The relationship between government and civil society. A neo-Gramscian framework for analysis.

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1. Introduction

This paper presents a neo-Gramscian framework for the analysis of the relationship between government and civil society. The place and role of civil society has been the topic of a lively debate in many arenas in society: in academics, in politics, as well as in civil society itself. In general, civil society is regarded as important for different reasons: its impact on 'social capital' (e.g. Putnam, 2001), its role in public service delivery (e.g. Evers & Laville, 2005b) and its political role (e.g. Edwards, 2014). This paper is part of the research consortium "Civil Society Innovation in Flanders" (CSI Flanders), and focuses specifically on the dimensions of public service delivery and political work. CSI Flanders was established to assess claims of increasing marketisation, managerialism and depoliticisation made by members of civil society in Flanders in a series of public debates in 2012-2013, which were aimed primarily at their role in public service delivery and democratic politics.

We argue that the influence of 'post-traditional' theories of modernisation on 'networks' and 'network society' is crucial in understanding the concept of 'governance'. This influence has led to an exaggeration of the displacement of hierarchy by networks and of the novel nature of governance reforms. Additionally, it can be argued that the notion of 'governance networks' is part of a neoliberal hegemony and that the concept is thus more ideological than analytical. This critique on the neoliberal dimension of the governance concept was also forcefully argued by Jonathan S. Davies (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014b), who presented a Gramscian alternative for the analysis of government and governance. We will follow a less orthodox Gramscian path, but one that is nonetheless aimed at offering an alternative of the dominant network view on governance. We will present how the relationship between government and civil society can be seen as an interplay between coercion and hegemony. As part of the CSI Flanders research project we will then explore three dimensions of this relationship in closer detail: the ideological dimension, the institutional arrangements, and the street-level strategies. These three dimensions will be further operationalised in the following phases of the research project, especially in a large-scale survey of Flemish CSOs and representatives of governments, and selected in-depth studies of Flemish central and local governments.

2. Government and Civil Society: an evolution towards "governance"?

This section explores how the relationship between government and civil society has been described in terms of a shift from 'government' to 'governance' and how this shift is based to a great extent on underlying theories of modernity. Modernisation, a concept around which most of the early classical sociological science developed, refers in general to the transition in the 18th and 19th century from 'communitarian society' to 'modern society'. This transition is mostly defined in terms of one or more processes of *individualisation, secularisation, rationalisation, reification, cultural fragmentation, role differentiation* and *commodification* (Laermans, n.d., p. 223). According to many authors this process of modernisation has entered a new phase, starting from the last decades of the twentieth century. This new phase has been called 'postmodernity' (Lyotard, 2010 (1984)), 'liquid' modernity (Bauman, 2000), 'reflexive' modernisation (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994) , 'risk'-society (Beck, 1992), or 'network society' (Castells, 2010c). These theories have been called "post-structuralist" (Marinetto, 2003a) or "post-traditional" (Lee, 2006), and have strong conceptual links to the academic literature on 'governance' and 'networks'. Throughout these theories it is argued how society has become structured without a centre, how power has become diffused throughout a wide array of actors and structures, and how traditional institutions have become unstable and fluid. These claims are central to the concept of governance as well, together with the idea of a large transformation in the way government and civil society interact. Key to this transformation is the central position of networks in the analysis of social relations. While we do not wish to dispute the important role that networks play, we will qualify its importance and present three important critiques on 'governance as networks' in the subsequent section.

2.1. Post-traditional theories

The two central themes that combine these post-traditional theories are the decline of traditional structures and, related to this, the decentring of the modern state. We will present some of the central ideas of these two themes.

In social theory the notion of society, and the place of the individual in it, has become increasingly problematic (Schinkel, 2007). Above all, the notion of **decline of traditional structures** frames the debate on the relationship between government and civil society. The theory of *"reflexive modernisation"* (Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003; Beck et al., 1994; Lee, 2006) states that society is fundamentally transformed in a 'second phase' of modernisation: traditional structures that once seemed fixed have become uncertain and fluid (Bauman, 2000), although this does not mean that structures have become obsolete (there are still rules, expectations, values, identities, institutions, ...). Several causes are identified: globalisation, intensified individualisation, transformed gender roles, flexible employment, and risk politics (associated closely to the global ecological crisis) (Beck et al., 2003). This has important consequences for the role of government and politics in society. In a 'risk society' politics cannot be managed by experts but has to rely on other mechanisms for dealing with risks: decentralisation, public consultation, public-private partnerships, citizen involvement and participation (Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, & Mayer, 2000). Modernity has become 'reflexive' in the sense that individuals have the ability to reflect more than before on the state of the social order and their place in it (Beck et al., 1994). However, in this view on modernisation, society no longer offers clear integrating narratives, but instead relies on 'flows of communications' in fast working networks, which means that has not many structures that offer stability of identity or meaning for modern

individuals (Lash, 2001). This means that because of the loss of traditional structures individuals have to constantly build their own life-paths (Giddens, 1991). An important consequence of the decline of traditional structures is that ideological, religious or cultural identification of individuals with civil society organisations is no longer self-evident, and new organisations and movements can emerge that are not part of the traditional social order. In Belgium (and Flanders), this has been described in research by Billiet and others (Billiet, 2004), according to who traditional "pillars" between civil society and government have evolved from being *exclusive, sustainable* and *formal* towards being *selective, changing*, and *informal*. (2004, p. 141). This loss of stable formal bonds does not mean, however, that collective action has become impossible. For Giddens (1991) politics now also includes "life politics" wherein individuals connect social issues with their own life-project of self-actualisation. Bang and Sørensen have described how from this setting the political figure of the "everyday maker" can arise, aimed at political action not in an overarching ideological sense but as part of specific issues in daily life (1999).

The notion of a **decentered state** is related to this decline in traditional structures. In abstract terms this idea has been thoughtfully formulated as *functional differentiation* which implies that society is essentially without centre (Esmark, 2009; Luhmann, 1997). This position reflects two ideas that are influential in many post-traditional theories. First, society cannot be analysed as a 'whole' consisting of different 'parts' (Schinkel, 2007). Second, no function system (e.g. politics, economy, religion) holds the societal centre from which an ultimate source of power emanates over all other systems. Instead, the structure of modern society is often explained by using the metaphor of 'networks' where different actors (individuals, organisations, ...) can become important 'nodes', and analysis should mainly focus on the relations between the nodes (Marshall & Staeheli, 2015). As such, policymaking becomes the result of "governing processes that are not fully controlled by governments. Policymaking occurs through interactive forms of governing that involve many actors from different spheres" (Lewis, 2011, p. 1222). Of course, the idea that "networks" are the defining characteristic of modern society is often attributed to Manuell Castells and his theory on 'network society' (2010a, 2010b, 2010c), where governments are also only one of many possible actors in the networks to hold significant influence over power. Although, for the construction of political and cultural identities, according to Castells the local and regional governments have gained in importance, being "the closest point of contact between the state and civil society" (Castells, 2010b, p. 334) (which is related to Castells' distinction between the *space of places* and the *space of flows*). However, it is clear that in Castells' theory the state has become a decentred source of power: "What really matters is that the new power system is characterized (...) by the plurality of sources of authority (and, I would add, of power), the nation-state being just one of these sources."(Castells, 2010b, p. 356). On the level of local politics, the idea of decentred political power is crucial to understanding 'urban regime theory', a dominant paradigm in the field of urban politics (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001), with Clarence Stone as its most influential theorist (Sapotichne, Jones, & Wolfe, 2007). In his seminal work on regime politics in Atlanta (USA) he writes: "In a fragmented world, the issue is how to bring about enough cooperation among disparate community elements to get things done—and to do so in the absence of an overarching command structure or a unifying system of thought." (Stone, 1989, p. 227). On a more abstract level again, Michel Foucault's work idea of 'governmentality' still has significant influence on analyses of the relationship between government and civil society (e.g. Anjaria, 2009; Anwar, 2012; Fyfe, 2005; Jaeger, 2007; Roy, 2009). Here as well

the notion of decentered political power takes centre stage, which leads Marinetto to conclude: "The outcome is a view of government as a disaggregated institutional entity." (Marinetto, 2003b, p. 621).

These views on the decline of traditional structures and the decentering of the state all capture the idea of a *shift in relations of power* between government and civil society, which in turn is reflected in a *shift in vocabulary* around the start of the 21st century with concepts as 'governance', 'networks', 'trust' and 'interdependency' (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 1). This is what we will show next.

2.2. From government to governance

It is commonplace to state that governance is a complex concept with a large volume of literature that contains many different approaches to it (Cepiku, 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011) and is an important concept in the literature on the relationship between government and civil society (Bevir, 2007; Maier & Meyer, 2011; Phillips & Smith, 2011). At its core, 'governance' is conceptualised in contrast with 'government' on the one hand, and 'new public management' on the other (Cepiku, 2008, p. 109). It offers a view on politics and public service delivery that set outs to be wider and more inclusive than the concept of government (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). In general, this difference can be seen in how much of governance literature focuses more on the process of governing than on the structure of government (Klijn, 2008). Bevir offers a good summary of these core ideas of governance:

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

This statement captures the idea of transformation in society that we sketched previously. In the following we will discuss how governance went through several 'conceptual movements' using a demarcation of two waves or phases indicated by Bevir and Rhodes (2010): the move from government to network governance, and the move towards metagovernance and 'bringing the state back in again'. (Bevir and Rhodes actually conclude with a 'third wave' towards decentred governance which chiefly refers to their own proposal for a renewed governance theory). At the centre of this presentation of governance is the question whether it is justified to speak, as some do, of "a shift from hierarchy to markets and networks" (Bevir, 2012, p. 17).

Decentring a state can of course only take place from an original position with the state at the centre. Most overviews on governance commence with presenting **'the base model' of the bureaucratic state** (Hondeghem, Van Dooren, De Rynck, Verschuere, & Op de Beeck, 2013; Pollitt, 2003; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Pyper, 2015). Bureaucracy is a model of organising public policy and service delivery with a focus on predictable rules ('rule of law'), a clear hierarchy of competences, a central command structure, and a distinction between administrators and politicians (Eliassen & Sitter, 2008; S. P. Osborne, 2010; Pollitt, 2003). Importantly, the bureaucratic state is a state that carries out its own policies instead of relying on third party actors for implementation. Especially starting in second half of the 20th century bureaucracy has been evaluated in negative terms for

being sluggish, dysfunctional, overly centralised, and inflexible (Pollitt 2003 offers a good overview of the critiques of bureaucracy).   Starting from the mid-1960s up to the late 1970s the first challenges to the model of a bureaucratic public administration appeared, and intensified from the mid-1980s (Frederickson, Smith, Larimer, & Licari, 2012; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Pyper, 2015). Under the umbrella term **"New Public Management" (NPM)** new ideas formed in academic literature and government policies (Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew, 1996; Hood, 1991; Metcalfe & Richards, 1990; D. Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The shared concern in the NPM-critiques is the improvement of the three "E's" of public services: its economy, efficiency and effectiveness. (Eliassen & Sitter, 2008; Fattore, Dubois, & Lapenta, 2012; R. A. W. Rhodes, 1994). The core techniques in the NPM-discourse are "contracting out, decentralizing, granting greater discretion to managers, increasing citizen or customer choices, deregulating, organizing so that there is competition, and determining effectiveness according to outcome measurement." (Frederickson et al., 2012, p. 128). Although NPM attacks the state for its flaws it is itself mostly a top-down strategy performed by a central government (Fattore et al., 2012), leading some authors to conclude that NPM is not a complete rejection of public administration but can rather be regarded as a subset of it (Pollitt, 2003; Pyper, 2015).

In the early 1990s in the UK, however, a train of thought developed in which this movement towards NPM was interpreted in a different light. According to the so called "**Anglo-governance school"** (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010; Marinetto, 2003a) **or "Differentiated Polity" model** (R. A. W. Rhodes, 2007) government was becoming increasingly fragmented (e.g. Dunleavy & Rhodes, 1990; R. A. W. Rhodes & Dunleavy, 1995). Furthermore, according to Rhodes the state was being "hollowed out" (R. A. W. Rhodes, 1994) because of privatisation and contracting out, increasing use of arms-length public agencies, the transfer of function to the EU, and the limitation of discretion by public servants because of NPM techniques (such as performance measurement, managerial accountability, political control). Hierarchies were seen as giving way to markets and networks because of this disintegration of the state. Especially networks were perceived to be the new dominant organising principle, leading Rhodes to proclaim that governance should now be understood as *network governance* (R. A. W. Rhodes, 1996). In the tradition of the Anglo-governance school, network governance can be summarised "as consisting of something akin to a differentiated polity characterized by a hollowed–out state, a core executive fumbling to pull rubber levers of control, and, most notably, a massive growth of networks." (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010, ch.5). The focus in this research tradition thus became policy networks with a specific concern for who is involved in the policy process and what the power relations are (Klijn, 2008). This notion of "differentiated polity" has been highly influential in governance theory (Marinetto, 2003a; Marsh, 2008) and marks the shift from 'government' to 'governance' in thinking about the role of government in politics and public service delivery. In this school of thought the decentring of the state is the core assumption around which the notion of governance is built.

There are numerous authors that disagree with the idea that governance would lead to a hollowed out state. In these approaches the state still is an important actor, albeit that the state now has a different role to play. This is what Bevir and Rhodes identify as a so called *'second wave'* in governance literature, focused on metagovernance and re-evaluating the role of the state (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010). Sørensen and Torfing see it as a '*second generation*' of governance literature that has accepted the spread of governance networks and is now focused on issues such as the conditions of

failure and success, the regulation of governance networks and the democratic quality of networks. (SøRensen & Torfing, 2005). Lowndes (2001) emphasised how the idea of a shift from government (bureaucracy) to governance (markets and networks) was too simplistic. Governance should be analysed as an increasingly complex "institutional mix" of hierarchies, markets and networks and she stresses that networks, as "the new ingredient", should be taken under significant consideration (Lowndes, 2001, p. 1962). This is not to say that the idea of a "mixed mode of governance" was absent in the first movement from government to governance, yet in Lowndes' view as well as in the literature on policy networks the network remains the main mode of governance (Marsh, 2008). The concept of "metagovernance" (Jessop, 2002; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Kooiman, 2003) attempted to couple the primacy of networks to a renewed governing role for governments. According to Sørensen there are three ways of metagovernance: "*hands on* through the facilitation of self-governance; *hands off* through political, financial, institutional, and discursive framing of self-governing networks, organizations, and groups; or *indirectly* through the presence of a strong shadow of hierarchy." (Bevir, 2007, p. 230). The state is an important actor in the wider coordination mechanisms in governance networks, and the preferred tactics are related to persuasive negotiation and other informal tactics (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010), although the state still has other more coercive measures as its disposal. In European welfare states, for example, self-organising welfare organisations operate "in the shadow the state", i.e. in the hierarchically determined framework set out by government (Scharpf, 1997). Despite the fact that government can still rely on forms of coercive power in politics and public service delivery, metagovernance literature emphasises that this is not the default position: "its role today is much more reflexive, that of coordinator in chief (including coordinating its own decentred activities), inter-scalar mediator, bricoleur, medium of democratic accountability and legitimacy and institutional entrepreneur." (Davies, 2011a, ch.1).

2.3. Conclusion

We have briefly sketched how ideas of decline of traditional structures and the decentering of the state are central for understanding theories of governance. For us, this is important because the relationship between government and civil society is framed in this debate on governance. A central theme in the governance literature is the so-called rise of networks to the extent that governance is equated with 'network governance' (e.g. Klijn, 2008; R. A. W. Rhodes, 1996). We argued that this is mostly due to the influence of post-traditional theories of society that are often more asserted than effectively argued (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 4). As a result the concept of 'networks' are dominating the debate on governance. The danger of this perspective is that it "tends to lead to a focus on the soft power of persuasion and a neglect of the hard realities of power (…)." (Stoker, 2011, p. 29). In the following section we will present three general critiques on the concept of 'network governance'.

3. Three critiques on network governance

In the previous section we have shown how for many authors 'networks' have become the dominant mode of governance, leading to an equation of 'governance' with 'network' governance. We do not wish to dismiss the qualities of networks as a useful concept for analysis, but we do wish to highlight some important critiques on the dominance of network governance. In this way we want to "put networks in their place" (Davies & Spicer, 2015, p. 224). Three major critiques in the literature on governance stand out. First of all, the claim that networks have displaced hierarchies is widely overstated. Secondly, networks are not a radically new mode of governance, especially in European context. Finally, it can be argued that the proposed dominance of networks is more an ideological statement than an analytical one.

3.1. Networks have not displaced hierarchies

The central claim in network governance literature is that networks have displaced hierarchies as the main social form. However, even Bevir by now admits that this claim was overly dramatic: "hierarchic bureaucracies are still the dominant form of public governance" (Bevir, 2012, ch.4). In more general terms Bell and Hindmoor argue that "states have not been hollowed out and the exercise of state authority remains central to most governance strategies" (2009, pp. 1–2). They present a wide overview of cases of hierarchical governance by governments (2009, pp. 71–92). For instance, despite the influence of the logic of privatisation, state-owned enterprises are still numerous in several countries and even where privatisation has occurred it has been accompanied by an extension of regulatory powers (2009, p. 75). In relation to many civil society organisations governments rely on extensive auditing procedures, further strengthening the argument that hierarchies are widely important (2009, p. 76). Another important domain of hierarchical government intervention is in the occurrence of market failures, such as in the management of scarce resources, public health and social security (2009, pp. 79–80). Bell and Hindmoor refer to Moran who states that the current hierarchical modern state is "characterised by stronger central controls, and extensive auditing and quantitative measurement of performance" (2009, pp. 88–89). This last claim is also supported by Perri 6, who cites the rise of new regulatory agencies that are constantly monitoring and assessing the delivery of public services (2015). In his evaluation of the ESRC Local Governance Programme (1992-97) Davies found that hierarchies and markets were still prevalent in UK local governments (2000).

Perri 6 argues that these claims about displacement of hierarchies come from a "theoretical misunderstanding of hierarchy" (2015, p. 58). Hierarchies have often been confused with bureaucracies and coercion-based governing, while instead they are essentially rule-based systems and as such they *can* be coercive or bureaucratic but not necessarily. More fundamentally, he argues that thinking about governance in terms of networks, hierarchies and markets is theoretically misguided and should be abandoned "in favour of better-specified theory and method" (6, 2015, p. 71). In section 4 we will propose such a theory and method building on insights from Gramsci.

3.2. Governance reform was less radical than proposed

This critique on the governance concept is especially important in European context. As Bode (2011)shows, in European countries (Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria) network-based interactions between government and civil society occurred from early on. In his study on elderly care in Germany, France and England he finds that "inter-agency collaboration as such is nothing new in this field so that viewing (co-)governance as a substitute for hierarchical government or market governance does not make sense here." (Bode, 2006, p. 1). Even though Bode still accepts the use of 'networks' as concept, in the European context public service delivery is caught more in a dynamic of marketisation than further decentring of state authority through network governance. Even for the UK, Pyper (2015) argues, the idea that network governance as something radically new is not supported. Specifically in the construction of the post-WWII welfare state many different actors were involved, leading to the idea that maybe the era of the centralist state was more the exception rather than the rule (Pyper, 2015, p. 20). This is also argued by Marinetto and Perri 6, who trace the occurrence of multi-actor policymaking and service delivery back to the immediate postwar years (6, 2015; Marinetto, 2003a). "The claim that the 1980s represents a grand discontinuity in the history of public administration is, at best, greatly exaggerated, and, at worst, false; indeed, the reverse may be closer to the truth" (6, 2015, p. 66).

In sum, the notion that 'network governance' is something radically new, as is captured in its connection to the thesis of a second modernisation process, is not undisputed. Specifically regarding the relationship between governments and civil society organisations in European countries with their (neo)corporatist traditions and historical "pillars" (Billiet, 2004; Brandsen & Pape, 2015; Dekker, 2005), it can be argued that there have always been extensive partnerships and interactions. As such, the notion of a displacement of 'government' by 'network governance' does not fit particularly well with the European case (Bode, 2011).

3.3. Network governance as ideological hegemony

Underlying the previous two critiques is the idea that governance is often more a normative concept than a descriptive concept. In her literature review of the governance concept, Cepiku notes that there is often confusion in international literature between these two dimension of the concept, and that more attention should be given to separating the two (Cepiku, 2008, p. 110). According to Davies the centrality of 'networks' in the literature on governance is related to the dominance of the neoliberal ideology (Davies, 2011a, 2012). Building on insights from Boltanski and Chiapello, he argues that 'networks' are a crucial part of the neoliberal hegemony because in the age of informational capitalism the "connectionist paradigm" is celebrated and has to legitimised (Davies, 2011b). Davies shows how in the UK, networks have become the dominant paradigm on both sides of the political spectrum, seen as an inherently positive force of change that would lead to 'inclusive' governance through both competition and cohesion (Davies, 2012, p. 2697).

While the dominance of neoliberalism as ideology can be contested, the normative assumptions surrounding networks must not be ignored. Even if one supports the idea that networks have become more prolific, as Sørensen and Torfing do, this should not lead to an uncritical "celebration of the merits of network governance" (SøRensen & Torfing, 2009, p. 236). So, instead of "fetishising"

any particular form of governance, "a more agnostic approach to governance research" should be adopted (Davies & Spicer, 2015).

3.4. Conclusion

We have argued how the perceived proliferation of networks can be contested on three grounds: hierarchies have not been displaced by networks, networks are not a radically new mode of interaction between government and nongovernmental actors, and the concept of network is often normatively and ideologically used. However, this does not mean that we wish to throw away the concept of networks entirely. Networks as a social form play a role in society and this has to be part of any governance study. Disposing of the network concept in its entirety would be extreme (Davies & Spicer, 2015). Rather, what is contested here is the idea that networks are an all-pervasive form of governance in today's society and that networks are a radically new way of organising (specifically important for our research project) public service delivery and politics.

Instead of joining the 'celebration of the network' this papers presents a framework to examine the relationship between government and civil society that focuses on the dialectics between coercion and hegemony. This neo-Gramscian perspective builds on work previously done by Jonathan Davies (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014b) which was inspired by the same concerns regarding the dominance of the network governance paradigm. Our approach differs in that it supplements the Gramscian perspective with a more institutionally focused analysis that takes into consideration the internal differentiation of civil society and governments. We find that many (neo-)Gramscian analyses have more consideration for the complexities and diversity of civil society than for those of governments. In sections 4 and 5 we outline how this can be achieved and apply this idea to three dimensions of the relationship between government and civil society.

4. A neo-Gramscian approach to governance

The critiques outlined above are central to the model we will propose for our research project on the relationship between government and civil society. We argue that Gramsci's view on government and civil society responds to the concerns in the previous sections. First of all, Gramsci's dialectics between coercion and hegemony (see below) offers an alternative to the network-hypothesis that takes into consideration the so-called "mix" between hierarchies, networks and markets, albeit in different terms. Secondly, a Gramscian perspective still offers us the possibility of relating dynamics in the relationship between government and civil society to changes in the wider social order. Rather than literally applying Gramsci's ideas on societal structure we are guided by his attention to the dynamics of social reproduction. Here our model will differ from the proposal by Jonathan Davies in his Gramscian critique on governance (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014b). As we will show, we present a less orthodox interpretation of Gramsci that does not dispense with the notion of networks but reframes it in the dialectics of the Gramscian 'integral State'. Furthermore, in section 5 we will supplement the Gramscian perspective with a more institutionally focused analysis that takes into consideration the internal differentiation of civil society and governments. We find that many (neo-)Gramscian analyses have more consideration for the complexities and diversity of civil society than for those of governments. Our aim is to show how a Gramscian inspired framework helps to identify how different coercive and hegemonic relations give form to the interaction between governments and civil society organisations.

It is also important to emphasise that this paper uses the analytical tools developed in work of Gramsci and the large literature commenting on his work from the ideological assumptions of some authors working with Gramsci's concept. Specifically we are referring to the tendency to regard 'civil society' as a positive, progressive force and 'government' as a negative, limiting force in democracy. While not always explicit, this assumption is reflected in the attention given to the internal differentiation of civil society without doing the same for government (e.g. Agustín & Jørgensen, 2016). We argue that the dialectics between coercion and hegemony must be extended from a homogenous view of government and civil society to a view of both spheres as internally complex differentiated realities. Only in this way can the dialectical relationship between both be fully grasped.

4.1. The integral State

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

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

perpetuating the subalternity of other strata. (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 4 - our emphasis).

Political society here refers to government in a broad sense or the state in a narrow sense: the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, the police, administrative systems, etc. (Buttigieg, 1995, 2005; Simon, 1991). In terms of power, government is the sphere of *coercion* which can force people to act according to a set of rules and norms either by direct violence or by the implicit threat of violence. Yet government is only the 'most immediately visible aspect of the state'. Gramsci developed his notion of the state in search of a way to understand how power in modern liberal societies is distributed (Buttigieg, 2009). The use of coercive political power is not enough to explain this, it is in civil society that a more stable base for power is constructed, namely on the basis of *hegemony*. "In other words, civil society is the arena wherein the ruling class extends and reinforces its power by *nonviolent means*." (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 26 - our emphasis). Consequently Gramsci writes: "State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion" (Gramsci, 2006, p. 80). Hegemony is the establishment of dominant ideology and institutions through *leadership* and *consensus* (Buttigieg, 1995). Thus, *political power* in the State is achieved with a combination of domination through *coercion* and *hegemony* through leadership and consensus. The "State", then, refers to this collection of mechanisms of political power that in its turn is built on and simultaneously relies on a corresponding economic base (Coutinho & Sette-Camara, 2012, p. 82).

Importantly, hegemony should not be understood as a conspiracy or a preconceived strategy for social domination by a certain class, but as a set of existing social relations that are more beneficial to specific social classes than others. A social order is the outcome of the forces at play in political and civil society (in relation to the economic system), of the dynamic between coercion and hegemony, that is not simply 'controlled' by a social class (Simon, 1991). These classes then 'exercise' hegemonic power in the sense that through their participation in certain institutions and organisations they reproduce the existing social order. On the side of civil society, the institutions and organisations where the hegemonic process plays out are the press, the media, schools, churches, trade unions, cultural associations, political parties, business associations, etc. In sum: "the 'private apparatuses of hegemony', that is, voluntary social collective organisms relatively autonomous in the face of political society" (Coutinho & Sette-Camara, 2012, p. 82).

In a Gramscian perspective three sets of relations are important for understanding the position of social actor in society: the relations of production (economy), the coercive relations (government) and all other social relations (civil society) (Simon, 1991). In this view it is the role that organisations play in the coercive or hegemonic nature of the relations between the different spheres of society that comes into focus. The educational system is for instance linked to all three spheres through coercive government policy (legal age of attendance), hegemonic discourse in civil society (non-coercive learning of norms and values) and economic structures (reproducing inequalities). Labour unions in Belgium are another example of how CSOs are related to different spheres of society: they are linked to the relations of production (economy), delivery of unemployment benefits (government), policymaking (government and civil society) and the political debate and collective action (civil society). Furthermore, it is clear that many CSOs combine service delivery and politicising work in a complex relationship with possibly different forms of governments – resulting in a complex mix of coercive and hegemonic relations. For instance, in a survey of Flemish nonprofits

in the welfare sector, Verschuere & De Corte researched the impact of public funding (Verschuere & De Corte, 2013, 2014). Their findings indicate that the influence of government control in this particular sector is more focused on outcomes than internal processes. Through the use of coercive administrative procedures, government has a strong influence on target groups and expected results of these CSOs However, when it comes to strategic decision-making a large group of managers consider their organisation to be an "equal partner" with the government that funds them. These findings can be considered as part of the hegemonic political culture in civil society in Flanders, where CSOs in the welfare sector traditionally have a close relationship with government. This could also point in the direction of a hegemonic political culture where public dissensus is avoided in favour of closed-circuit deal making. In the case of Flemish-Belgian politics this type of political culture has been indicated before (e.g. Dewachter, 2001).

To conclude, two key points must be emphasised with regard to *hegemony*. In Gramsci's view civil society is to be seen as the domain of hegemony, which is constructed through a wide variety of processes and institutions. At the same time, civil society is the place where possibilities for alternatives to hegemony can be formulated – of cited by authors as instances of *counterhegemony* (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2016; Katz, 2006; Loopmans, 2008), although Gramsci himself does not use this term (Buttigieg, 2009, p. 31). The idea of counterhegemony thus points to the role civil society plays in challenging hegemonic dominance and as such can form the basis for political and social change. The second point which must be emphasised it that it is easy to forget that while hegemony is built on consensus this does not mean that the use of *coercion* is absent. In Gramscian terms: a dominant ideology is never without its 'armour of coercion'. Examples of this are the use of coercive managerial procedures and norms in urban planning, despite collaborative rhetoric and techniques. Davies argues that local governments have a wide array of coercive techniques at their disposal that can result in an "administrative domination": "Depending on state-specific divisions of labour, these include juridical enforcement, policing, incarceration, school inspection and traffic and housing management (bailiffs, traffic wardens and rent collectors)." (Davies, 2014b, p. 8).

4.2. A Neo-Gramscian approach

In his Gramscian critique on governance Davies compared his own "orthodox" position to other possible interpretations of Gramsci's writings. We find this to be a very useful overview, and have selected that part of his comparison that is most relevant to our discussion here in Table 1 below. As is clear, many factors of this comparison refer back to the discussion on the concept of network governance in section 2. We will discuss some parts of this table in order to clearly state our position with regard to the academic literature on Gramsci, and more in particular the relationship between government and civil society.

Table 1: Competing Gramscian perspectives on governance (adopted from Davies, 2011: 103-104)

	Orthodox Gramscian	Neo-Gramscian	Post-Gramscian
Civil Society	Part of the integral state and the dialectics of coercion-consent	Relative autonomy or autopoiesis	"Civil Society" is reification. Myriad forces of sociability.
Hegemony	Incomplete and always contested	Provisional but strong and weakly contested	Post-hegemony
Coercion / Consent	Coercion as the condition of consent	Emphasis on consent and underplays coercion	Coercion redundant amid rampant subjectivities
Privileged actors	Capitalists, states and classes	Global 'nébuleuse' and social movements	Individual connectionists and fluid networks
Agency	Agents endowed with power through position in the social structure	Agents act reflexively on relatively malleable social structures	The subject unfettered from the yoke of tradition
Agent of transformation	Class	Social Movement	Multitude, swarm, network
Organised network governance	Hegemonic strategy of states and markets in neoliberal passive revolution	Rise of networks in a 'mix' with states and markets	Networks emblematic of the connectionist epoch
Informal network governance	Closed power networks, for example policy communities, are the medium of exclusion and domination	Rise of heterodox networks in a 'mix' with hierarchies and markets	Networks exemplify the postmodern condition
Prominent network type	Power networks: policy communities, closed networks	Governance networks	Empire, multitude - network governance
Governance trends	Governance networks recuperated by hierarchies, from hegemony to dominance	More networks in a mix with market and hierarchy: towards metagovernance	Detraditionalisation, dispersion and the proliferation of networks
Concepts	Marxism, Orthodox Gramscian	Neo and Post-Marxist Gramscianism, Regulation theory, Metagovernance, Neo-intuitionalism	Actor-Network Theory, Differentiated Polity Model, Post-hegemony, Reflexive modernisation
Key Thinkers	Benson	Cox, Jessop	Beck, Bevir, Lash, Rhodes

Our position can be found mostly under the header of the "neo-Gramscian" approach, although there are some important overlaps with the orthodox position. In section 2 we outlined our reservations with the network governance paradigm, specifically with the fact that it considers networks to be the emblematic social form of contemporary society. We do however, consider the "mix" of hierarchies, markets and networks (to name the idealtypical social forms used in goverance literature) to be an important part of our analysis. However, we do agree with Davies' critique on this notion of a 'mix' in that it must not be used in a way that covertly still assigns primacy to the form of networks over other social forms. This critique is also reflected in our position on the first three characteristics in the table above concerning the nature of civil society, hegemony and the coercion/consent dialectics. From the previous section (4.1) it is clear that we start from a traditional or orthodox Gramscian approach with an emphasis on the dialectical relationship between coercion and consent, government and civil society. However, as we will argue in section 5, we do wish to emphasise the internally differentiated nature of both civil society and government, which leads us to a more neo-Gramscian interpretation of the privileged actors. Firstly, while maybe not adopting the language of the "nebuleuse" we do recognize the work done in governance literature in identifying alliances and coalitions of actors inside and outside of government. These alliances construct political agendas, mobilise resources and coordinate actions. Besides class identities as the basis for possible coalitions and conflicts, other possibilities can occur. As Hall argues, a Gramscian perspective does not only work for class-based analyses, but can be adapted to analyse dynamics of political identities around a variety of social categories (Hall, 1986) such as "political, moral, intellectual, cultural, ideological, sexual questions" (Hall in: Simon, 1991, p. 142). This is especially relevant in the discussion on the so-called 'traditional' and 'new' civil society organisations. The categorisation of 'new' is sometimes used to identify CSOs that are organised around environmental or cultural agendas, or around what we called in section 2 'risk politics'. This does not mean 'class' as an analytical category has lost its significance, but it can be read as more than an economically determined category (Hall, 1986). What this means concerning governance trends is less clear at this point. For Davies governance networks are instrumental in the hegemony of neoliberalism. For our project, this question is certainly an empirical one that can only be answered by exploring the dynamics of the relationship between governments and CSOs. Most importantly, we will set out to explore three dimensions of this relationship: the ideological dimension, the institutional arrangements and the street-level strategies. A combination of these three dimensions applied to a large-scale survey of Flemish central and local governments and CSOs, together with an in-depth research of selected cities and municipalities, will result in a broad overview of the dialectical relationships between government and civil society.

5. Three dimension of government-civil society relations

In his discussion of a Gramscian analysis of urban hegemony, Davies acknowledges that an analysis of coercive power must take into account that much of its impact comes via "routine modalities" through "the myriad technologies of administrative domination" (Davies, 2012, p. 2693). We argue that this attention to the routine application of coercive powers applies as well to the techniques of noncoercive power in the interaction between governments and CSOs. In a later article, Davies calls for more study on how "configurations of coercive and noncoercive power in cities" have evolved (Davies, 2014a, p. 594). Related to our research topic, we believe that a multi-dimensional analysis of the interaction between governments and CSOs takes place can answer this need for more specific analysis. In order to achieve this we will focus our research on three specific dimensions of this relationship so that a more fine-grained analysis becomes possible. As a first level of analysis we will look at ideologies operate in the interactions between governments and CSOs: what are the ideas dominating government and civil society discourse? Secondly, we will analyse the institutional arrangements through which the coercive and noncoercive interactions between governments and CSOS are built. Here attention will be given not just to formal rules and regulations, but also to the informal norms, the narratives that are reproduced, and the routine application of these institutions in governments and CSOs. As a third dimension, we will zoom in on the street level strategies at work in governments and CSOs: how do workers in day-to-day operations implement official policies?

The figure below shows how the interplay between coercive and hegemonic relationships between government and civil society take place throughout the different dimensions. We will present all three dimension in this section, but first we have say a few words on the internal differentiation of both government and civil society.
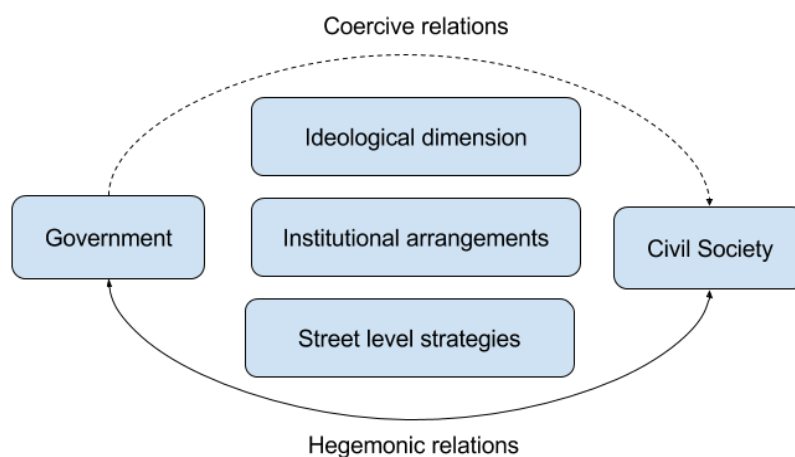
5.1. Internal differentiation of government and civil society

Throughout the discussion so far we have mentioned that it is important to keep in mind that both government and civil society are not homogenous entities. When it comes to **civil society** it is clear that there is a wide array of literature on the nature throughout which the debate on what exactly civil society is, has received many insightful contributions (Arato, 1994; Bunyan, 2014; Cohen & Arato, 1997; Edwards, 2011, 2014; Evers & Laville, 2005b). When discussing its relationship to governments and markets the term "third sector" is often used (Taylor, 2010), but also other concepts have been used, such as nonprofit sector (Salamon & Anheier, 1997) or social economy (Evers & Laville, 2005a; Moulaert & Ailenei, 2005), all aiming to capture the dynamics of a 'sector' or social sphere that is distinct from government and markets. In the end, civil society (or third sector) captures a wide domain of different organisations with their own unique characteristics, occupying a wide domain in society. In the neo-Gramscian perspective we have presented, civil society is a social sphere that has its own autonomous logic distinct from the coercive logic of government and the logic of production of economy. Civil society is the sphere of hegemony and includes family, schools, universities, political parties, religious groups, business interest groups, ... in short, all private voluntary associations that are relatively autonomous from government.

Government must be observed with the same attention for the internal complexities as well. This insight is mostly absent from work inspired on by Gramsci's analysis. For instance, although Davies argues that governments are complex entities (considering departments, agencies, scales, …) he relates this complexity mostly to the difficulties governments can face in establishing dominating strategies (e.g. Davies, 2014a). What's missing from this view, and the Gramscian perspective in general, is how actors inside governments can also have conflicting views on the hegemonic relationship with civil society. For instance, Prior and Barnes (Prior & Barnes, 2011) show that frontline workers can show considerable resistance to the implementation of official policies. Such resistance by itself is of course not enough to counter larger hegemonic relations, but the same is true for counterhegemonic tendencies in CSOs. The point is that more attention should be given to how actors inside government are related to other actors in governments and civil society, and how these relations contribute (or not) to the dialectics between coercion and hegemony.

The classical definition of government offered by Heywood in his handbook on *Politics* offers a good start to capture this complexity:

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

Heywood summarised nicely how government can refer to three things. First there is domain of collective decision making; second there are the institutions that organise the different authorities of decision making; third there is government as the executive branch of policymakers. In the neo-Gramscian perspective that we have developed so far, the first level refers to the 'political society' as

the domain of the integral state that is capable of enforcing collective decisions by use of coercion. The institutions that are primarily concerned with this function are the executive, the legal institutions, police and military, but also the many administrative entities that are created by government in order to specialise on certain specific domains (e.g. energy, infrastructure, health, education, culture, etc.). Further differentiation has to be made however.

First of all government, in all three of its meanings, operates throughout different scales (local, regional, national and international). Government operates inside a certain territory in which it has authority, which is something that is not fixed but part of continuous social construction (Sassen, 2006). It is also not the same "government" at work in these different scales as institutions can vary greatly. Even in the meaning of systems of decision making, multiple forms of government can be at work at the same time (for example a national democratic government that is dealing with an international technocratic government). Another aspect to consider is the relationship between local, regional, national and international institutions of governments. Not only do we have to consider the various core executives of government, but also the variety of agencies and partnerships between them. For instance, in Flanders, there are many partnerships between the local governments, creating a diverse field of institutions on the regional level (as in: between the local and central government) (Temmerman, De Rynck, Wayenberg, & Voets, 2012).

Secondly, there is an important distinction to be made between the political dimension of government and the administrative dimension. We know that administrators are not passive subordinates of the political executives, but that they have considerable discretion in carrying out their tasks (Lipsky, 2010), and can even have considerable influence on policymaking. Administrators can even develop strategies that lead to a subversion of the policy they are intended to implement (e.g. Prior & Barnes, 2011).

If we apply these insights simultaneously a complex picture emerges of different levels of government with different authorities, agendas and resources; different actors inside these governments, on the side of politics as well as administration, who can have conflicting interests or outlooks; and different types of relations (financial, regulatory, oversight, etc.) that can also possibly conflict with each other.

The literature on the relationship between government and CSOs offers several attempts at constructing **typologies** of the dynamics between both spheres (Coston, 1998; De Corte & Verschuere, 2014; Furneaux & Ryan, 2014; Mcloughlin, 2011; Najam, 2000; Young, 2000). We believe these typologies can be useful instruments in presenting some partial aspects of the dynamics involved, but can also be overly reductionist and simplifying. The very nature of typologies results in a very undifferentiated view of government and civil society, that is also usually a static view as it can only capture some relations at a certain point in time. Some authors also admit that many of these typologies lack sufficient empirical testing (De Corte & Verschuere, 2014; Furneaux & Ryan, 2014; Mcloughlin, 2011). Moreover, we should consider the gains of constructing typologies. If typologies only list the different types of relations according to a two-dimensional scheme, the resulting analysis remains firmly trapped in the specific locality of the observations. In sum, while we consider some typologies to be useful as concise methods of conveying partial information, it is at the very least important that these typologies capture the internal differentiation of both

government and civil society. For example, in the often-cited typology of Young (Young, 2000) the three 'idealtypical' relations between government and civil society (supplementary, complementary, adversarial) are not considered to be mutually exclusive (2000, p. 151), offering some degree of complexity. However, Young explicitly abstracts "from some of the messy detail of the real world" (2000, p. 151) in order to construct a more abstract model wherein the relation between government and civil society is considered only as a relation between the two domains 'in general'.

There are also some typologies that consider the internal complexities of governments and try to integrate it. Two often cited examples are the typologies developed by Coston (1998) and Najam (2000). Another one is a recent effort by Furneaux and Ryan (2014), who propose a five-dimensional typology. **Coston** developed a model where relations between government and nongovernmental organisations are placed on a 8-point continuum. This continuum ranks the 8 types of relationships according to the "government actor's relative acceptance or resistance to institutional pluralism, degree of formalization of the relationship, and the relative power asymmetry in the relationship." (Coston, 1998, p. 362). She acknowledges that "Governments are not monolithic: regimes of all types may incorporate agencies and actors that are more cooperative or repressive than the overall regime." (1998, p. 363). She also emphasises that the power-relation between governments and CSOs are inherently asymmetrical: governments can dominate CSOs more than the other way around. The result a continuum in which three types of relations are considerably more assymetrical (repression, rivalry and competition), and five tend to have more balanced power relations (contracting, third party, cooperation, complementarity, collaboration). The value of Coston's approach is the detail to different dimensions of the power asymmetry between governments and CSOs and the room it leaves for individual cases within the same sector to differ greatly. An important part of her approach is to look at how particular governments and CSOs are situated in a wider political and institutional context.

Najam takes the approach of building a typology based on the goals and strategies of the organisations involved and how they align. This way he constructs four categories which he calls the Four C's Model: cooperation (similar goals and similar strategies), confrontation (different goals, different strategies), complementarity (similar goals, but different strategies) and co-optation (different goals, but similar strategies). The value of this typology is that it shows how specific organisations can relate to different parts of government in several ways, depend on what is at stake (goals) and how each actor tries to achieve their goals. Najam thus aims to bring into view how organisations "are driven not just by the grand schema of sectors and politics, but by the reality and rationality of their institutional interests and priorities" (Najam, 2000, p. 391). He also explicitly acknowledges that governments, like CSOs, are not monolithic entities: "different agencies and actors within the same government can nurture different types of relationships with a given NGO, and vice versa." (Najam, 2000, p. 391).

A last typology we would like to briefly point out here, is five-dimensional model proposed by **Furneaux and Ryan** in their study of Australian CSOs (2014). They conclude their paper with a conceptual, not yet empirically tested, model using five factors: power asymmetry, conditions to funding, goal and value alignment, shared planning and decision-making, and criteria for accountability. Each factor can be scored (they propose using scores from 1 to 5) and the result is a web-like map of each organisations position on the web:
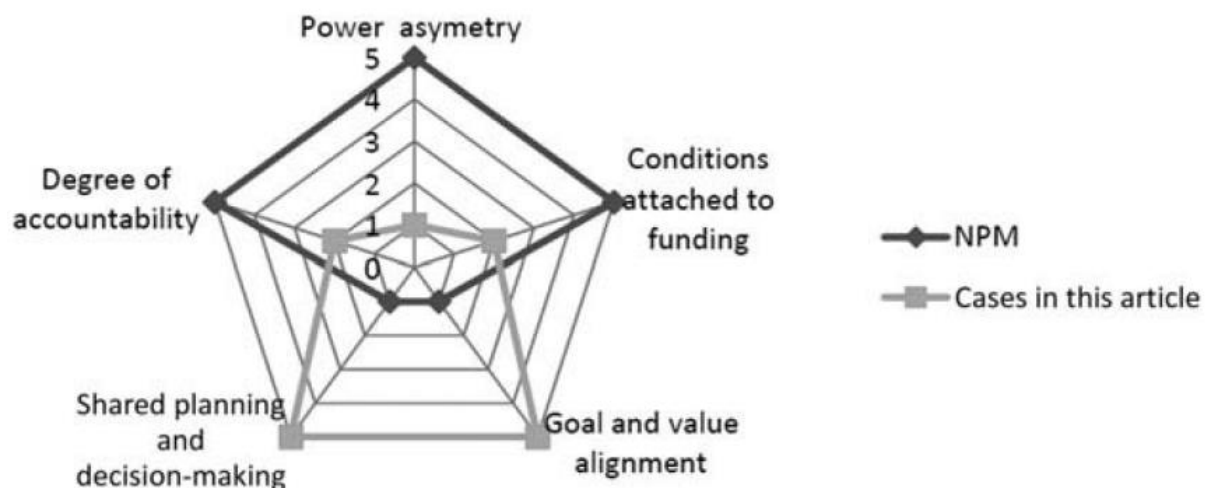
Figure 1: A multidimensional typology of government-CSO relationships (Furneaux & Ryan, 2014, p. 1133).

What's interesting about this model is that aims to offer an alternative to the two-dimensional models that are mostly used. We think this can be a valuable approach since it combines the advantages of typologies with the strength of a more complex multi-dimensional analyses. However, we think that the last four factors suggested by Furneaux and Ryan are not sufficiently worked out. Most importantly, we would argue that they are in fact part of the larger "power asymmetry" between governments and CSOs. In order to be able to use this model, more work needs to be done in outlining how the dialectics between hegemony and coercion take form throughout the many relations between CSOs and governments.

5.2. Ideological dimension

Ideology is an important part of the hegemonic dynamics in society as it is concerned with the construction of a set of ideas on 'the rules of the game'. Ideology can be understood as a set of ideas that offer a view on the social order (in this case on the role and function civil society and government in society) and that offer strategies of political change in order to achieve a different social order (Heywood, 2012). This also means that ideology is never a single state of affairs, but a continuous coexistence of conflicting ideas and visions – in other words, it is a thoroughly hegemonic construct. "The question is how these ideological currents are diffused and why in the process of diffusion they fracture along certain lines and in certain directions." (Hall, 1986, p. 22). This continuous ideological construction takes place on both sides of the relationship, in government and in civil society. In government certain ideological beliefs are at play concerning the role of civil society and the role of government; and in civil society the same happens. What's more, inside individual organisations (governmental and nongovernmental) different ideological notions can be at play. To illustrate this, one can consider the differences in ideological perspectives in Flanders concerning the role of labour unions in the political process. Historically, labour unions have played an important part (and still do) in the institutionalised policy-making process with government and employers' organisations. They also have an important role in the delivery of welfare benefits. According to some politicians this service delivery role should be transferred away from the labour unions to the government. Some also would prefer another role for labour unions in the policy-

making processing, limiting their presence in the policymaking process on the national and regional level to the level of sectors or firms. At the same time, this debate takes part in the labour unions themselves: what role do they wish to keep vis-a-vis government policy; does taking part in the service delivery process make them too dependent on the government; can they still develop an oppositional stand against government policy while taking part in an institutionalised policymaking process?

Key questions to explore in both government and CSOs are:

● What are the hegemonic elements in government discourse (by representatives, in policy documents, etc.)? What about in civil society?
● Related to this, can we identify 'counterhegemonic' elements in discourse?
● Can we identify normative elements of the three 'idealtypical' governance paradigms?
    o Is there a difference between governments and CSOs? (and is there a gap between discourse and reality – see the institutional arrangements below)
● How do different actors in civil society (individuals, organisations, political parties, business associations, etc.) perceive and evaluate the role and function of CSOs in society? How do governments (representatives, policy documents, media appearances, etc.) perceive and evaluate the role of CSOs?

5.3. Institutional arrangements

Here we are interested in institutions as the relatively stabilised sets of rules, norms and practices that take place in governmental and nongovernmental organisations (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013; Roderick A. W. Rhodes, 2006). Institutions are what all actors understand to be the rules of the game, which means the explicit norms as well as the implicit assumptions. Lowndes and Roberts present an insightful distinction between rules, practices and narratives (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013):

● **Rules** are formal institutions such as legal procedures or administrative rules. They can be found in written documents.
● **Practices** are informal institutions, "the way things are done". They can analysed through observation of participants. A well-known example are 'rules in use' that can have considerably different impact than 'rules in form'.
● **Narratives** are institutions that are communicated through the telling of stories, by using symbolic forms, or by using 'scripts such as "speeches, mission statements, logos, design or style" (2013, p. 63)

A key element of institutions is that deviations from what is (formally or informally) expected can be sanctioned in one way or another, ranging from coercive action, over threats of violence to informal disapproval. The trichotomy between hierarchies, markets and networks that is so often used in governance literature should not be equated with a division between coercive power (in hierarchies) and noncoercive power (in markets and networks). It can be expected that both forms of power occur in all three modalities of governance (6, 2015; Davies, 2014b). Equally so, the institutional arrangements with which these relations of power are constructed cannot be divided strictly according to the coercive (which then supposedly be the formal rules) and noncoercive (the informal practices and narratives) distinction.

Importantly, institutional arrangements can consist of rules, practices and narratives that coexist tightly in a clear overarching frame, but they can also consist of conflicting rules, practices or narratives. An example of this are the auditing procedures that CSOs have to participate in when receiving subsidies from a government agency. Formally, the rules prescribe CSOs to measure their performance and report the findings to the administrators. There are however examples of practices that undermine the formal goal of this arrangement. First of all, the administrators might not have the time and means to actually perform an audit, leading to pro-forma reporting by the CSO. Secondly, the organisation can have a close relation with the government agency and as such is allowed to determine the criteria according to which it should be evaluated. In both case, the 'rule in use' (practices) differ greatly form the intention of the formal rules.

To conclude this discussion of institutions, we would like point to an article by Cunningham (2016) as a good example of the interplay between the ideological dimension and institutional arrangements. It deals with the impact of personalisation in social care in Scotland in the context of public service austerity aimed at reducing public expenditures. He shows how an ideological commitment to pursue personalisation and to austerity as part of a long-term marketisation agenda has resulted in more market-like techniques in CSOs, although to varying degrees and at different speeds. Cunningham show how this process of forced marketisation resulted in a shift in "hard" and "soft" management techniques in most of the CSOs he interviewed. These techniques form a continuum in degrees of coerciveness, from promoting new values and skills via training, over new recruitment policies to new monitoring procedures and introducing more flexible contracts. What's more, this study opens the possibility to explore if these shift in ideological programme and institutional arrangements can also lead to resistance by workers (Cunningham, 2016, p. 17). This is the theme we pick up in the following section.

Key questions to explore in these institutional arrangements:

- With which governments (and which actors inside these governments) does the CSO have formal or informal interactions? For the government: does it have an overview of the CSOs with which it deals with on a regular basis? And what about the CSOs it doesn't have any relation with?
- Formal rules:
  - Financial arrangements: the degree of financial dependency on government subsidies? Does this impact the autonomy of the organisation? **Austerity**
  - Accountability: What are the procedures of accountability? (reports, documents, auditing, data gathering, etc.) What criteria are used?
  - Management techniques: are there formal management procedures outlined?
- Informal practices:
  - For the abovementioned formal rules: how are they implemented? Are there different 'rules in use' that supplement, reinforce or contradict the formal rules?
    - For example, in the case of reinforcement: do CSO implement stricter NPM techniques than the auditing criteria demand? In the case of contradiction: Is reporting used as an actual auditing tool or only to follow procedure?
  - What kind of informal interactions occur? How do they relate to the formal arrangements? Are there informal practices that conflict with formal arrangements?
  - What are the dominant management techniques?

- Narratives:
  - Are there stories on the local political context that occur frequently? (eg. "this city has always been good to civil society initiatives", "local politics can't do anything", …)

5.4. Street-level strategies

At this point in the analysis we are concerned with the how the relationship between CSOs and governments take place on what is called "street level". What is at stake here is the possibility that CSOs can develop strategies that can reinforce certain policies with being formally expected to do so, of to develop strategies by which they can respond to government policies that go against the values of the organisation. Kim (2014) explored this in a study on South Korean nonprofits who developed strategies to deal with the marketisation policies set out by their government. In the case of conflicting values between government and CSOs this can of course be seen as part of the broader hegemonic dynamic. A hegemonic strategy for public service delivery will always be contested, since hegemony is by definition unstable and subject to counter-forces. For Davies, the fact that citizens in governance networks (and we can add: administrators, front line workers, etc…) can from counter-strategies to the intended policies might be a possible reason for why networks have a tendency to devolve into hierarchies or more coercive administrative policies (Davies, 2011a, 2011b).

When we focus on street-level actors we mean public workers both in government and civil society organisations who are in frequent interaction with citizens, colleagues and other professionals and have to make decisions for which they have considerable discretion. (Lipsky, 2010; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). As such, they are actors that have to implement very concretely the coercive and hegemonic dynamics of public service delivery. Since street-level actors are tasked with implementation of policy they experience daily how their CSO operates in relationship to government. The same goes for government officials who work at the street-level of government policy. Even for government workers their 'room for manoeuvre' can go to great lengths, in so much as they have considerable possibilities to subvert formal policy (Prior & Barnes, 2011). The relation between street-level actors and policy goals does not always have to be negative however. The possibility of discretion in implementation also gives workers the ability to tailor formal rules to the needs of clients, which results in more meaningful work and a higher willingness to implement the policies (Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). As Evans and Harris argue, discretion (or 'room for manoeuvre') is a position to be examined, and can manifest itself as a positive or negative act (Evans, 2004). Furthermore, it can be argued that with more formal rules comes more room for manoeuvre: "Rules may actually be an impediment to supervision. They may be so voluminous and contradictory that they can only be enforced or invoked selectively." (Lipsky, 2010, p. 14). The more rules are invoked, the more selections have to be made. Discretion at street-level is thus not necessarily harmful for policy, nor can it be replaced by more rules and regulations.

To sum up, when it comes to the implementation of formal rules and regulations street level actors in both government and civil society organisations have considerable degrees of discretion. Of course, this also means that they have a certain room for manoeuvre in their interactions with each other. In our research, we will focus on how CSOs and different parts of government deal with the implementation of official policies.

Key questions to explore in these street-level strategies:

- What aspects of government policy conflicts with the ideas of workers (CSO / government)? Are there organisational strategies developed to deal with this on street-level?
- Can we identify strategies that frontline workers develop
- What strategies are developed by CSOs that are affected by austerity measures?

5.5. Conclusion

In this section we have presented a framework for an analysis of the ideological and institutional construction of the hegemonic dialectics in the interactions between governments and civil society organisations. We believe that first of all the neo-Gramscian literature is in need of more work on the internal differentiation of especially governments. This means that governments should not be considered as monolithic institutions that serve a single hegemonic strategy. In the literature some typologies have been formulated to capture aspects of these complex relations, with some authors that have constructed typologies to take into account the internal complexities of both governments and CSOs. This is important because governments consists of many layers and actors, and can contain many internal differences and conflicts. Our own formulation of the Gramscian perspective aims to bring in these internal governmental differences as well. In order to take on this task we have presented how ideology, institutional arrangements and street level strategies all give form to the hegemonic dialectics between governments and civil society. This is by no means a definitive selection on the many aspects of this complicated relationship, but we believe that our selection combines two important qualities. First of all, it brings together elements of both coercive and hegemonic relations throughout both formal and informal interactions. An important part of this analysis is the insight that the distinction between hegemony through consensus and domination through coercion is not to be equated with the distinction between hierarchies (coercive) and networks and markets (noncoercive). Instead, we want to develop a research strategy that looks at how hegemony and coercion take place throughout ideological discourse, formal rules, informal practices and narratives and in street level strategies. Secondly, we believe our selection can be a further step in the development of a more fine-grained analysis of the relationship between government and civil society because it contains elements of different scales, different actors, and different types of formal and informal interactions.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the shift from government to governance in the understanding of the relationship between government and nongovernmental actors can be related to a great extent to the dominance of post-traditional theories on the decline of traditional structures and the decentring of the state. The concept of 'networks' stands at the heart of the connection between the concept of governance and these theories of society – so much so that governance has become equated with 'network governance'. The central claim in governance literature is that networks have displaced hierarchies as the main social form. In section 3 these claims have been disputed. Firstly, hierarchies are still seen by many authors as a crucial part of public governance. Secondly, the claim that 'network governance' was a radical departure from previous forms of governance does not hold in the European context of long standing interactions between government and nongovernmental actors. Thirdly, network governance can be related to the project of neoliberal hegemony and thus more ideologically motivated than analytically.

Section 4 presents an alternative to this paradigm of network governance in the form of a neo-Gramscian perspective on the relationship between government and civil society. In this perspective, the dialectics between coercion and hegemony are crucial for understanding this relationship, whereas the network governance paradigm relies overly much on soft power and understates the role of hard power. The final section adds to this perspective the understanding that both government and civil society organisations are not monolithic entities. It presents a complex picture of different levels of government and CSOs with different authorities, agendas and resources; different actors inside the organisations (governments and CSOs), who can have conflicting interests or outlooks; and different types of relations (financial, regulative, oversight, etc.) that can also possibly conflict with each other.

In order to analyse this complexity, three dimensions of the relationship between government and CSOs are presented. In the ideological dimension we will focus on how discourse in government and CSOs advance different world-views and political strategies. In the institutional arrangements between governments and CSOs attention is focused on formal rules, informal practices and communicated narratives. Finally, possible street level strategies in CSOs and governments to deal with the implementation of official policies will be examined.

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