with IGR and MLG.

Network governance also contains a normative strand concerned with institutional design for democratic strengthening. This can be divided into two elements. First, there is an active debate about the ways in which networks can be effectively subject to regulation by political principals. Secondly there is a debate about the potential for the development of deliberative and participative democracy in the context of network governance.

The theoretical insights, however, are diverse. They arise from the (US) 'iron triangles' and (UK) policy networks literature on the structured forms of interest group intermediation; networks as patterns of inter-personal relationships in which interdependency and trust are posited as key explanatory variables (especially in some of the Dutch and US literature); the normative literature on participative and deliberative democracy in which networks are proposed as instruments through which traditional institutions of representative democracy can be supplemented or transformed; and (reflecting an older literature) a view that the study of networks offers a way of understanding how political elites and/or public bureaucrats maintain or increase their power in the face of greater public involvement. These all have scope for enhancing the study of IGR/MLG.

The use of the concept of ‘network’ and its adjectival attachment to ‘governance’ has a number of limitations. These include: the lack of conceptual precision in the use of ‘network’ and in defining its relationship to the concept of ‘governance’; weaknesses in the literature regarding whether ‘network’ is being used as an analytical device or is regarded as an empirical reality; methodological problems in attributing explanatory variables to links established through network analysis; the normative and self-referential nature of some of the network governance literature; the absence of a critical position in the literature, for example the lack of challenge to the assumption that networks arise from interdependency and failing to give sufficient attention to state authority (hierarchy) in the widely adopted position of ‘from government to governance’.

Network, governance and democracy: a discourse perspective

Our position is that network governance can be understood as a communicative arena. Networks, then, are not defined by frequency of interactions between actors but by sharing of and contest between different clusters of ideas, theories and normative orientations (discourses) in relation to the specific context within which actors operate. A discourse comprises an ensemble of ideas, concepts and causal theories that give meaning to and reproduce ways of understanding the world (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). For Schmidt and Radaelli:

‘Discourse is fundamental both in giving shape to new institutional structures as a set of ideas about new rules, values and practices, and as a resource used by entrepreneurial actors to produce and legitimate those ideas, as a process of interaction focused on policy formulation and communication’ (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004: 192).

Consequently, network governance can be understood as the inherently political process through which discourses are produced, reproduced and transformed. Democratic network governance thus becomes the study of the way in which the core challenges of democratic practice are addressed – how is legitimacy awarded, by what mechanisms are decisions reached, and how is accountability enabled.

Our interest is in the way in which discourses supply and limit the possibilities open to actors in the design of institutions for public governance, and specifically beyond representative government in the world of quasi-governmental agencies, public-private partnerships or various forms, policy networks, and new deliberative spaces where civil society and government interact. Institutional design structures the access of actors to the process of determining the allocation of public (and, to some extent, private) resources. Consequently, the design process is one where we expect to see contestation between discourses. Thus, in our earlier work on multi-actor partnerships in England, we identified three sub-discourses of ‘partnership’ each having a different normative orientation towards institutional design and the engagement of non-governmental actors (Skelcher, Mathur and Smith 2005).

This contestation is brought to bear on new forms of governance through the conceptions, preferences and underlying discourses available to the actors who are

involved in institutional change. Our research aims to access this subjective world in order to illuminate and critically examine the way in which different discourses of democracy shape the day-to-day practices of governance. Of course, discourses cannot simply be 'read off' the data taken from actors because they are complex and nuanced. Our case studies have begun to throw-up some apparent contradictions in understandings of democratic practice for which we argue a concept such as democratic milieu is needed if we are to resolve these contradictions analytically.

For example, in Denmark we were told by a public manager responsible for neighbourhood revitalisation that democracy was part of the Danish identity, and was important to any understanding of the governance of social housing:

.... the social housing sector is very much fond of it [democracy]. And it [democracy] is a kind of it is a part of the identity that we are extremely democratic. And there are different levels in the democracy but it is, from my point of view it's extremely bottom [up] democracy. Yeah. I think that this will be the frame for understanding social housing. (C1)

In contrast, a social housing manager in Birmingham showed complete puzzlement when asked about democracy in the governance of this sector:

Interviewer: ...Does democracy come into this way of doing this [neighbourhood revitalisation]?

Respondant: Uh? [*puzzled look on respondent's face and snigger*] Democracy? (B1)

For this respondent, democracy is not a concept that comes to the forefront when talking about the process of undertaking neighbourhood regeneration.

The contrast cannot be taken as evidence of weaker democracy in England than in Denmark. However it does provide a way of opening up questions about the sets of ideas that structure the way in which public managers go about their job. We do need to take contrasts and similarities, contradictions and points of general agreement seriously, and begin to conceptualise them and find ways of understanding them empirically.

Methodological considerations

This chapter reports on the interpretive leg of our research design, which aims to provide a means of gaining access to knowledge about the meanings of democracy that are integral to the design and operation of governmental systems. The wider research design also utilises methodologies to undertake a more objective measure of the democratic features of networks and their institutions (Mathur and Skelcher 2007). For example in political science interpretative epistemologies are attracting mainstream attention (e.g. Bevir and Rhodes 2003, Fischer and Forester 1993, Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Yanow 1996). However there are often theoretical, methodological or normative differences between these approaches. Thus, in this chapter we are interested in what we can learn from a number of these approaches. The three

approaches we examine are argumentative analysis (e.g. Hajer 1995), intersubjectivity analysis (e.g. Dryzek and Berejikian 1993), and genre analysis (e.g. Fairclough 2003).

The empirical data comes from fieldwork in three European cities – Birmingham, Copenhagen and Rotterdam - and two policy areas – integration of new migrants (a new policy challenge) and neighbourhood revitalisation (a longstanding policy challenge). We took our instructions for approaches to research design and coding from the methodologies of the three approaches to discourse analysis in which we are interested. We will now explore each in turn, briefly introducing each approach, identifying their origins and previous applications, and showing a worked example from the analysis from our fieldwork. The chapter concludes with a critical discussion of each approach and prospects for further application to research.

Three modes of discourse analysis

Analysis of argumentation

The analysis of argumentation draws on the work of such scholars as Frank Fischer, Maarten Hajer, Robert Hopp, and Patsy Healey. For Fischer and Forester (1993), the argumentative analysis offers three advancements:

1. On a practical level it allows for a closer analysis of ‘communicative and rhetorical strategies’ used by policy actors in framing problems and opinions
2. It reveals theoretically the importance of how problems are formulated, how their arguments ‘express or resist broader relations of power and belief’
3. It reveals both the micro politics of agenda setting and claim making and the macropolitics of analysts’ participation in larger discourses.

One of the most widely recognised approaches to argumentative policy analysis can be found in the past work of Maarten Hajer (1995, 2003). For Hajer, public policy is made through argumentation of discourse-coalitions. These are actors from a broad range of agencies held together by a common appeal to a set of story-lines. However, it is crucial not only to consider the words and images expressed by a respondent but also to assess the positions being criticised, hence the analysis of argumentation (Hajer 1995: 53). He argues that when policy actors engage in debate about problems and policies they do so with only a partial understanding of a phenomenon that is complex and fragmented. Story-lines function to reduce complexity of the problem in question producing ‘problem closure’, their ritual character give a ‘permanence to the debate’ as they become tropes and figures of speech; furthermore story-lines allow actors to expand their understand beyond the confines of ‘experts’ thereby allowing them to place themselves within the debate (Hajer 1995: 63). It is an affinity to these story-lines that coheres actors into discourse coalitions. Discourse coalitions differ from political coalitions in that they are founded on story-lines rather than fixed interests or belief systems (e.g. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith). Because of this they can be very broad and actors can be members of a number of coalitions depending on the circumstances.

The argumentative discourse approach is primarily focused on both the stable, the ritualized, the institutionalised and the shared that indicates the achievement of hegemony and also the fracture of these meanings (Hajer 1995: 60). For both hegemony and fracture, the analyst will be interested in the documents, transcripts of speech, media articles, and so on. This analysis captures cliché, sayings, metaphoric language, and particularly where these metaphors are shared or repeated. This repetition will flag up the ritual story-lines that in turn are the result of a process of closure.

Discursive closure is where complexity, doubts, open ended debates have been 'closed' and condensed into an appealing and 'catchy' one-liner or visual representation. For Hajer and others, this is an essential part in the process of governing where actors seek to achieve discursive hegemony. Hegemony for Hajer is achieved when the discourse achieves both structuration and institutionalization: structuration is when actors draw on the ideas of a discourse in their argumentation and institutionalisation is when ideas of the discourse are translated into institutional arrangements or concrete policies (Hajer 1995: 60-61).

We interviewed approximately 100 policy actors in our three case study cities between April and September 2007. All of the interviews were professionally transcribed and coded using qualitative software. The kind of story-lines we found in our research varied in their scope. For example something like "*in a political sense Copenhagen is red*" (C3), or that Copenhagen needs to follow the British lead of "*get the old Bobby [police officer] back on the streets like you [in England] have. Here, the police are in their cars*" (C9). These are taken-for-granted story-lines where the respondent, who works and lives in one of our cities, can concisely and credibly articulate their view of a particular area of policy. However, for the purposes of this chapter, we are interested in how story-lines and the discourse coalitions that foster such story-lines play a roll in framing democratic norms around legitimacy, accountability and consent.

One example is the integration council, an elected board of migrants, decedents of migrants and social partners with the role of informing and being consulted by Copenhagen City Council in their migrant integration policy. Here we are interested in how employing Hajer's categories can inform our understanding of democratic discourses in play, in this instance in Copenhagen. Our interviews show there are at least two clearly definable *discourse-coalitions* around the integration council. Discourse-coalitions, according to Hajer, have three elements, they consist of a set of story-lines, a set of actors who utter those story-lines and the practices that result (table 1).

This argumentative analysis has alerted us to the narratives, metaphors and story-lines policy actors reproduce in documents and speech. Through careful coding of texts it is possible to map how these story-lines are used and from this assume coalitions of meaning. Further analysis could then explore how these discourse coalitions provide the conditions for democratic principles and practices to flourish or flounder.

----- table 1 about here -----

Inter-subjectivity analysis

This form of analysis concerns the analysis of inter-subjectivity, the meanings shared by policy actors. We employ Q-methodology. It is a qualitative approach with a quantitative stage. Q methodology is becoming an increasingly recognised form of analysis for public policy and administration, for example to explore public service motivation (Brewer et al 2000); sustainability (Barry and Proops 1999); climate change (Dayton 2000); and perspectives on forestry management (Steelman and Maguire 1999). Of particular relevance to our work is its application to discourses of democracy amongst US citizens (Dryzek and Berijikian 1993), citizens in post-socialist countries (Dryzek and Holmes 2002), and democracy and social justice (Salazar and Alper 2002).

There are six stages to conducting a Q study. First, as with the argumentative analysis approach it involves careful understanding of the volume of debate around a particular issue, what it refers to as the 'concourse'. The concourse can be scoped through interviews (Steelman and Maguire 1999), discussion groups (Dryzek and Holmes 2002), or the analysis of published and media texts (Dryzek and Berijikian 1993). Second, the concourse is organised as a series of statements. This could number into the hundreds. The third step is then to narrow these down to a manageable number of between 30 and 100, but so that this sampling remains representative of the diversity of opinion within the concourse. The fourth step is to ask a sample population (P sample) to sort these statements into order, usually in terms of a Likert scale. Individuals responses are then analysed through a factor analysis that enables the researcher to identify the way in which particular statement combinations are clustered. Finally, the statements included in each cluster are interpreted by the researcher as a discourse, which is then further refined through a workshop with respondents.

We developed our concourse from interview transcripts that we held and from the literature on governance networks. Following suggestion from Dryzek and Berejikian we noted statements of opinion about democracy that were definitions, prescriptions, attempts at fact or opinions. This gave us around 250 statements. We then drew up a 3x3 sampling grid to sort statements by discursive qualities of *relationships* – assumptions about natural relationships between entities, *agency*, referring to degrees of agency and *motivation*, clues to agents' underlying motivation, e.g. self-interest. The three kinds of argumentative claims regarded the *definition* of an entity, claim of *fact/opinion*, and *prescription* or normative claim. All cells were populated. We stripped out duplicates leaving four in each cell. This left us with q sample of 36 statements. We then held workshops in each city to discuss the sample of statements and to agree terminology (all statements were in English). This led to some minor revisions of statement wording.

The survey instrument was web-enabled. Participants were e-mailed an invitation to participate, and a web link. This took them to a computer programme 'FlashQ' (Hackert and Braehler 2007) that allowed participants to sort the statements like a game of solitaire on their computers. The P sample for the pilot study was 42 public managers from Birmingham and Rotterdam who were currently or had previously worked in governance networks. In addition to the sort, each respondent was asked seven further questions about why they had chosen their most and least favourable

statements, age, gender, location, occupation, and average time spent working in networks.

For this initial analysis, we ran separate analysis for each group, from the Netherlands and England. The factor analysis, using Principal Components Analysis and a varimax rotation, indicated four significant factors in each case. It showed which actors loaded significantly on each, how each statement is scored on each factor and what statements are distinguishable. The further information provided by each of the participants and also interviews with public managers in the Netherlands and England further fleshed out our interpretation of each factor.

The factors can be represented in a number of ways. For brevity we have paraphrased the factors into evaluative and normative opinions based on the factor analysis and data from additional questions in the instrument. The four factors identified from then pilot study using English managers are:

English Factor 1: Network as a new democratic opportunity

This factor assumes networks to have a relatively high degree of autonomy. They are a forum for discussion, a means to involve and engage a broad array of governance actors. As a result, they are recognised a rich and legitimate member of the governing community. Because of this, managers think they should be visible and all stakeholders should be involved to maintain a rich dialogue. The absence of conflict and emphasis on dialogue and communication shows aspirations for rational communication.

English Factor 2: Networks as new bureaucracies

This factor endorses the orthodoxy that partnerships and networks are now an established mode of governance in the England. However, it also highlights the extent to which such networks and partnerships are controlled by government. In addition, they mirror traditional bureaucracies as following government diktat, slow, bureaucratic and under-resourced. They are also political spaces and with more often than not a lack of trust between actors. However this factor does not advocate a repeal of these partnerships. The clearest message is that representative democracy should remain the primary way to make decisions.

English Factor 3: Networks should be anchored in representative democracy

For this third factor tends to regard networks as places of conflict between a relatively self-selecting but open membership. This factor acknowledges the role of networks in contributing to addressing policy challenges and sees them as enhancing rather than threatening government. However as with factor 2, the representative democratic model should remain as the main way of making decisions. Therefore, networks should be involving politicians in key roles. Election takes precedence over selection.

English Factor 4: Networks are self-legitimising, and follow the failure of normal politics

This factor sees both the value of networks as democratic spaces and the insignificance of politicians as having any particular privileged status over other governance actors. Networks are opening up the process of decision

making. With weak mandates, politicians can not be seen to reflect the will of the people. They cannot be informed on every issue. Networks do not rely on politicians to achieve a democratic legitimacy. Network, although exclusionary, can be self-legitimising. Therefore networks should not see the services of politicians to be 'democratic' however they should pursue mechanisms to be more inclusive.

In the Netherlands pilot we also identify four factors:

Dutch factor 1: Networks are democracy in transition and this change is long overdue

Networks involve managers being accountable to new sources. They involve opening up new avenues of influence for the marginalised. They involve conflict. They are developing new sources of democracy. However, networks are no threat to local government. Like traditional forms of governance networks are bureaucratic but retain a degree of autonomy from government. This factor argues we should move beyond the traditional ideas that representative democracy has to be the main way of making decisions or that in order to be democratic, networks should include politicians, for it is the elected that are more likely to distort rather than accurately represent the views of citizens.

Dutch factor 2: Networks are complementary to the primacy of representative democracy in a complex age

We live in a complex society where politicians lack the time and knowledge to understand all of the issues. Therefore networks offer a means to address this complexity. As a result politicians do not bring legitimacy to networks, networks can create their own. Unlike hierarchies there are few rules. In networks it is trust rather than rules that holds networks together. They are spaces where new forms of democracy can emerge. They are providing spaces where people can influence politics. They are political rather than managerial spaces. Conflict is inevitable, but can also challenge taken-for-granted perspectives and enable actors to think 'outside of the box'. Networks do not threaten representative systems. Proving networks remain flexible and open, they offer a means to achieve their goals in this complex world.

Dutch factor 3: Networks are transitional and communicative channels

They are communicative spaces, where members can share opinions. Rather than networks posing a threat, they offer opportunities to local government. However representative democracy should not necessarily be the primary mode of making decisions and networks are developing new forms of democracy for decision making. In doing so they retain a degree of autonomy from government. Networks can never be accused of being closed or unaccountable because they are by their very nature open modes. The way they operate and reach decisions is important to the public. Therefore they should strive to be transparent, participative, and inclusive and should encourage dialogue between members. Steps should be taken to ensure stronger members of the network do not dominate the weak.

Dutch factor 4: Networks are instrumental for managers, but should also be politically anchored

As with the previous two factors, trust is necessary to achieve success in networks. They allow managers to manage. As for politicians, they play an important role within, or close to, networks as representatives of the people and bringing democratic legitimacy. The expectations are often unclear and the process often conflictual. In response, networks should be flexible and should include strong members who will achieve results. However it should be politicians rather than the networks themselves that should set the overall political goals.

Although there are notable similarities between factors in the two contexts, they are also usefully different. The quantitative analysis reveals some factors which are familiar and perhaps expected, but importantly, others that are less so. However it is important to remember that these factors are embryonic discourses and require further interpretative analysis.

The Q analysis also gives a clear idea of which respondents load onto each factor and in what proportion. However what it also reveals is although some load strongly on only one factor, others load on 2 or more. To put it in Hajer's terms, actors can buy into the storylines of more than one discourse coalition.

Genre analysis

Our third form of analysis, *genre analysis*, is drawn from Critical Discourse Analysis (hereon, CDA). CDA engages with the relation between language and power and provides analytical and theoretical frameworks for discourse as distinguishable element of social practices (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 16). It combines a close analysis of discourse drawn from actual 'text' with analysis of the relationship between the text and the social practice in which it is produced, circulated and received: how it is shaped by and affects the wider practice. Much of CDA is concerned with uncovering the potential ideological work of discourse and its part in establishing or reproducing power asymmetries in societies. Discourse, in CDA, is seen then as affective of social outcomes and as being shaped by social practices.

Critical discourse analysts argue that important details about social practices can be discovered through close analysis of discourse using texts, but that discourse is inexhaustible to analysis - there is always more that could be analysed. It is important, therefore, to work with a specific analytical framework tailored to the problem under investigation. This means that there is no single CDA framework that can be applied universally, but a set of analytical techniques and tools and concepts available to apply to social problems. These different approaches to CDA reflect differing emphases on analytical techniques and ontological assumptions (Wodak and Chilton 2005).

The version of CDA employed in this chapter is based on the work of Fairclough (2003) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). It argues that real entities, such as discourse, are emergent from other entities or combinations of entities. So discourse is emergent from psychological, social, biological and physical structures. This means that the pre-existent properties of these structures constrain and enable

discourse and its causative powers - discourse does not override any of these structures but takes its properties from the possibilities they give. In understanding this we can see that CDA takes discourse to be relatively constrained in its possibilities. We can also see that social practices are made up of other structural elements besides discourse, so that to deepen understanding of a social practice these other elements need to be taken into account.

The analytical implication is that significance cannot be simply read off a text, but careful analytical work on the context of discourse has to be brought into analysis, in this case these would include the structures of democracy, the policy field and the democratic traditions. In becoming a real entity discourse is not then reducible to those structures from which it emerges, so it is not enough to study only the social, psychological, biological and physical structures as though they determine what discourse will be - discourse is not a reflection of these realities, but becomes a causal entity of itself.

This is why it is important to pay attention to discourse, to understand what effect it is potentially having, and why its status as one element in a practice gives rise to caution in making claims over what one finds in analysis: if a text says something is the case this does not mean that it is the case.

In CDA, though we can see that government as an institution emerged from structures including discourse, it is not reducible to discourse once formed: we cannot say that government is a discourse. For two reasons: that discourse was not the only element in its emergence and that once formed it is not reducible to its precursors taking on causal properties of its own. This means that analytically, in CDA, discourse is distinguishable as a causally effective part of ongoing practices from historically emergent structures.

In our research this means we can distinguish the institutions and their configuration in different policy fields and see them as forming the context for current action, action which is the basis for democratic practice and which includes, as part of the wider practice of policy or governance, a discursive aspect. We can then begin to analyse the discursive aspect and how it is currently shaping practice. In theory this would include potential ideological work of discourse, and the reproduction or transformation of power asymmetries.

One method of analysis employed in CDA is genre analysis. The elements of discourse include ways of *representing* the world (or aspects of it), ways of *acting* in the world, and ways of *being* in the world. The second of these elements – ways of acting in the world – are conceptualised in CDA as genres: ‘the specifically discursive aspect of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events’ (Fairclough, 2003: 67). For CDA: ‘genres are important in sustaining the institutional structure of contemporary society – structural relations between (local) government, business, universities, the media etc.’ (Fairclough, 2003: 32). Genres can form ‘chains’:

These are different genres which are regularly linked together, involving systematic transformations from genre to genre. Genre chains contribute to the possibility of actions which transcend differences in space and time, linking together social events and social practices, different countries, and

different times, facilitating the enhanced capacity for ‘action at a distance’...
(Fairclough, 2003: 31)

This conceptualisation can usefully be put to work in understanding links between both national (and international) context with local instantiations of democratic practice and in linking democratic practice within networks of practice around integration and regeneration policy which include moves away from state provision. Genre chains give us a means of analysing these important structuring links and their comparison across cases and cities.

In the example given here we analyse a link in the chain of genres – the news letter produced by the regeneration company in our case study. Importantly, the theory of genre in CDA suggests that a feature of genre is its part in social change: for us, change in systems of governance and the place of democracy in that process of change. The theory suggests that contemporary social change happens, in part, through the hybridisation of genres within a social practice. That is that new genres are formed through the mixing of genres from previous practices or from other practices altogether:

Analysis of any discourse in contemporary societies with their complex intersections of different forms and types of discourse should include an ‘interdiscursive’ analysis of how different discursive types are mixed together. The claim is that such hybridity is an irreducible characteristic of complex modern discourse... (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 49)

In a situation of ongoing social change which includes a change in systems of governance that have a democratic imperative, actors are faced with making a change without a template for how to enact democracy in the process of change. There are ways of doing things which actors may know about from the past, and there may be new possibilities for enacting democracy. If social change is seen from the point of view of genre, one way in which change can be effected in is through the mixing of genres.

To illustrate this approach, we take the example of the Midland Heart newsletter, published by a social housing organisation (Midland Heart) engaged in the regeneration of a district in Birmingham in partnership with local residents’ organisations, the city council and others. Midland Heart produces and distributes a newsletter to each residential address in the area. The news letter is entitled ‘Closer Look’, it is printed in colour on satin-finish A4 paper and has a mix of articles in column form, photographs, graphics and logos. The analysis will address the activity-type enacted in the news letter, the attempted structuring of social relations through production and distribution of the news letter, and finally the implication of the communication technology engaged in this production and distribution.

First, genre can be analysed for ‘activity’ (Fairclough, 2003: 70). Production and distribution of the news letter does several things in relation to governance of this regeneration scheme and for the potential for democracy. The leaflet primarily does two things: it gives information about Midland Heart activity in the area and it promotes the ‘brand’ of Midland Heart as an organisation. Both activities are distinguishable from democracy, but both can be seen in relation to democracy. First,

information giving could be seen as being essential to democracy – how could people make decisions about their lives if they do not know what is happening around them? The sentiment behind this question is a powerful one in favour of seeing information giving as inherent to democracy. But information can be given in non-democratic settings and democratic settings can operate in ignorance. Conceptually the two are distinguishable: democracy on the one hand, information giving on the other.

Yet the information is one-way, selective and limited in scope. Information can be given, as seems to be the case here, as part of a legitimisation strategy for the activities of the Midland Heart organisation. If we look at what is being done thematically – at what grammatical themes we find, they are: closer look; cleaner safer and better; the news letter; the project; Midland Heart; this news letter. The starting point for the information, the taken for granted themes, are the organisation and its new tool. The promotion of Midland Heart itself is clearly a major part of what is being done here.

What might be the reasons for this promotional strand of the activity? One possibility is that in order to be in a position to deliver decent project outcomes, Midland Heart needs the support and acceptance of the residents for its activities. However, the residents do not have any power of veto over plans. Another possibility is that Midland Heart need to show other organisations what it is that they are doing – including keeping the residents informed – in order to continue with their activities. Midland Heart does indeed need the support of other organisations. In either case, or combination, the simple giving of information by Midland Heart and promotion of Midland Heart do not boost democratic practices of themselves. An alternative might have been for the same money to be given freely to a community run information sheet, written and run by residents.

The second strand of analysis focuses on what the news letter does in structuring social relations. Genre can be analysed in terms of social hierarchy and social distance (Fairclough, 2003: 75). The communication is between an organisation and either individuals or other organisations. As an organisation facing individuals (many of whom are also tenants) this is a relation of social hierarchy with Midland Heart taking up the more powerful position. The social distance is also reinforced with Midland Heart being the ones with the information and presenting it to its audience. The news letter potentially alters social relations by extending the influence of Midland Heart beyond that between it and its tenants to all residents. Does it extend a democratic relation? An immediate answer would be: no, the residents do not ultimately have access to an equivalent genre through which they can come to collective decisions over Midland Heart activity. Legitimacy of Midland Heart, though, might be increased through the use of the news letter, a legitimisation based on juxtaposition and normalisation of Midland Heart in the neighbourhood as a regeneration intervention organisation.

Finally, the resources employed in production and distribution of the News Letter reinforce the relative power of Midland Heart vis-à-vis the residents of this area. The communication technology is one-way and mediated, which means there is an unequal flow of information; an unequal access to the means by which such a leaflet can be produced and distributed; an unequal selection of topics; an unequal representation of points of view; the newsletter is non-dialogic

The news letter is one link in a chain of genres linking the social events of governance of a regeneration scheme. It is a response to change that hybridises genres of promotion, with information giving report. We can begin to understand that in Birmingham a response to networked governance is partly the processing of information in a particular way, but also partly in establishing and maintaining a visible presence amongst certain constituents, to raise the profile of Midland Heart beyond its tenant base.

Conclusion

This chapter outlines three approaches to discourse analysis and illustrates how they can be used to gain insights into the sets of ideas and causal theories that inform the way in which actors engage with democracy under conditions of network governance. Argumentation analysis helps us to identify the main storylines deployed by actors in relation to the development of a new institution to enhance democratic involvement by migrants and their descendents. It provides a way of establishing how coalitions of actors are held together through common narratives, based on underlying ideas and theories. It also enables us to isolate contesting storylines within the network concerned with integration of migrants. Intersubjectivity analysis using Q methodology provides a means for discerning clusters of ideas held by actors, and thus isolating competing discourses. Further interaction with respondents enables the normative institutional consequences of these discourses to be established. Finally, critical discourse analysis provides the researcher with a method for investigating the way in which sets of ideas and theories are contained in ways of acting on the world.

----- Table 2 about here -----

The empirical research on which the illustrations are based draw from research into democratic aspects of network governance. Thus, there is the potential to translate these methods into analysis of MLG and IGR. The value for the study of MLG/IGR is to complement existing forms of analysis by opening up the communicative and ideational aspects of interactions between levels of government and other actors. For example, it can help to illuminate the different ways in which actors at different levels in a system of governance frame the world in which they operate. Just as the actors in Rotterdam and Birmingham saw the relationships of democracy to network governance differently, so we might expect differences between tiers of government. The significance of incorporating this communicative element into an analysis is that it helps us to explain why particular institutional arrangements may or may not enable effective policy implementation or negotiation over policy priorities – as the two discourse coalitions contesting the future of Copenhagen’s integration council illustrate. And it also encourages a normative analysis of existing practices, a focus – as in the Midland Heart newsletter – on the way in which this genre embodies one set of power relations and occludes other possibilities.

Our contention, then, is that the study of MLG/IGR can be enhanced through a consideration of the communicative and ideational world that actors inhabit. The potential and limitations of policy processes in multi-level systems is not just a matter of economically-motivated behaviour, nor of the pursuit of political advantage, but is also shaped by the way in which possibilities for action are enabled and constrained

through the power of ideas and their relationship to sets of theories that frame the way actors understand the world around them.

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Notes

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2. We use the term 'communicative' in its literal rather than Habermasian sense.

Table 1: Discourses and discourse coalitions around the Integration Council in Copenhagen

Discourse coalition	Story-line	Actors	Practices (normative implications for institutional design)
Representative government should have primacy	The integration council migrant members are inexperienced and often ill-informed. They do not understand the complexity of the task of integration. Although they mean well the cohesion of the group is often precarious, with members regularly leaving. Despite being elected, they lack legitimacy because of the 13% turnout of eligible immigrant voters. Rather than being proactive, they are reactive and preoccupied with a narrow set of issues – namely anti-discrimination. Although they have been granted representative places on other bodies, their attendance at meetings sporadic and many have since left the council. The integration councils as a body is broken and perhaps beyond repair.	Some descendents of migrants; some city councillors; some city council officials	This institutional experiment in the engagement of affected publics should be disbanded, and the locus of decision making should be returned to representative government.
Integration councils is an innovative design to extend democracy	The integration council is an innovative form of governance. It is democratically elected by the people it represents. It provides a democratic kindergarten for those normally excluded from decision making to learn about the Danish system and culture of democracy. It provides a direct way for Copenhagen City Council to consult its migrant population in the development of integration policies. It has been reactive, however. It does have the potential and will to become a proactive think tank. Its status is above other voluntary and community organisations, as it has legitimacy from its election. The low turnout was because it was the first election of its kind.	Some members of the integration council; those officials responsible for supporting integration councils locally and nationally; politicians on the Left.	The city council should involve the integration council at an earlier stage in the policy making process.

Table 2: Summary of three modes of discourse analysis

Form of discourse analysis	Method
Argumentative analysis	Discourses are identified through use of metaphor and crisp generative statements which mark out for analysts what different story-lines are in play and for whom. Analysis of storylines in relation to actors enables identification of discourse coalitions
Inter-subjectivity analysis	Discourses are identified as a result of interpretation of results of factor analysis of respondents' preferences in relation to the framing of a debates, and further refined through interaction with sample
Critical discourse analysis (genre analysis)	Analysis of genre – ways of acting in the world – offers the researcher a means of exploring the taken for granted assumptions in such actions.