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**“From Government to Governance – Still the Same Old Song?”**

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**Abstract**

The tension between the ‘democratic ethos’, understood in terms of meaningful self-government, and the maintenance of privileged political and economic power has long characterised modern politics. This paper explores this tension in the context of the terminological shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’. The central argument is that this apparently simple discursive shift signifies a reconfiguration of the institutions of political rule, leading to what might be best described as the ‘governance state’. This is a form of state that retains the shell of familiar democratic forms while minimising the possibilities of the democratic ethos to constrain the excesses of the prevailing relations of power. In the substitution of ‘governance’ for ‘government’, both conceptually and in practice, there is a danger that the familiar democratic practices of the past may no longer be capable of retaining their hold on our political imagination.

*Would it not be easier  
... for the government  
To dissolve the people  
And elect another?  
(Bertolt Brecht 1953)*

## **Introduction**

The terminological shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ within contemporary political discourse may well signify that an effective way to dissolve the people is at hand. Both ‘government’ and ‘governance’ can be understood as denoting a systematised means for structuring a society’s power relations and modes of political rule. The development of these relations and modes in their democratic form in industrialised and industrialising societies has been characterised by an enduring tension between the democratic ethos and the maintenance of privileged political and economic power. The idea of a ‘democratic ethos’ is here broadly understood to mean that all adult citizens are self-governing in the sense of collectively constituting and empowering the sovereign political authority. This ethos underpins the idealised core principles and practices defining a democratic government, whatever its particular institutional form. This is not to suggest that actually existing democracies are themselves embodiments of this ethos. Rather, invoking the idea of a democratic ethos serves as a statement of “an ideal model” in the sense of “set[ting] a marker” that enables contemporary practices to be considered “in relation to an ideal” (Crouch 2004, 3).

Considered in historical perspective the trajectory of democracy has been (and remains) heavily contested (Corcoran 1983; Dunn 1994; Wood 1996a; Crouch 2004; Rancière 2006). Whenever and wherever democratic ideas and practices have gained the ascendancy considerable efforts have gone into ensuring that their institutional expression heavily circumscribes the democratic ethos. The institutional forms of contemporary liberal democracy offer limited involvement at various levels of participation while at the same time distancing “people from their government in most other respects” (Hindess 1997, 81; Wood 1996a; Crouch 2004). Notwithstanding the specific limitations that might constrain the democratic ethos in practice, it is still accurate to suggest that the *idea* of the democratic ethos, the “dream of a self-governing community” (Hindess 1997, 81), “the maximal ideal” (Crouch 2004, 4), animates a range of claims to ground the authority for decision-making in the name of that community, which in turn also grounds the legitimacy of democratic political rule. Also significant among the principles and practices of democratic self-government is the expectation that a government’s actions should be politically accountable.

Since the early 1990s there has been a clear shift in terminology within political (and other) discourses favouring the term ‘governance’ rather than ‘government’. The sheer preponderance of the use of ‘governance’ as a key political term would suggest that the shift is well established and, for many, relatively uncontroversial. While there has been no shortage of commentaries on the deployment of ‘governance’ as a term in a variety of settings, especially in the fields of political science, public administration and public policy, these commentaries have not been especially critical (Kooiman 1993; Rhodes 1997; De Alacánta 1998; Pierre & Peters 2000; Richardson & Smith 2002; Whitman 2005). Indeed, advocacy of the terminological shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ has occasioned very little contrary comment. Yet it is not clear how the relationships

between political authority, accountability, and the democratic ethos operate within a discursive context in which 'governance' rather than 'government' is the centrally defining term. Even a scholar whose work has been at the forefront of discussions of governance theory and practice noted the likely possibility that prevailing understandings of accountability might not survive the shift to regimes informed by ideas of 'governance' (Rhodes 1997, 54; Hirst 2000, 19). This may well be symptomatic of what Crouch (2004, 19 ff.) has described as "post-democracy", a situation in which contemporary forms of democracy have become pale, yet still recognisable, imitations of "the maximal ideal".

In the rush to substitute 'governance' for 'government', both conceptually and in practice, there is a danger that the relationships between political authority, accountability, and the democratic ethos might undergo significant transformation such that the democratic ethos that informs them might disappear altogether. Hence a key aim of the paper is to explore how 'governance' might affect these relationships. The central argument is that the apparently simple terminological shift from 'government' to 'governance' reflects a shift from political empowerment of citizens, even in the limited representative democratic sense, to a form of regulation of political rule, seemingly democratic, that ultimately preserves existing relations of power (and thereby the advantages of the already advantaged). The paper begins with a discussion of two early arguments advocating the replacement of 'government' with 'governance', at least within the thinking of political science if not in the practice of politics. The focus then shifts to consider the relationship between democracy and accountability. It notes the tendency for the historical trajectory of the development of democracy to constrain both the democratic ethos and degree of democratic accountability, and then examines the problem of governance in terms of what some scholars refer to as the 'democratic deficit'. The argument concludes that 'governance' is not simply a symptom of a declining democratic ethos, a symptom of post-democracy as per Crouch (2004), it is one of the causes of that decline. The discursive shift from 'government' to 'governance' is a key means of dissolving the people. It signifies not change but continuity; but is it still the same old song?

### **From Government to Governance?**

In examining the governance literature it is curious that, prior to its rapid and widespread adoption in the early 1990s, there are very few examples of scholars arguing for the contemporary relevance of 'governance', and even less urging its adoption in preference to that of 'government'. Rather, it is often only after 'governance' gains discursive prominence and scholars begin arguing over its meanings and definitions that examples of advocacy also become more frequent. Even one of the most commonly cited sources for popularising the term, the World Bank (1992), does not engage in explicit advocacy for the substitution of 'governance' for 'government', but rather achieves a form of advocacy by using it within its reframed development discourse. That is, the terminology of 'governance' gains in popularity through repeated usage across a range of discourses. Its advocacy in this sense was largely in terms of its usefulness for understanding the complexities of governing at the close of the twentieth century (Richards & Smith 2002; Pierre 2000; Pierre & Peters 2000; Rhodes 1997; Kooiman 1993). In those contexts 'governance' was sometimes seen as a synonym for 'government', and occasionally as superior in its conceptual precision. But it was not seen as a replacement term for 'government'. Advocacy in that sense was almost non-existent prior to the rise of widespread presence of the term.

However, at the beginning of the 1990s there can be found occasional examples urging political scientists to abandon both the terminology and preoccupation with 'government' in favour of 'governance'. Two examples, indeed the only examples that I have been able to find thus far, were published in 1990 and 1992: the first by Boyer entitled "Political Science and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: From Government to Governance" and the other by Grell & Gappert, "The Future of Governance in the United States: 1992-2002". As noted this was a time when the idea of 'governance' was only just starting to make its presence felt in political science and political discourse more generally. These scholars were among the first within political science to put into print the idea that 'government' *should* give way to 'governance'. In that respect they were giving voice to developments that were taking shape at the time but had not yet found a sympathetic hearing within the political science literature.

A central concern for Boyer, and one that provided the context for his discussion, was that nation-states were becoming obsolete because of the rapidly developing levels of interdependence between them:

ideologies and national boundaries are being transcended by international science and global technologies ... whereby concepts of national ownership, national sovereignty, and national citizenship are giving way to concepts of a global village and the common heritage of humankind (Boyer 1990, 52).

Trend-setting measures such as privatisation, structural adjustment, deregulation, and the ongoing transitions within the then socialist societies were indicators that governments were no longer the central actors that they once were. The growth in international mechanisms as well as non-government actors on the world stage, such as multinational corporations, had shifted the focus away from governments to supra-national entities like the United Nations, the European Union and various international treaties, agreements and covenants.

Moreover, national governments were increasingly unable to deal with the severity and scale of crises that were looming and likely to worsen in the coming decades. He singled out sustainable development, environmental degradation, and global poverty as issues that required integrated solutions that combined with and recognised local conditions. However, it was not just a matter of recognising this interdependence, but that the interdependence and the associated problems were not going to lessen. Hence what was needed was a concerted rethinking of approaches to governing and institutionalised power, to "think unhabitually", to develop "broader institutions and perspectives that [would] focus on world poverty and international inequality" (Boyer 1990, 51).

For Boyer, the idea of 'governance' offered the appropriate conceptual opportunity to "think unhabitually" and to provide a "broader perspective". He defined "governance as the action of government plus its interaction with its nongovernmental partners in the process of governing – in their collective relationship with the economy and public policy" (Boyer 1990, 51). He noted that "non-government institutions are increasingly performing public functions" and hence there is a clear move away from government (Boyer 1990, 51). The idea of 'governance' makes it possible to conceptualise how the trends towards the increased convergence of government (ie public) and non-government (ie private) powers and interests can be harnessed effectively, at both the national and international levels. Boyer approvingly cited a view put forward ten years earlier by

scholar and diplomat Harlan Cleveland that “if we are going to govern ourselves, without inflating our governments more and more, [then] the nongovernments in our society will have to think of themselves quite self-consciously as part of governance” (Cleveland cited in Boyer 1990, 51). Indeed Boyer went on to argue that political scientists should “give priority attention to nongovernment institutions and their allocation of resources” (Boyer 1990, 51-2). In his view, governance provided the conceptual means to embrace a new “synthesis” that could acknowledge the growing convergence between the public and private sectors. Here it is quite clear that ‘governance’ is understood as a way of reconceptualising and reorganising political rule, shifting the emphasis away from past ways of understanding the nature and operation of government.

Echoing Boyer’s optimism, Grell & Gappert similarly saw the shift to governance as leading to a “restructuring of ideas [that] will include a new democracy, new leadership, and increased public participation”, a shift that they interpreted in terms of a move away from “excessive” and “highly politicized” government (Grell & Gappert 1992, 68 & 77). Like Boyer they too saw the impetus for this shift being driven by the “changes caused by advances in science and technology, lack of resources, and conflict created by immense desires for freedom, democracy, and equality” in a context that is “a fragile, vulnerable, interdependent global system (Grell & Gappert 1992, 74). In particular, the rapidly changing technologies, especially information technologies, were outstripping the capacities of contemporary “centralized hierarchical bureaucracies” to be able to adapt with sufficient speed or success (Grell & Gappert 1992, 70 & 77).

The emphasis had to be shifted from the institutions of government and reconceptualised, focusing on the “roles and goals” of those institutions. While in the past government had performed the role of mediator, its “new role should be that of steward of public values” (Grell & Gappert 1992, 74), a view that was also gaining popularity with others who would subsequently be prominent within the governance literature (see Walmsley 1990; Kooiman 1993; McGregor 1993). In contradistinction to ‘government’ Grell & Gappert (1992, 68) defined ‘governance’ as “an individual and collective act encompassing the ability to create and maintain the delicate balance necessary to act, process, and govern through, for, and with the needs and voices of a culturally diverse society”. They placed particular emphasis on the need “to create mechanisms and linkages that foster equitable, effective policies that, in turn, will be adaptable to future conditions” (Grell & Gappert 1992, 69 & 77).

However, despite referring to ‘governance’ as both an “individual and collective act” their discussion focused almost exclusively on individuals. Notwithstanding their references to “grass-roots efforts”, Grell and Gappert (1992, 76) placed the bulk of their emphasis on individuals as the key actors, as distinct from networks or groups or institutions.

[i]ndividuals are already taking a greater share of responsibility, while relying less on larger institutions for alternative options. Examples of this include more individual responsibility for employment in entrepreneurial activity, multiple careers, self-employment, home schooling, and preventative personal health care (Grell & Gappert 1992, 73).

In their view, “governance begins with the individual”; it is a new conceptual framework that also involves “civic responsibility, mutual obligation, and social restraint” (Grell & Gappert 1992, 76). They did not go into details about these particular aspects of the

governance framework. However, none could be said to be examples of social or community oriented responsibilities. Rather they resonate more with the a-social developments captured in Putnam's (2000) discussion about the decline of community. These features of Grell and Gappert's new conceptual framework of governance have found increasing acceptance and have developed apace with the growth of marketisation (understood as the process of enabling the market to undertake functions and services once done by governments).

The rhetoric of democracy and a participatory politics within Boyer's and Grell & Gappert's discussion is belied by the reality that has been created since they urged the adoption of a governance-oriented approach. In part, this might have been expected since there was no indication of how people would be empowered to participate politically within the governance structures that they envisaged. Even at the time that they were writing there might have been good reason for pause. However, subsequent developments have blunted any faith in their optimism. As Melville (1999), Sawyer (2002), and others have demonstrated there has been a concerted effort in a number of OECD countries to decrease the number of community groups or community networks able to participate in the decision-making processes of government, especially the formulation of policies. Furthermore, the nature of that participation has also come under revision with community groups finding themselves increasingly limited in what they can say and do to influence policy outcomes. Criticism of government policies or even merely disagreeing with their government's decision has seen many groups excluded from meaningful participation (Maddison & Hamilton 2007).

Finally, there is the important problem of how Boyer or Grell and Gappert envisaged that those making the decisions would be kept accountable. Even if "grass-roots" or community organisations are included within larger decision-making networks it is unclear how this will result in either meaningful democratic activity or accountability. Given the developments explored by Melville (1999) and Sawyer (2002) it would seem doubtful that this form of participation would foster accountability. As Rhodes (1997, 54 & 101) has pointed out, accountability is one of the casualties of the trend towards greater fragmentation and the devolution of decision-making and political authority. He also noted that "as networks multiply, so do doubts about the centre's capacity to steer" (Rhodes 1997, 54), though this is but one aspect of the problem of accountability within a democratic polity.

### **Democracy and Accountability**

Accountability and responsibility are two sides of the same political coin.

Democratic responsibility refers both to a process of deliberation (giving reasons for policies of government) and to a process of accountability (identifying the agents of those policies, punishing or rewarding them) (Thompson 1983, 236).

Any model of democratic responsibility, suggested Thompson, should ensure that it is sufficiently broad enough to encompass both the technical rationality informing political decisions as well as the "values underlying the policies officials pursue" (Thompson 1983, 236). But it is not simply a matter of the accountability of the elected politicians. There are the various public officials whose actions also have to be held to account. For an important feature of the development of modern democracies over the past two hundred years is the supposed separation of roles and tasks undertaken by those elected to

parliament and those who put into practice what the parliamentarians decide. While this separation is not nearly as distinct in practice as it might be in theory it nevertheless captures a significant aspect of contemporary democracy, namely the structural differentiation between those who decide and those who implement. When it comes to identifying the agents of particular policies, whether it be politicians or unelected officials it is not just a question of establishing the “formal lines of authority”, but also one of identifying the “officials who actually influence particular decisions” (Thompson 1983, 236). Hence not just the elected politicians, but their agents are expected to be accountable for the nature of the political rule that they exercise, for the policies that they pursue, for the decisions they make, and for the values that they uphold.

There is also another broader, though just as important, structural differentiation – namely that between those who govern and those who are governed. This would seem to run counter to, if not minimise, the democratic ethos as defined above. Democracy understood as a system of self-government based on rule by the people, an organisation of political rule in which the authority of the people is, in principle, sovereign, would appear to be minimised. Some variation of representative rather than direct democracy has become the norm. But even in the case of representative government the degree of self-governing is attenuated. Self-government is nominally present, but it is a particular type of ‘self-government’ that, as John Stuart Mill pointed out in the middle of the nineteenth century, calls into question its representativeness.

The ‘people’ who exercise the power are not always the same people with those over whom it is exercised; and the ‘self-government’ spoken of is not the government of each by himself, but of each by all the rest (Mill 1976, 67).

Leaving that issue to one side, it can at least be agreed that while the specific institutional manifestation of representative democracy will vary with the historical circumstances from which it emerges, there are a number of features that characterise modern representative democracies. These features are the rule of law, political equality of all citizens, free and fair elections, the principle of majority rule, tolerance of minority groups, and a number of other rights such as participation in political affairs, free speech and free assembly; in short the values and features characteristic of “the model architecture of a classical liberal society” (Hirst 2000, 19). These features are underpinned by three important norms or values – trust, accountability, and responsibility. These norms are essential not just for the smooth working of liberal representative forms of government, they are core constitutive aspects of the democratic ethos. When these norms are diluted or subordinated to other concerns the strength of the democratic ethos is in danger of ebbing, resulting in something other than a democracy.

Politicians (and public officials) exercise political authority as a public trust on behalf of all the voters. There is an expectation that policy promises will be kept more often than not, that there will be some degree of care directed toward those offering their trust, and that those being privileged with this trust will not betray it “as a consequence of either bad faith or ineptitude” (Levi & Stoker 2000, 476). Both politicians and public officials empowered to implement government policies are understood to be accountable for their actions, public officials to the politicians and the politicians to the population through the electoral system. Of course the lines of political accountability are nowhere near as clearly defined as the above account implies. To the contrary, lines of accountability are often fragmented, blurred, and exceedingly complex (Papadopolous 2003; DeLeon 1998;

Walmsley & Wolf 1996). With the growth of networks and increased private enterprise participation in the delivery of various services formerly provided by publicly owned entities the question of who is accountable to whom becomes even more vexed.

Attempts to improve accountability through the development of a variety of 'governance' arrangements such as 'reinvented government' (Osborne & Gaebler 1992), 'participatory governance' (Edwards 2003), 'democratic governance' (Kakabadse, Kakabadse & Kouzmin 2003; Papadopolous 2003) and so on largely beg the question about how accountability (and participation) is to be made effective. This is not to say that there is nothing to be gained or learned from their discussions of how governance might assist in improving accountability. Rather it is to acknowledge that their discussions take for granted what should be put in question, namely the very framework within which their suggestions are to be implemented. This framework is the system of representative government itself and the particular organisation of political rule that it facilitates and which in turn militates against the democratic ethos, resulting in what some have described as the "democratic deficit". Granted, as Papadopolous has argued, "merely asserting the 'democratic deficit' of governance is not an adequate treatment of the problem" (Papadopolous 2003, 477). In his view criticisms of the alleged 'democratic deficit' of governance suffer from two key problems: first that such criticisms are based on an "idealised image of the performance of representative (partisan) democracy" and second, that they fail to provide an adequate conceptualisation of accountability and responsiveness in complex societies (Papadopolous 2003, 477). These are fair criticisms and it must be acknowledged that in what follows the idea of a 'democratic ethos' is somewhat idealised as has been noted above. But as importantly the argument of this paper turns not so much on accountability and responsiveness as it does on the question of the relationship between governance and the democratic ethos.

### **Democracy, the Democratic Deficit, and the Democratic Ethos**

As noted earlier in the paper, the democratic ethos means that the people are the sovereign political authority. This is (or should be) the animating spirit of anything that bears the name 'democracy'. However, what has been accepted as democracy over the past three hundred years has not been government by the people, but government on behalf the people. The struggle to build democratic institutions has been a long and hard-fought affair, and is not over yet. Democracy, as a desirable system of government, did not find widespread favour amongst either political theorists or political rulers. Those with a vested interest in holding on to particular powers and privileges regarded democracy with suspicion and, at times, outright hostility. For the most part concessions to democratic demands were given only after violent struggles, only after those who were already politically powerful saw that it was in their long-term interests to concede some ground. And in those cases where democratic institutions were established without (much) bloodshed, such as Australia for example, the resulting institutions of responsible government were set up in such a way as to favour or protect the already privileged and powerful (Cochrane 2006).

Once working class political power had flexed its muscle during the course of the nineteenth century it became impossible for the ruling elites to avoid making concessions. Hence those who were not necessarily democratic in temper gave begrudging support to limited democratic reforms (Wood 1996b). While political leaders in the early years of the twentieth century increasingly deployed the rhetoric of democracy, a good deal of effort was put into limiting the impact of the democratic ethos on the exercise of political power. However, by



the end of the twentieth century the practically universal endorsement of democratic ideals and practices has become so widespread and unexceptionable as to lead one political theorist to quip that “we are all democrats now” (Dunn 1979, 1). Even so, what is being praised is government on behalf of the people, not government by the people. Of course one might question just how much meaningful political empowerment and participation (as distinct from the rhetoric) has been (and is) available within representative forms of democratic government. Critics of representative government have long identified many of its weaknesses (Held & Pollitt 1986), especially the Schumpeterian formulation of it as an “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (Schumpeter 1947, 269). The point being made here is simply that the idea of democracy has come to be understood in terms of representative democracy, an understanding that dilutes, if not eliminates the democratic ethos as interpreted above.

To the extent that modern democracies are variations on the theme of ‘representative government’ it can be said that modern democracies suffer from a ‘democratic deficit’ which, broadly interpreted, signifies that there is a gap or deficit between what the institutions purport to be about and what they actually do. For Hindess a ‘democratic deficit’ is, “the failure of democratic institutions to satisfy broadly democratic standards of accountability and legitimacy” (Hindess 2002, 30); for Papadopolous (2003, 475) it is the failure to satisfy democratic standards of “accountability and responsiveness”. In Hindess’s view the “democratic deficit” was an integral part of the design of representative government. Hindess was not so much concerned with the specific forms in which the deficit might manifest itself, as with the fundamental discrepancy between “democratic norms and institutional practice” (Hindess 2002, 30).

This discrepancy was “built into” it for a number of reasons. One was to ensure that there was a separation between those who were empowered (democratically) to govern and those who were governed (Hindess 2002, 31). A second reason was because of a fundamental “distrust of the people” and hence representative government would serve to restrict their influence on government policy and decisions (Hindess 2002, 31 & 33; see also Wood 1996b, 204 ff). A third reason was the issue of corruption in the Aristotelian sense; namely that “a true form of government ... is one which operates according to its own proper purpose or *telos*”, but when diverted from that *telos* it becomes perverted or corrupt (Hindess 2002, 31). Democracy, as in rule by the *demos* or the people, was a corruption of a well-formed system of government because, on Aristotle’s view, it would be “dominated by the short-term interests and the prejudices of the poor and uncultivated majority” (Hindess 2002, 32). A proper system of government would be run by a cultivated minority, an educated elite, who would govern on behalf of the majority – as per Schumpeter’s view of democracy. Hindess took up this Aristotelian sense of corruption to argue that the fear of rule by the people “reflects a concern that the common interest will be poorly served by a government which is dominated by the poor and poorly educated” (Hindess 2002, 35).

Modern democracies, systems of representative governments, guard against this form of corruption by effecting a threefold separation of the majority of people from: (a) the work of government, (b) those who are elected to govern, and (c) those who form part of the administrative apparatuses. However, Hindess noted that representative government does not prevent the possibility of corruption, rather it prevents one form by opening itself to

other forms thereby prompting the need for an ongoing array of internal checks and balances (Hindess 2002, 35). It is in this context that calls arise for greater involvement or participation of ordinary people in their government. This may be a good thing, but as Papadopolous (2003, 479) pointed out, merely “including more social actors in political processes does not make political systems more democratic”. However, even if the political system does not become more democratic, it is reasonable to agree with advocates of ‘democratic governance’ and ‘participatory governance’ that increased participation is still a positive means to enhance the policy process – both to create better policy and to ensure wider acceptance of and support for the projected policy decisions and outcomes (Edwards 2003; Fung & Wright 2001). Moreover, participation might also be desirable because of its educative potential to improve the citizenship qualities of the participants, thereby committing them more fully to the political system (Mill 1976). Hindess noted in passing that one of the possibly undesired consequences for the participants is precisely that outcome; their very participation would occasionally discipline them to act in ways contrary to their reasons for participating in the first place (Hindess 2002, 36; Fung & Wright 2001, 34).

While political scientists such as Boyer and Grell & Gappert can be reasonably interpreted as supporting some form of participatory democratic processes, others see participation as part of the problems besetting modern government. In the 1970s this was interpreted as a problem of governability, a problem that in considerable part was understood as the result “of a decade of democratic surge and of the reassertion of democratic egalitarianism” (Crozier, Huntingdon, & Watanuki 1975). By the end of the century the problem of governability had apparently receded in the wake of different policies and strategies, most notably those of marketisation and governmentalisation, aimed at redrawing the boundaries between the state and the market. It is in this context that the concept of ‘governance’ has found considerable favour as it provides a way of understanding the complex changes in governing that have occurred in the past three decades (Kooiman 2003; Pierre & Peters 2000; Rhodes 1997; Stoker 1998). Yet neither marketisation nor governmentalisation could easily allay problems thought to be inherent in increased popular participation. This is partly because many proponents of governance, even when pursuing marketising or governmentalising agendas, advocate (or acknowledge the need for) some degree of popular participation as a means of ensuring these agendas either remain under nominal political oversight or are able to command reasonable levels of popular assent (eg Kooiman 1993, 2003; Jessop 1997; Rhodes 1997; Pierre & Peters 2000; Pierre 2000; Hirst 2000; Fung & Wright 2001; Bang 2003; Papadopolous 2003; van Kersbergen, K. and van Waarden, F., 2004). On the other hand, one of the attractions of marketisation (at least for its neo-liberal advocates) is that it may minimise the corruption of government (in the sense articulated by Hindess above) by the uncultivated majority (Hindess 2002, 37). That is, marketisation enables the governing strategies inherent in representative democracy to be insulated from the ostensibly corrupting animus of the democratic ethos. In the guise of governance, however, these marketising moves do more than insulate governing strategies from the democratic ethos, they construct modes of governing that may well be antithetical to the democratic ethos.

### **Government, Governance, and the Governance State**

To the extent that ‘governance’ is understood as a variation on the theme of representative democracy it too suffers from a similar ‘democratic deficit’ in the sense that it preserves the gap between “democratic norms and institutional practice” (Hindess 2002, 30). The

arguments developed by Boyer (1990) and Grell & Gappert (1992) clearly accepted this gap while advocating 'governance' as a way to ensure sufficient levels of accountability were built into the process so that the negative aspects of marketisation might be counteracted. Yet 'governance' both as a concept and a political strategy is more than just a way of counteracting these perceived negativities, it enables particular, as distinct from generalised, articulations of the 'political' and 'economic' to be made manifest. To the extent that governance is about the changing frameworks within which governments exercise political rule (cf Pierre & Peters 2000; Stoker 1998) then, as Jessop (1997, 472) has suggested, governance is best understood "as the restructuring of the relationship between the political and economic spheres" in which both the nature of the 'political' and its relationship to the 'economic' was being redefined in ways that enhance the latter at the expense of the former, a point also made in a different context by Wood (1981).

Like Boyer and Grell & Gappert, Jessop too talked about the "shift from government to governance" (Jessop 1997, 574. his emphasis), but for him it was emblematic of a "trend towards the *destatization of the political system*". What he meant by "destatization" was a decline in the role of the state as a central sponsor of government activities "towards an emphasis on partnerships between governmental, para-governmental and non-governmental organizations in which the state apparatus is often only first among equals" (Jessop 1997, 575). This tilts the scales more heavily towards market-based participants, towards the economic, though Jessop also acknowledges that there is some countervailing pressure applied through the "government's increased role in *meta-governance*" (Jessop 1997, 575, his emphasis). Like Pierre & Peters (2000), Jessop sees the issue of governance in terms of the changing relationships of governing, and sees government subsumed within newly emerging forms of governance. Thus for him the political system becomes subject to "destatization". He is not arguing that the national state will cease to be important, only that its role will be increasingly one of meta-governance, of "coordinating different forms of governance and ensuring a minimal coherence among them" (Jessop 1997, 576).

Central to Jessop's account is the idea that "principles" of "sovereignty and hierarchy" are "now rule[d] out" by "growing complexity and globalization" (Jessop 1997, 576). Yet it is not clear that this idea is as self-evident as he suggests. It may well be that what he describes as "destatization" is in fact a reconfiguring of the modern state into some other kind of state, namely the governance state. This type of state is characterised by a form of sovereignty, "contingent sovereignty", which no longer rests exclusively with the state and its publicly accountable apparatuses, but increasingly is dispersed along several axes of organised power (Sassen 1998; Harrison 2004; Duffield 2007). These new axes of power are largely what scholars take to be covered by the idea of 'governance'. Contemporary governance processes are causally involved in reconfiguring the nature of this sovereignty (Harrison 2004, 6; Duffield 2007), and hence the basis upon which the political system draws its legitimacy and accountability. Harrison defines a governance state as one that has "succeeded in internalising the impetus of governance[,] ... a general project of political engineering" promoted largely by the World Bank to effect wide-ranging reform of state institutions and their practices (Harrison 2004, 3-4). The governance initiative by the World Bank in the 1990s was a post-conditionality phase "concerned with the *nature* of state action as much as its scope" such that international donors and other global players, in addition to state officials, might become integral parts of state decision-making and policy-making processes (Harrison 2004, 18 his emphasis, also 23-6). In the

governance state, non-state participants gain a political legitimacy to which they otherwise might not have had access.

Thus governance becomes a transformative process that blurs the boundary lines between state and non-state, inside and outside, private and public, sovereign and non-sovereign authority that effectively relocates “various components of sovereignty onto supranational, nongovernmental, or private institutions” (Sassen 1998, 92). Harrison (2004) and Duffield (2007) also point to a sharing of sovereignty with non-state outsiders. But there is a crucial difference. For Sassen the sharing is outward, a form of outsourcing of sovereignty whereas for Harrison and Duffield the sharing is inward. On Sassen’s account, the locus of sovereignty is what is assumed to shift, it is no longer necessarily located within the state itself. For Harrison and Duffield the locus of sovereignty remains, but the structure of the state and its mode of being are transformed to accommodate new participants in the exercise of that sovereign authority. Both Harrison (2004) and Duffield (2007) have identified this as the crucial significance of the emergence of the governance state.

Therefore the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ is more than just a convenient change of terminology. And it is more than accepting that governance, both as a term and a practice, can constitute a benign conceptual framework within which the changing role of government can be understood. Insofar as governance is understood as an advance on past institutional arrangements of representative government it was argued that it too suffers from a similar ‘democratic deficit’ in the sense that it preserves the gap between “democratic norms and institutional practice” (Hindess 2002, 30). The arguments developed by Boyer (1990) and Grell & Gappert (1992) clearly accepted this gap while advocating ‘governance’ as a way to ensure sufficient levels of accountability were built into the process so that the negative aspects of marketisation could be counteracted. Neither Boyer nor Grell and Gappert, like most of the advocates of ‘governance’ who have come after them, rarely question the logic of the organisation of political rule that characterises representative democracy, no matter how much talk there might be about including “stakeholders”. In the end, it is accepted that those who decide do so on behalf of those who do not, and the latter must take on trust that those who make the policy decisions will do so for the good of all.

To assume simply that ‘governance’ best captures contemporary arrangements with respect to political rule begs two questions. One question concerns the principles informing and grounding that rule, namely the democratic ethos and the related norms of accountability and responsibility. The second question concerns the relationship between ‘governance’ and the democratic ethos. Engaging with those questions has been the focus of this paper. Contemporary (and past) democratic practices have embedded practices of accountability and responsibility that are constitutive of both a conceptual and institutional separation of the ‘political’ and ‘economic’, a separation that has long been a feature of the political system and its institutions of representative democracy. Contemporary governance processes are themselves cut from much the same political cloth. In terms of any gap between democratic norms and institutional practices, ‘governance’ remains on the side of the institutional practices.

Put more emphatically, ‘governance’, both as concept and practice, is causally connected to the idea of the ‘democratic deficit’. As Harrison (2004) and Duffield (2007) have argued, governance processes are transformative. In the discursive shift from

‘government’ to ‘governance’ the issue is not simply one of particular terminological preferences. Nor is it only a concern about the changing role of government (and the political system generally) within particular structures of governance. It is also about the form of state that is being brought into existence under the auspices of ‘governance’, and the sort of society that is fitted to it. And so, is the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ still the same old song? Yes, for the most part it is still the same old song, but with this difference. It is the harbinger of a new state formation in the making – the twenty-first century governance state.

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