

## Governance network as a frame for inter-demoi participation and deliberation

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# CENTER FOR DEMOKRATISK NETVÆRKSSTYRING

## WORKING PAPER SERIES

### GOVERNANCE NETWORK AS A FRAME FOR INTER-DEMOI PARTICIPATION AND DELIBERATION

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## Introduction

Liberal theories of democracy share the view that political participation and deliberation is important because it contributes to the construction of a strong demos through the institutionalization of a tight public control with the authorities (Bentham, 1776/1948; Mill, 1820/1937; Dahl, 1989) and/or a strong sense of communality among the citizens that constitutes them as a People (Stuart Mill, 1861/1946; Barber, 1984; Macpherson, 1977; Pateman, 1970). However, liberal theories of democracy have neglected to consider the possible role of participation and deliberation in enhancing democratic control and a sense of communality interaction between demoi. This neglect is becoming still more evident due to the current changes in the way advanced liberal democracies are governed. The *age of nation state hegemony* that has for the last 250 years been the imaginary point of departure for liberal theories of democracy is over and we are approaching an *age of pluricentrism* (Kersbergen and Waarden, 2004) in which processes of societal governance more often than not involves more than one demos. This transition from nation state hegemony to pluricentric governance calls for the development of new theories of democracy, which seek answers to the question of how inter-demos governance can be democratically regulated.

In recent years, much attention has been given to the role that networks play and might play in the provision of efficient and effective inter-organizational governance (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997; Rhodes, 1997; Jessop, 1998; Goldsmith and Eggers, 2002; Kettl, 2002; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007). Less attention has been directed towards the problems and potentials of networks as a means to enhance democratic governance. The aim of this article is to discuss and analyze *to what extent and how governance networks can function as a means to facilitate democratic inter-demos participation and deliberation*. The first step in this endeavor is to show how liberal theories of democracy have tended to focus on intra-demos participation and deliberation, while giving limited attention to the democratic quality of the interplay between demoi. Then, follow a description of the surging age of pluricentric governance in which advanced liberal democracies are turning into pluricentric political systems of governance, where governance networks play a central role as a medium for vertical and horizontal coordination between multiple units of governance. Next step is to consider the democratic implications of this transition from nation state hegemony to pluricentric governance from the perspective of traditional liberal theories of democracy. Finally, I point to how governance networks, seen from the perspective of a new emerging body of theories of democracy can contribute to not merely rescuing but actually enhancing democracy in the age of pluricentric governance by providing a framework for democratic participation and deliberation between demoi.

## **Participation and deliberation in liberal theories of democracy**

Liberal theories of democracy, that is theories which seek to deal with the tension between collective decision making and individual liberty (Holden, 1993: 23ff; Heywood, 2002: 30), can be divided into two groups: protective and developmental theories of democracy (Heywood. 2002: 73-6; Held, 1987: Ch. 2 & 3). Both groups of theory underline the importance of participation and deliberation for democracy.

Turning first to the *protective theories of democracy*, they regard participation and deliberation as crucial for the protection of the citizens vis-a-vis the state (Mill, 1820/1937: 45; Bentham, 1776/1948: 143; Dahl, 1989: 113). Citizen participation in general elections is vital because it grants the citizens a means to control the sovereign ruler i.e. the government through the election of representatives. Deliberation is equally important because it enhances the ability of the citizens to make informed choices at Election Day. Hence, ongoing public debate played out in a free public space provides citizens with relevant knowledge and information about the issues at stake, and an opportunity to test and qualify their view points in dialogue with other citizens and elected representatives. The underlying point of reference in this protective approach to participation and deliberation is that democratic control exclusively concerns the relationship between a specific group of citizens and their elected representatives within a given predefined territorially demarcated demos i.e. the state.

Within protective theories of democracy the liberal tension between collective decision making and individual liberty appears as a dilemma between ‘government *by* the people’ and ‘government *for* the people’. In other words: should priority be given to strong citizen control with the government or to enhancing the ability of this government to govern efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the people? There is so to speak believed to be an inherent trade-off between democracy and efficiency that cannot be absolved. This trade-off is more outspoken in some policy areas than in others, and most of all in foreign policy, due to the central role of inter-demos interaction between governments (Connolly, 1995: 141). Foreign policy, where the liberal state performs one of its most central objectives, namely that of protecting the citizens against outside dangers and enemies, is said to be in high need of confidentiality in order to be efficient. The price that must be paid for this confidentiality is a restriction of the citizens’ ability to control their representatives through their access to full information and a free public debate. As such protective theories of democracy tend to give up the call for tight control with governance processes that involve inter-demos interaction.

*Developmental theories of democracy* give different reasons for the importance of public participation and deliberation. Participation and deliberation is first and foremost considered as

necessary in order to transform the citizens from self-interested individuals into democratic citizens who regard themselves as part of a people with common interests and a shared understanding (Stuart Mill, 1861/1946: 254; Tocqueville, 1835/1968: 25; Almond & Verba, 1963: 88-9; Pateman, 1970: 105). Democratic citizens do not merely pursue individual goals but seek to promote the common good of the specific demos to which they belong. The sense of communality and shared identity that constitutes a strong unitary demos is brought about through the existence of a well functioning civil society that allows for extensive citizen participation and public deliberation. Widespread citizen participation helps to visualize the interrelatedness between individual and collective interests while ongoing deliberation among the citizens enhances the creation of shared understanding and belonging. As such a well functioning participatory civil society is seen as the corner stone of democracy.

In developmental theories of democracy the tension between collective decision making and individual liberty surface as an insurmountable *tension* between democratic inclusion and exclusion. Hence, the claim for communality sentiments as a constituting feature of a demos tends to produce sharp patterns of internal and external exclusion. One the one the production of a strong sense of communality calls for deep inclusion through extensive participation and deliberation. On the other hand, efforts to establish a strong unitary people rely on the construction of a constitutive outside to that unity that produces antagonistic sentiments between the included and the excluded.

*Internally*, the constitutive outside is represented by those individuals who have not yet developed into democratic citizens, capable and willing to pursue the common good of the larger community. These individuals should be given access to participate and deliberate in civil society in order to promote their transformation from self-interested individuals into democratic citizens, but they should not be given influence until this transformation has taken place. John Stuart Mill's famous propositions of a system of plural voting and a democratic divide between a national level of competent democratic decision making and a local training ground for citizen participation and deliberation, illustrates this way of thinking, and the resulting search for ways to disconnect participation and influence (Stuart Mill, 1861/1946: Ch. 6; Macpherson, 1977: 50ff). As such, the paradoxical outcome of the democratic desire for a homogenous civil society that produces a strong communality within a given demos is the construction of a sharp line of demarcation between the included and the excluded: 1) between those who count as fully developed democratic citizens and those who do not, and 2) between that which has been canonized as being in the interest of the common good and that which has not.

*Externally*, the constituting outside is represented by all those who do not belong to a specific people: those who can be said to belong to other demoi and those who fall in between demoi. By focusing exclusively on the common good of the members of a specific demos, efforts to pursue the identification of a common good that reaches beyond that demos is democratically incomprehensible and irrelevant. Efforts to promote collective thinking, shared understanding and a sense of communality through participation and deliberation stops at the borders of the homogenous civil society i.e. the nation state, and political issues that transgress the borders of this nation state, cannot and should not be regulated democratically.

It should now be clear, that *both protective and developmental theories of democracy, perceive democracy as a way of regulating decision-making within the confines of a sovereign unitary nation state.*

There is no reason to believe that the sovereign nation state imaginary that underpins these liberal theories of democracy has ever mirrored reality. The distance between image and reality is evident in federal democracies where the difficulties of theoretically conceptualizing the relationship between the federal government and the states have been persistent (Dahl. 1986: 114), but the sovereignty of unitary states has also to a smaller or larger extend been jeopardized in praxis by their need to gain support from other powerful external and internal societal actors.

However, the massive transformation of the institutional set up of advanced liberal democracies that has taken place in the last decades has deepened the distance between imaginary and reality to a degree that makes references to a unitary sovereign nation state more and more of an anachronism. The persistent survival of the imaginary of a sovereign nation state as point of departure in debates on how policy making is and should be performed is in Bill Connolly's (1995: 317) phrasing to be understood as some sort of 'politics of homesickness', that we clings to in order to maintain the safe perception of politics as an orderly and controlled process that is played out within the confines of a given territory conceptualized as community, nation, or people. This politics of homesickness hampers our recognition of the considerable impact that the emergence of a pluricentric political system has on the contemporary functioning of democracy, and thus of the pressing need for a theoretical as well as an institutional renewal of democracy.

## Towards pluricentrism

Then, what kind of political system is developing in the wake of the withering of the sovereign nation state? Despite considerable differences between them political scientists, and governance theorists in particular tend to agree that the political systems within advanced liberal democracies are getting more and more *pluricentric* (Rhodes, 1997; Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan, 1997; Goldsmith & Eggers, 2002; Ansell, 2000; Kettle, 2002; Kersbergen & Waarden, 2004; Pierre & Peters, 2005; Skelcher, 2005; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). The increased pluricentrism is seen as a result of four changes:

Political globalization has led to the establishment and consolidation of a multiplicity of transnational political institutions and public and private organizations that push for the establishment of a set of transnational standards for how nation states can act internally and externally, and which monitor transnational policy making and policy implementation (Greven & Pauly, 2000; Bache & Flinders 2004; Larner & Walters, 2004; Van Heffen, Kickert & Thomassen, 2000).

De-bureaucratization of the administrative apparatus through the implementation of New Public Management (NPM) reforms that split the state apparatus into fragmented and decentred units of public governance (Hirst, 1994: 7; Rhodes, 2000: 345f; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004: 175; Bogason, 2004: 27 f).

Transformation of private actors such as firms and voluntary organizations into co-producers of public governance through various forms of formal and informal partnership arrangements (Kooiman, 1993: 4; Mathur, Skelcher & Smith, 2004: 2; Milward & Provan, 1993: 222ff; Kettl, 2002: 119).

Growth in governance networks that enhance coordination between decentred producers of public governance, and between public and private stakeholders in different policy areas and at different levels of governance (Kooiman, 1993: 4; Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan, 1997: 7ff; Rhodes, 1997: 51; Milward & Provan, 2001: 241; Goldsmith & Eggers, 2002: 9ff; Ansell, 2000: 305).

The added outcome of the radical changes described above is a distortion of the internal and external sovereignty and unity of the nation state (Onuf, 1991: 432; Hinsley, 1986: 100). Political globalization jeopardizes the *external sovereignty* of the state vis-à-vis other sovereign rulers, while the fragmentation and decentring of governance competencies to various relatively self-regulating public and private actors decentre and diffuse the *internal sovereignty* of the state. Finally, the

formation of governance networks blurs the borderlines between different policy compartments and different levels in the political system.

As such, public governance can no longer be seen as the outcome of a system of state rule. Rather, it represents the outcome of complex patchwork-like process of piecemeal decision making that takes place within the confines of a pluricentric political system in which different centers of power within and beyond the state apparatus seeks to govern society in close cooperation and competition with other powerful public and private actors.

While most governance theorists agree on a more or less radical version of this diagnosis, debates concerning the impact that this transition of the political system has on the powers of the state has been harsh. Some argue that the state is as strong as ever (Hirst & Thompson, 1996; Kernsberger, Lieshout & Verbeek, 2000), while others contend that the powers of the state have been reduced considerably (Milward & Provan, 1993). However, a large group of governance theorists, and I with them, argue that the external and internal sovereignty of the state has indeed been reduced, but that this has not led to a weakening of the powers of the state as such (Mayntz, 2003: 32; Kooiman, 2003: 79; Jessop, 2004: 57; Ansell, 2000: 310). I shall argue, that the transition from sovereign rule to pluricentric governance can in fact be seen as a part of a new governmentality that paves the way for *an extension of the realm of public governance into the trans-national realm and into the private realms of the market and civil society, which were formerly beyond the reach of liberal governments.*

What we witness is a general governmentalization of society according to which all corners of social life are being made subject to public governance (Dean, 1999: 6). However, this governmentalization of society goes hand in hand with a governmentalization of government itself that calls upon the state to govern in different ways (Dean, 1999: 21, 193). Sovereign forms of rule must be given up in order to strengthen the ability of the state to govern society through forms of governance that are played out through the design of governance processes and political identities that invoke societal actors to govern themselves and others. In sum, the state has lost its sovereign position, but at the same time it has developed new and not less ambitious ways of governing society through the regulation of freedoms (Rose, 1999: 65), or as governance theorists call it through meta-governance (Jessop, 2003; Kooiman, 2003; Sørensen & Torfing, 2006: chapter 9). The pluricentric political system is an outcome of this endeavor to enhance the meta-governing capacity of the state.

In sum, the age of pluricentric governance has undermined the sovereign position of the state vis-à-vis other centers of political decision making, just as it has transformed the state itself from being a



unitary whole into being a fragmented and decentred patchwork of overlapping arenas of public-private co-governance. In this pluricentric political system, coordination is not primarily achieved through formal law and bureaucratic rule and regulation within the limits of a coherent clearly demarcated unit of governance, but through metagovernance and different forms of self-regulation within a complex, dynamic and heterogeneous plurality of relatively autonomous and mutually overlapping units of public governance within and beyond the boundaries of the nation state.

### **Pluricentrism as a challenge to liberal democracy**

Pluricentrism challenges liberal perceptions of democracy in at least two ways: 1) it undermines the channels of democratic control with elected political leaders that are so central to protective theories of democracy, and 2) it distorts the formation of a unitary homogenous civil society with a shared identity and a clear image of its constituting outside that developmental theories of democracy regard as the constituting feature of democracy.

*The democratic control problem springs* from the fact that governance no longer takes place within a unified political system in which a clearly demarcated body of citizens controls a group of representatives through their informed and qualified participation in general elections that takes place on the basis of free public deliberation. This democratic control model is first of all undermined by the fact that current processes of governance more often than not *involve more than one nation state*. Inter-state governance is no longer a specific feature of foreign policy but has become an important and increasingly institutionalized ingredient in most areas of public policy making. The fact that these inter-state activities are only to a limited extent controlled by elected politicians and made subject to public deliberation does not necessarily represent a problem for democracy if they, like foreign policy, are seen as a necessary means to provide efficient and effective governance for the people. Seen from a protective approach to democracy this reduced control could be seen as a necessary and insignificant rebalancing of the insurmountable tension between democracy by the people and democracy for the people. More problematic is the distortion of the protective control mechanisms that takes place when the citizens of many national demoi, like in the EU, have been given the opportunity to elect a trans-national body of representatives. This trans-nationalization of representative democracy is perceived as a serious threat to protective democracy because it undermines the one-to-one relationship between the people and its' representatives that is a corner stone in the maintenance of democratic control. Hence, the establishment of a cross-demos body of elected representatives, like the EU-parliament, paves the way for a situation in which citizens from one demos are ruled by a majority of representatives

elected by citizens from other demoi. This problematic has resulted in a heated debate about the degree to which democratic thought is in fact at all compatible with trans-national institutions (Scharpf, 2001; Greven 2000; Newman, 2000; Schmitter, 2000; Dahl, 1999). As such the control perspective advanced by protective theories of democracy leads to two mutually exclusive reactions to political globalization: 1) an acceptance of an intensified and more institutionalized foreign policy, which is only to a limited degree controlled through public participation and deliberation, or 2) a claim for the establishment of a cosmopolitan democracy (Held, 1995; Habermas, 2001; Bohman, 2005) in which the protective relationship between a clearly demarcated citizenry and a sovereign body of elected representatives is upgraded to a global level.

Another challenge from pluricentrism to the provision of democratic control, as suggested by protective theories of democracy, has to do with the still more *decentred and fragmented scope of the state apparatus*, which is among other things caused by the New Public Management (NPM) reform programme that has put its mark on most advanced liberal democracies from the 1980s and up till today (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). The aim of this programme has been to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public governance by exchanging legal, bureaucratic forms of government with a market based model of decentred public administration and competitive service provision among public and private providers of public services (Hood, 1991, 1996; Sørensen, 2007). This new model of public governance establishes a divide between the responsibility of elected representatives and the responsibility of public service providers, which is not immediately comprehensible for the citizens. It becomes still more difficult for citizens to establish a clear connection between decisions made by elected representatives and the experienced performance providers of public services. This decoupling of political leadership and public service delivery is recognized and encouraged by the NPM-reform programme, which calls upon dissatisfied citizens to blame – not the elected representatives - but the service providers, and sanction them and not the politicians by ‘exiting’ as would a customer on a market (Hirschman, 1970). What takes place here is a down-grading of the level of citizen control with the public sector through democratically elected representation in favor of a market based system of sanctioning. Seen from a protective perspective on democracy this way of ensuring democratic control is not only problematic because it undermines the sovereign control of the elected representatives with substantial parts of public governance, but also because the exit-based market oriented control system is not accompanied by ‘voice’ mechanisms (Hirschman, 1970: 30), which ensure that citizens are able to make informed and well reflected choices qualified through public participation and deliberation (Sørensen, 1997).

Yet, another control problem related to pluricentrism has to do with the establishment of all sorts of *public-private partnerships*. Such partnerships between public authorities and voluntary

organizations and business firms are problematic because it is difficult for citizens as well as for elected politicians to control private actors through participation and deliberation. It is not possible to democratically sanction private actors at Election Day, just as the legalized claim for transparency and openness in processes of public decision making tend to be weaker when private actors are involved.

Finally, the complex web of *governance* networks that emerge in the effort to enhance vertical and horizontal coordination within the decentred and fragmented political system are problematic seen from the perspective of protective theories of democracy because their informal and dynamic character makes them difficult to control. Hence, inter-organizational governance networks between public and private actors and between local, national and transnational public authorities tend to decouple the bureaucratic and legal strings of control through which elected politicians seek to maintain sovereign control over the governance process, and the informality and opaqueness of network interaction reduces the ability of the citizenry to control them by making their actions subject to public deliberation.

In sum, the erosion of the unitary sovereign state caused by the NPM-reform programme, the formation of public-private partnerships, and the surge of inter-organizational governance networks, has severe implications for the exercise of democratic control as defined by the protective theories of democracy. Seen from this perspective the democratic control problem can only be remedied in one out of two ways: 1) through a re-institutionalization of the sovereign state and the patterns of participation and deliberation that is installed through the institutions of representative democracy, or 2) through the development of a tight system of metagovernance that ensures elected politicians an indirect control with the many actors that contribute to the production of public governance through the measurement of policy outcomes. This strengthening of democracy for the people at the cost of democracy by the people is the core ingredient in the NPM reform program (Sørensen, 2007).

It is now time to take a look at how the emergence of a pluricentric political system *jeopardizes the promotion of a sense of communality* so cherished by developmental theories of liberal democracy. First, political globalization tends to blur the borderlines that demarcate the external patterns of inclusion and exclusion between a given demos and its constituting outside. It simply raises doubts about the scope of the demos: its boundaries, its identity, and its homogeneity. Trans-national political institutions such as the EU and the UN tend to rank both the human rights of individuals and the common good of the globe higher than the well being of the individual nation state. By doing so, they raise doubts as to the political legitimacy of focusing on the common good of

individual nation states, just as they promote the production of transnational points of political identification. The result is a destabilization of the image of the nation state as an undivided naturally given political unity that has the legitimate right to pursue its national interests to the benefit of its citizens. As such, the presence of trans-national political institutions increase the inherent tension already present within developmental theories of democracy between the call for extensive participation and deliberation among all citizens, and the harsh exclusion of non-citizens, by illuminating the contingent and hence political character of the external patterns of exclusion.

The image of democracy as something that is played out within the confines of a unitary political community is also *threatened from within due to the internal decentring and fragmentation of the state apparatus*. This internal transformation of the public sector has undermined the image of the nation as one large unitary and undivided national community held together by a strong sense of shared communality and identity. The image is eroded by the emergence of a plurality of partial territorially and functionally demarcated and mutually overlapping publics (Habermas, 1989, 1992; Fraser, 1992) with complex, unclear and relatively unstable points of identification. The consequential weakening of the internal unity within the national *demos* leads to a de-legitimization of internal exclusions of those who cannot and/or will not attest to what has gained hegemony as the common good. The division of the public into many publics with different views on the nature of the common good and with different points of identification and notions of communality destabilizes the very idea, that a unitary communality is a precondition for a well functioning democracy. The presence of many publics or communities with different notions of the common good visualizes that the internally excluded are excluded on contingent grounds because they do not fit the prevailing image of what it means to be a good democratic citizen at a given point in time. As such, it is visualized that exclusions are political in nature and should thus be made subject to democratic regulation.

The propensity to establish clear internal lines of demarcation between the included and the excluded in developmental theories of democracy, is further *challenged by the increased involvement of private actors in the production of public governance*. This involvement disrupts the image of the *demos* as consisting of citizens and not of organized interests and private businesses which are regarded as outside the realm of democratic decision making. Hence, private actors are seen as carriers of particular interests, wherefore their participation in processes of public governance is expected to hamper efforts to identify a common good. For that reason, only citizens should be included in processes of public governance.

In sum, the emergence of a pluricentric political system destabilizes the external and internal patterns of exclusion that are central to developmental theories of democracy by making it difficult to develop a stable and unitary sense of communality among a demarcated group of citizens. Polycentrism promotes an unstable scenario of shifting and overlapping territorially and functionally anchored points of collective identification, which constantly calls for the construction and justification of new temporal demoi and related patterns of external and internal inclusion and exclusion.

### **Governance network as a medium for inter-demos democracy**

It should now be clear that the surge of a pluricentric political system challenges traditional liberal perceptions of democracy by undermining the unitary, sovereign nation state: it distorts the unitary chain of democratic control installed through the institutions of representative democracy and destabilizes the production of one overarching national sense of communality.

Seen from this perspective, the future of democracy appears to be gloomy. However, I shall argue that the prospects for democracy are not necessarily that bleak. Measured from the viewpoint of a wave of new theories of democracy, the future of democracy depends on its ability to adapt to new circumstances (Hurley, 1999: 276; Benz & Papadopoulos, 2006: 4; Bohman, 2005: 293). These theories do not attempt to identify one true universal and perfect model of democracy that will fit all societies at all times. Instead they take a more modest and pragmatic and innovative stand by claiming that the aim must be to find ways in which to make the best of democracy at this particular time and space in history. The need to be modest and pragmatic is among others stressed by James Bohman when he suggests that the aim of democratic theory must be to focus on democratization i.e. moving in the right direction instead of reaching for the stars (Bohman, 2005) while Mark Saward points to the inherent innovative character of democracy that calls for a constant conceptual and institutional renewal of democracy: *'The story of democracy is nothing if not a story of innovation. One of the defining features of democracy may well be its restlessness, dynamism and comparative openness to new ideas'* (Saward, 2000: 3). As such the future of democracy rests on our ability to creatively adjust and redefine the conceptual and institutional features of democracy in order to increase its ability to function in a changing world.

One of the core challenges that face democracy in the age of pluricentrism is the extensive amount of governance that involves more than one demos. This state of affairs increases the pressure for finding ways to democratically regulate inter-demos governance. If this task is fulfilled successfully

there is not only a solid chance that democracy will survive pluricentrism - chances are, that democracy will prosper from it. First, the search for ways to promote the democratic quality of inter-demos interaction might in fact lead to the development of new patterns of participation and deliberation that will help to strengthen intra-demos interaction between elected leaders and the citizens. As argued by a number of scholars (Stoker, 2006; Pitkin, 2004; Barber, 1984; Hirst, 2000) institutions of representative democracy have not in practice been able to fulfill the promise made by traditional theories of liberal democracy that is to establish close links of control and identification between elected representatives and the citizen. By restricting the interaction between decision makers and citizens to participation in general elections and an unspecified public deliberation the links of control and identification have in fact become very 'thin'. Various supplementary forms of territorially and functionally organized participation and deliberation that promote an ongoing and intensive interaction between decision makers and citizens might in fact help to strengthen national representative democracy. The introduction of such supplementary forms of participation and deliberation will indeed make democracy complex and messy compared to the simplistic and unitary institutions of representative democracy, but the gain is likely to be a much needed improvement of the quality of democracy.

Second, the search for ways to democratically regulate inter-demos governance initiates a just as needed expansion of the realm of democracy. By viewing democracy as an intra-demos phenomenon that has to do with the establishment of links of control and communality between elected representatives and citizens, traditional theories of democracy deemed important parts of the governance process beyond the realm of democratic regulation. This leaves governance processes that take place at the trans-national level, involve private actors, and deals with the implementation of public policy beyond the reach of democratic regulation. As such, the mere extension of the focus of democracy so as to include inter-demos governance paves the way for a strengthening of democracy. However, in order to fulfill this promise of more democracy we need to *find ways to promote inter-demos control and communality through different forms of cross-demos participation and deliberation.*

The search for new forms of inter-demos participation and deliberation must go down many avenues in order to cover as much ground as possible. In this paper, however, I restrict my focus to *the possible role of governance networks* in this endeavor. While the surge of governance networks is in fact a part of the pluricentric challenge to democracy it also provides an important part of the solution. Hence, governance networks provide a forum for vertical and horizontal coordination, cooperation and communication that has the potential to promote inter-demos control and identification.

Then, what do I mean by governance networks? Summarizing the definition of governance networks posed by the extensive literature on the subject, governance networks can be defined as 1) relatively stable articulations of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors, who 2) interact with one another through negotiations, which 3) take place within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework, that is 4) self-regulating within limits set by external forces, and which 5) contributes to the production of public purpose (Torfing, 2005).

Governance network theorists argue that the current growth in governance networks can among other things be explained by their ability to provide inter-organizational coordination, which is essential for the production of efficient and effective public governance under pluricentric conditions (Pierre & Peters, 2005; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007: Ch. 1). As argued by Jan Kooiman the fragmented and differentiated nature of a pluricentric society (or socio-political system of governance as he calls it) produces long cross-organizational lines of interdependency (Kooiman, 2000: 139) because efforts to solve concrete governance problems in most cases demand for cross-organizational coordination, cooperation and communication. Governance networks provide an institutional framework for enhancing negotiated coordination between such 'long lines' of interdependent but operationally autonomous actors.

Studies of governance networks envisage that they can take many forms. Some governance networks are loose, inclusive and short lived while others are tight, exclusive and long-lived (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). Some governance networks are ambitious and targets positive coordination through the formulation of shared objectives, while others are less ambitious and settle for negative coordination i.e. avoiding harming one another (Scharpf, 1994). Finally, governance networks also differ with regard to whether they seek to enhance vertical or horizontal coordination. Some governance networks seek to provide vertical coordination, cooperation and communication by bringing together actors from different levels in the increasingly multi-level political system. Others provide horizontal coordination, cooperation and communication between different public and private actors at a given level in the political system (Markussen & Torfing, 2007).

As indicated above, the focus of interest among most governance network theorists have been the contributions of governance networks to the efficient and effective production of public governance, and the main conclusion seems to be that governance networks adds substantially to the efficiency and effectiveness of public governance. While less effort has been done to investigate into the possible implications of network governance for democracy there tend to be a general agreement that this issue is crucial and needs to be placed high on the research agenda. However, the first step in such efforts to study the possible implications of governance networks on

democracy, calls for reconsiderations of the traditional liberal notion of democracy and in this context its conceptualization of the notions of control and communality. Below, I shall first reconsider the concept of democratic control and discuss how participation and deliberation in governance networks can contribute to the enhancement of inter-demos control, and then turn to look at the concept of communality and the possible role of governance networks in this respect.

### **The question of inter-demos control**

It is about time that we give up the idea that democratic control can be installed as a one-to-one relationship between a democratically appointed authority and a People. If it ever did work as intended by the protective approach to democracy, which I seriously doubt, this one-stringed control mechanism has become insufficient to ensure control in the complex, fragmented, dynamic and patchwork like societies of our time. The image of democratic control as a one-to-one relationship between a People and an elected body of representatives must be given up and exchanged with an image of democratic control as something that must be installed between a plurality of temporarily organized groups of affected individuals and a multiplicity of more or less autonomous functionally and territorially authorized decision makers. This reinterpretation of democratic control indicates two things: 1) that democratic control should to be institutionalized through many supplementary control mechanisms and not only through one, and 2) that the People controlling the decision makers should not be seen as a permanent body of citizens within a nation state but as a temporary body of affected individuals that overlaps with other temporary bodies. With regard to the former, the establishment of a complex plurality of control mechanisms, although complex and messy, will promote a tighter and more interactive interaction between citizens and decision makers. Regarding the latter, an increased focus on affectedness will serve to fine tune the democratic control mechanisms so as to insure that those who are most directly affected have access to the most elaborate control mechanisms.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that degrees of affectedness do not necessarily follow lines of demarcation between nation state demos (Dryzek, 1997). Therefore, it is time to recognize that effective democratic control mechanisms that grant affected citizens the best possible control with the decision makers calls for the construction of temporal and overlapping demos organized around concrete degrees of affectedness. In some instances the nature of the issue at stake calls for territorially organized temporal demos while in others the organizing principle must be functional. Hence, a citizen might at a given point in time belong to one demos with regard to some aspects of life, while belonging to another demos when it comes to other aspects, and the



membership of each of these demoi gives access to specifically designed democratic control mechanisms.

As such, the increased focus on affectedness as an organizing principle of democracy and the establishment of a plurality of links of control between citizens and decision makers is likely to ensure a considerable level of democratic control in a pluricentric society. However, as already argued by Charles Montesquieu, and recently rearticulated by Eva Ezioni-Halevy (1993, 2003) democratic control institutionalized through traditional forms of representative democracy is not on its own enough to ensure the citizens an effective democratic control with elected elites since power between citizens and elites tend to become much too asymmetrical. Accordingly, effective systems of democratic control call for a separation of powers between elected political elites that reduce their respective powers and promote a situation in which elites control elites. This way of controlling political elites have by some called horizontal accountability that by supplementing more vertical forms of accountability contributes to insuring a democratic control with decision makers. As argued by Guillermo O'Donnell (1999: 169) '*accountability runs not only vertically, making elected officials answerable to the ballot box, but also horizontally, across a network of relatively autonomous powers*'.

While Montesquieu called for a separation of powers within the confines of the sovereign state, Ezioni-Halevy advocates for an extension of its relevance beyond the realm of the nation state. Hence, she points to the importance of a high level of ongoing political competition and contestation between a plurality of autonomous public and private elites and sub-elites for enhancing both horizontal and vertical accountability. While horizontal accountability is ensured through the separation of powers between a wide plurality of political elites within and beyond the state, the vertical accountability which is partly ensured from below through the ballot box, is further strengthened through the presence of an intermediate level of sub-elites placed between elected political elites and ordinary citizens that promotes qualified vertical contestation, competition and mobility between decision makers and decision takers. Vertical accountability, it could be added, is further supplemented from above through the presence of a range of trans-national political institutions, Courts and NGOs, which contest the actions of the Nation States. Seen from this perspective on control as an outcome of separated powers, the development of a pluricentric political system in which political power is dispersed to elites and sub-elites in different levels and centers of decision making enhances the level of democratic control rather than weakening it.

However, the activation of a system of vertical and horizontal checks and balances, calls for institutionalized arenas in which autonomous political elites and sub-elites can pursue negotiated goals. This is exactly where governance networks enter the stage as an important instrument for ensuring an ongoing contestation and negotiated cooperation between democratically authorized demoi (Esmark, 2002, 2007). The reason why networks fit this task so well is that they, as described above, are constituted of operationally autonomous but interdependent actors who decide to coordinate their actions in order to reach negotiated goals. As such, governance networks represent a central means to promote coordinated action in situations where hierarchy is not an option as is often the case under pluricentric conditions. It offers to do so by bringing relatively autonomous but mutually interdependent political elites and sub-elites together in a shared effort to reach negotiated policy goals through processes of political contestation, negotiation and balancing of powers.

However, in order to give elites and sub-elites the autonomy they need in order to be able to take part in negotiated decision making within governance networks the patterns of democratic control and accountability must take a subtle form. If the represented keep their representatives in too tight a string, governance networks will be unable to produce negotiated agreements. Hence, democratic control of governance networks must be carried out either ex post through intensive public deliberation, evaluation and contestation of the outcomes of governance network or through horizontal and vertical forms of accountability exercised through the checks and balances within and beyond the governance networks. As such, the next step is to search for ways in which to promote forms of participation and deliberation that enhances proactive and horizontal and vertical forms of control of governance networks.

### **The question of inter-demosi communality**

However, governance networks do not only give promise to the promotion of new forms of inter-demosi control in a pluricentric context. It also provides a much needed arena for inter-communal communication. To that end, it is time to realize that the presence of a strong unitary sense of communality is not only positive for democracy. It is in fact a two edged sword. While, a strong unitary communality enhances democracy by promoting the ability of a group of people to act together in order to reach collective goals, it threatens democracy by establishing very sharp and extensive patterns of exclusion. In short: communality produces unity, and unity produces exclusion.

In effect, efforts to promote communality sentiments should be pursued with caution and seek to develop what could be called soft edges. By the term 'soft edges' I refer to the need to develop agonistic sentiments within and between demoi (Connolly, 1996; Mouffe, 1993; Tully, 2000). The goal must be to promote an awareness of the fact that the communality that constructs a demos as a unity, the image of the common good it pursues, and the notions of what it means to be a good citizen it prescribes is nothing more than a contingent outcome of political decisions, and has no higher justification than that. This recognition of the contingency of political communities and democratic identities is important because it promotes the acceptance of difference as something that is to be dealt with within the realm of democratic decision making and not beyond it through extensive internal and/or external exclusion. Exclusions are inevitable and are a constituting feature of political decision making. We just need to acknowledge their political nature, and ensure that the process through which exclusions are decided is democratically regulated. Seen from this angle, the big question is to find out how antagonistic sentiments are promoted. The answer to this question is twofold: 1) through the shaping of situations in which citizens belong to more than one political community, and/or 2) through intensified communication and collaboration between holders of different political identities either within a given demos or across demoi, The democratic promise of the age of pluricentrism is that it enacts overlapping citizenry. As described by theorists such as Michael Sandel (1996):

politics today is played out in a multiplicity of settings from neighborhoods to nations to the world as a whole (...) The civic virtue distinctive to our time is the capacity to negotiate our way among sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting obligations that claim us, and to live with the tension to which multiple loyalties give rise. This capacity is difficult to sustain, for it is easier to live with the plurality between persons than within them'. (Sandel, 1996: 350)

An enforcement of the capacity for what we could denote *pluricentric citizenship* calls for deliberate efforts to upgrade our ability to live with the internal tension of multiple loyalties. Governance networks have much to offer in this respect. Hence, they pave the way for a promotion of inter-demos communication between autonomous but partially overlapping, interdependent political identities and images of communality. With Mark Granovetter's old terms networks are capable of establishing weak ties of communality between strong ties of unitary communality (Granovetter, 1973: 1369), and the same line of argument is characterizes the debate on the ability of networks to promote social capital not only through bonding but also through bridging that is through the promotion of communication between heterogeneous groups (Putnam, 2000; Hazleton & Kennan, 2000). In other words networks can function as a platform for inter-community participation and deliberation that promotes the construction of weak images of communality

between communities held together by more dense communality sentiments. By doing so governance networks paves the way for the construction of a degree of inter-demoi communality that makes the democratic interaction between demoi possible, while simultaneously reducing the closure of intra-demoi-communality that tends to produce intra-demoi exclusion.

## **Conclusion**

The emergence of an age of pluricentrism definitely challenges the traditional liberal conceptions and institutionalizations of democratic control and communality and the patterns of participation and deliberation that were meant to enforce them. Since democracy is no longer merely an intra-demos phenomenon, we need to re-conceptualize and re-institutionalize patterns of democratic participation and deliberation in a way that promotes inter-demoi control and communality.

Governance networks have a crucial role to play in this respect. Hence, governance networks have the potential to institutionalize contestation, negotiation and cooperation between a plurality of elites and sub-elites and to establish weak ties of communality between demoi, and thus to maintain some level of openness and heterogeneity in the collective points of identification within the individual demos.

However, governance networks are no panacea. In order to serve as a means to enhance democracy in the age of pluricentrism they must be democratically anchored in different ways. As I and Jacob Torfing suggest elsewhere (2005) governance networks should be democratically anchored by means of four anchorage points: 1) through metagovernance carried out by elected political leaders within the traditional institutions of representative democracy at different levels in the multi-leveled political systems; 2) through different pro-active forms of representation in the various affected groups of stakeholders; 3) through public contestation and deliberation in a wider citizenry and vis-à-vis other networks of elites and sub-elites; and 4) through the presence of a democratic network constitution that includes rules and norms for the external and internal inclusion and exclusion of network actors and for the handling of conflicts within the network (Young, 2000; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005). Next step in the effort to develop governance networks into a democratic form of participation and deliberation is to develop criteria for the democratic anchorage of governance networks.

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