



Some “New” Governance Models for Europe and the United States

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Abstract

We live in an age where populism, as both a totalitarian and a Manichean political attitude, is becoming more established on both sides of the Atlantic. An age, also, in which there is a proliferation of democratic innovations attempting to address the issues of the 21st century and the crises in representation and delegation. The question of public confidence in institutions is key, but it is based, first and foremost, on the way in which these issues should be resolved and, therefore, on the mechanisms that allow this to happen. In this respect, questioning governance in terms of its relationship with law, as the World Bank and the World Academy of Art & Science are doing, makes sense, particularly in as turbulent a context as the one we live in today. In addressing some “new” governance models for Europe and the United States, we will first review the definition of the concept and the organisation of its models in three spheres. We will then move on to examine the six mutations which have influenced and developed this model, before turning our attention to a 21st century form of governance, as advocated by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in the United Nations Economic and Social Council which, during its 2018 session, proposed a form of governance for Agenda 2030. The conclusion stresses the need for rationality and organisation in democracy.

We live in an age where populism, as both a totalitarian and a Manichean political attitude,* is becoming more established on both sides of the Atlantic. An age, also, in which there is a proliferation of democratic innovations attempting to address the issues of the 21st century and the crises in representation and delegation. The question of public confidence in institutions is key, but it is based, first and foremost, on the way in which these issues should be resolved and, therefore, on the mechanisms that allow this to happen. In this respect, questioning governance in terms of its relationship with law, as the World Bank and the World Academy of Art and Science are doing, makes sense, particularly in as turbulent a context as the one we live in today.† It seems that each piece of data, each reality, each fact

* As Emiliano GROSSMAN and Nicolas SAUGER note in *Pourquoi détestons-nous autant nos politiques?*, p. 71-72, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2017, *populism is, if we accept the contemporary definitions of the term (including Cas MUDDE, Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.), first and foremost a partial ideology (in that it does not offer a full and comprehensive explanation of the world), built around two principles: total separation between the people and the elite (the people being good, the elite being corrupt), and subjection of politics to the general will. In other words, populism is based on a negation of pluralism (the people are a homogeneous whole) and a form of Manichaeism (the people are good, the elite are evil).* Our translation. - See also Colin HAY, *Why we hate politics*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007.

† This text is an updated version of the author's speech at the “Round table on Governance & Law: Challenges & Opportunities” held at the World Bank in Washington, an initiative of the World Academy of Art and Science and the World University Consortium, on 5 and 6 November, 2018.

and each change is doubted, challenged or even disputed. Individualism and the restricted thought communities in which some people seem to isolate themselves permanently prohibit any critical dialogue, permitting instead all forms of intellectual or cybernetic manipulation. Memory fades and the horizon becomes more limited, rendering any view fundamentally myopic. In an age of fake news,* combined with superficial perspectives, all information, and also all knowledge, seem fragile and shifting. Yet, as historian and Yale professor Timothy Snyder rightly pointed out, *if there is no truth, there can be no trust, and nothing new appears in a human vacuum.*¹

The democratic innovations are clearly here to fill this vacuum, by restoring meaning to collective action in which the involvement of each individual is recognised by empowering citizens and politicians. The Destree Institute's Wallonia Policy Lab—the Brussels Area Node for the Millennium Project—has been involved in these innovations in conjunction with the Parliament of Wallonia, based on an experiment which was launched in 1994 and which ended in 2017 and 2018, with citizens' panels held within the parliamentary precinct itself, in dialogue with deputies and ministers. We are dealing here with the processes highlighted by Professor Archon Fung[†] that he calls “empowered deliberation” or “empowered participatory governance”, which enable officials and citizens to address and resolve complex and volatile governance issues jointly.²

In addressing some “new” governance models for Europe and the United States, we will first review the definition of the concept and the organisation of its models in three spheres. We will then move on to examine the six mutations which have influenced and developed this model, before turning our attention to a 21st century form of governance, as advocated by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in the United Nations Economic and Social Council which, during its 2018 session, proposed a new form of governance for Agenda 2030.

1. The Governance Models

Behind the concept of governance, as we will use it here, lies an old idea reflecting the political science of social administration, and a more modern concept, stemming from the end of the 1980s, which represents an effort to reinvent a management model through dynamic organisation of the actors and stakeholders. This model has a history, which we will not elaborate on here, but which has its roots in the process of decolonisation and advancement of human rights and in the efforts, particularly by the United Nations and related institutions, to shape new countries or even a new world.[‡]

1.1. Towards a Definition of the Concept of Governance

In 1991, in a Report by the Council of the Club of Rome entitled *The First Global Revolution*, Alexander King (1909-2007) and Bertrand Schneider (born in 1929) use the term

* Although the historian recalls that rumours are not specific to the information society or the knowledge society. See François-Bernard HUYGHE, *La désinformation, les armes du faux*, Paris, A. Colin, 2016. – Fake News, *la Grande Peur*; 2018.

† Archon Fung is Professor of Citizenship and Governance at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

‡ See *inter alia* Louis EMMERIJ, Richard JOLLY, Thomas G. WEISS, *Ahead of the Curve?, UN Ideas and Global Challenges*, New York – Geneva, UN-Indiana University Press, 2001. – id., *En avance sur leur temps?, Les idées des Nations Unies face aux défis mondiaux*, p. 229sv., Blonay, Van Diermen – ADECO – Geneva, United Nations, 2003. – Thomas G. WEISS, *Governance, Good Governance, and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges*, *Third World Quarterly* 21, no 5, October 2000, p. 795-814.

“governance” to denote the command mechanism of a social system (and its actions), which endeavours to provide security, prosperity, coherence, order and continuity to the system. This concept necessarily embraces the ideology of the system, which may (democratic) or may not (authoritarian) define the means for the effective consideration of the public will and the accountability of those authorities. It also includes the structure of the government, its policies and its procedures. Some might even say that governance is the means to provide a stable equilibrium between the various centres of power.*

“Good governance has many attributes. It is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is effective in making the best use of resources and is equitable.” – UNDP

The British successor to Aurelio Peccei as President of the Club of Rome, and the French Secretary General of that organisation which was founded in 1968, note that the concept of governance, in the broadest sense, should not be reserved for national or international systems but should be used for regional, provincial and local governments and for other social systems such as education, defence, private enterprise and even the family microcosm.³ Thus, governance includes the government and also *any actor who uses the command mechanisms to articulate demand, formulate objectives, disseminate guidelines and monitor policies*.⁴ As the political scientist and futurist James Rosenau (1924-2011) indicates, in this fragmented world of ours, all these many and varied actors are of no less importance in the governance process than government policies. However, Rosenau, a former professor at George Washington University, qualifies the idea of “command mechanism” found in the Club of Rome’s definition, preferring instead the concept of “control or steering mechanism”, which brings the concept closer to its etymological origin.[†]

Steven Rosell, a Canadian researcher at the Institute for Research on Public Policy who was himself inspired by the works of the American diplomat and professor Harlan Cleveland (1918-2000),[‡] offers a definition of governance that takes into account these aspects: *the process of governance is the process whereby an organization or a society steers itself, and the dynamics of communication and control are central to that process. While the role of government is and remains central to the process of governance, in the information society more and more players, voluntary organisations, interest groups, the private sector, the media and so on—become involved in that process*.⁵

* Alexander KING & Bertrand SCHNEIDER, *The First Global Revolution*, p. 114, New York-Hyderabad, Pantheon Books - Orient Longman, 1991. It should be noted that, in the French translation of this report, which was prepared by Jacques Fontaine and published in Paris in 1991, the term ‘governance’ is translated as “structures de gouvernement [structures of government]”, thus indicating that its use in France is not yet widespread. A. KING & B. SCHNEIDER, *Questions de survie, La Révolution mondiale a commencé*, p. 163, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1991.

† “Governance” is derived from the Greek *kybenan* or *kybernetes* (as in cybernetics), which means to steer or control. J.N. ROSENAU, *Along...*, p. 146.

‡ Harlan Cleveland, former United States’ Ambassador to NATO and former President of the World Academy of Art and Science, had himself used the term since the 1970s. *The organizations that get things done will no longer be hierarchical pyramids with most of the real control at the top. They will be systems—interlaced webs of tension in which control is loose, power diffused, and centers of decision plural. “Decision-making” will become an increasingly intricate process of multilateral brokerage both inside and outside the organization which thinks it has the responsibility for making, or at least announcing, the decision. Because organizations will be horizontal, the way they are governed is likely to be more collegial, consensual, and consultative. The bigger the problems to be tackled, the more real power is diffused and the larger the number of persons who can exercise it — if they work at it.* Harlan CLEVELAND, *The Future Executive: A Guide for Tomorrow’s Managers*, p. 13, New York, Harper & Row, 1972.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has set for itself the goal of advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources that help people build a better life. In its second annual report, in 1991, the UNDP suggests that underdevelopment originates from a lack of political accountability rather than a lack of funding. Since 1992, the term “governance”, combined with the democratisation of State management, has appeared in the *Global Report on Human Development*^{*}. The UNDP, which was a co-author, defined good governance as *the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Good governance has many attributes. It is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is effective in making the best use of resources and is equitable. And it promotes the rule of law.*[†]

We are aware of the World Bank’s role in disseminating the concept of “good governance” as a public management model—developing accounting control to tackle corruption, building legal frameworks to promote the establishment of international free enterprise, a mechanism for decentralising services, etc.[‡] The Washington Institute for Near East Policy was also at the forefront in terms of defining institutional governance:

We define governance broadly as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.[§]

* UNDP and governance, *Experiences and Lessons Learned*, UNDP, Management Development and Governance, Lessons-Learned, Series, no 1, p. 9, <http://magnet.undp.org/docs/gov/Lessons1.htm> 17/02/01 Richard Jolly, Director General of Unicef, special advisor to the UNDP Administrator and the driving force behind the Human Development Report, and the conference entitled *Good governance and democratisation: the role of the international organisations*, Ottawa, United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada), 16 and 17 October, 1997. *Une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale au service de l’humanité et de l’équité, dans Rapports mondial sur le développement humain* 1999, p. 97-123, New-York, UNDP Paris-Brussels, De Boeck-Larcier, 1999.

† G. Shabbir CHEEMA, *Politique et gouvernance du PNUD: cadre conceptuel et coopération au développement*, <http://www.unac.org/français/activites/gouvernance/partieun.html> 17/02/02. Shabbir CHEEMA directeur de la Division du Renforcement de la Gestion et de la Gouvernance au PNUD. – Another definition given by the UNDP is that of Public Sector Management, which dates back to 1995: *governance or public management encompasses the direct and indirect management by the state of public affairs and regulatory control of private activities that impinge on human affairs. Governance can best be understood in terms of three major components: first, the form of political authority that exists in a country (parliamentary or presidential, civilian or military, and autocratic or democratic); second, the means through which authority is exercised in the management of economic and social resources; and third, the ability of governments to discharge government functions effectively, efficiently, and equitably through the design, formulation, and implementation of sound policies.* dans *Public Sector Management, Governance, and Sustainable Human Development, Discussion Paper 1*, Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, p. 19, New-York, United Nations Development Programme, 1995. In 1997, a new study by the Management Development & Governance Division, prefaced by G. Shabbir Cheema, gave a very similar definition to the one presented in Ottawa: *Governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. In Governance for sustainable human development, A UNDP policy document*, p. 3, New-York, United Nations Development Programme, 1997.

‡ See, for example: J. ISHAM, Daniel KAUFMANN & Lant PRITCHETT, *Governance and Returns on Investment*, Washington, The World Bank, 1995. – *Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries*, Washington, The World Bank, 1996. – Francis NG and Alexander YEATS, *Good Governance and Trade Policy. Are They the Keys to Africa’s Global Integration and Growth?* Washington, The World Bank, 10 November 1998. – Michael WOOLCOCK, *Globalization, Governance and Civil Society*, DECRG Policy Research on Globalization, Growth, and Poverty: Facts, Fears, and Agenda for Action, Background Paper, Washington, The World Bank, 10 August 2001.

§ *We define governance broadly as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.* Daniel KAUFMANN, Aart KRAAY & Pablo ZOIDO-LOBATON, *Governance Matters*, Washington, World Bank, 1999. <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance>. 16/02/02. Daniel KAUFMANN, Aart KRAAY & Pablo ZOIDO-LOBATON, *Gestion des Affaires publiques, De l’évaluation à l’action, dans Finances et Développement*, June 2000, p. 1.

We see the operational side of this definition for the World Bank, a definition which also includes a range of indicators that help to explain these various aspects of governance.⁶

Other definitions have been developed over time, including those of the European Commission, the OECD and various countries. In its *White Paper* in 2001, the European Commission indicates that *governance means rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which they are exercised at the European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.**

As the political scientists have demonstrated, governance is a descriptive label used to highlight the changing nature of the political process over the past few decades. This concept alerts us to the ever-increasing diversity of areas and actors involved in the development of public policies. It takes into account all the actors and areas outside the executive framework of the policy development process.⁷ The key element in both understanding and promoting governance is probably the notion of *stakeholders* of the particular policy or issue, which turns such parties into potential actors.⁸ Whether they are engaged in action or in campaigning, it is through such involvement that actors find the legitimacy of participating in the governance of the defined territory. As for the public sector, such involvement may offer it a new opportunity to rethink its role and, consequently, a new vitality.⁹

Lester Salamon, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, has highlighted the new governance paradigm by demonstrating the transition between, on the one hand, traditional public administration based on programmes, agencies, hierarchy, public-private sector antagonism, command and control mechanisms and skills-based management, and, on the other, governance based on new tools, network logic, a constructive relationship between the public and private sectors, negotiation and persuasion and development of skills.¹⁰

This comparison is consistent with others, particularly between the Weberian Bureaucratic State and the Postmodern State, between government and governance, as explored by Richards and Smith in 2002 and developed by Michael Hill.¹¹

1.2. The Three Spheres of Governance

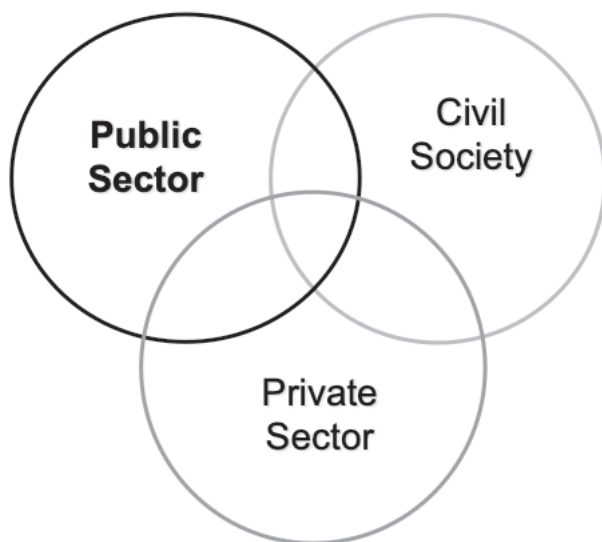
The UNDP model structures the State, the private sector and civil society as three spheres of governance based on a specific division of tasks.

- The role of the State and its three powers—legislative, judiciary and executive (*public services and the military*)—is to create a political and legal environment and climate conducive to human development by defending interests for the public good. It is the State’s responsibility to ensure law enforcement, maintain order and security, create a *national identity and vision*, define public policies and programmes, generate revenues for public services and infrastructures, create and implement its budget and regulate and stimulate the market.
- The private sector which, from the smallest business to the largest, grows within the market, creates and provides goods and services, along with jobs and revenues for

* *Governance means rules, processes and behavior that affect the way in which they are exercised at the European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. European Governance, A White Paper, July 25, 2001, p. 8.*

citizens. This commercial sector is not linked to a specific territory, yet it is an element of regional development.

Figure 1: Three Spheres of Governance



Civil society, which comprises all citizens, who may be organised through non-governmental organisations, professional organisations, religious associations, women's associations, cultural or community associations, etc., facilitates political and social interaction, particularly by mobilising groups of citizens to participate in economic, social and political activities and *express a range of dynamic and varied opinions*.*

Although it makes the system easier to understand, this arrangement of the three spheres of governance does not diminish the complexity of the system. Thus, it reveals the following seven types of relationships which remain common:

- the relationship between governments and markets;
- the relationship between governments and citizens;
- the relationship between governments and the voluntary or private sectors;
- the relationship between (elected) politicians and (appointed) civil servants;

* G. Shabbir CHEEMA, *Politique et gouvernance du PNUD: cadre conceptuel et coopération au développement...*, p. 10. – Governance includes the state, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. All three are critical for sustaining human development. The state creates a conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income. And civil society facilitates political and social interaction, mobilising groups to participate in economic, social and political activities. Because each has weaknesses and strengths, a major objective of our support for good governance is to promote constructive interaction among all three. *Governance for Sustainable Human Development, A UNDP Policy Document*, United Nations Development Programme, January 1997.

- the relationship between local government institutions and residents in towns and rural areas;
- the relationship between the legislative and the executive;
- the relationship between the Nation-State and international institutions.¹²

In its analysis, the UNDP points out that none of the three spheres is solely responsible for good governance and cannot own it solely by itself. Good governance extends beyond the functions of each sphere and is the main topic during meetings and interactions. As G. Shabbir Cheema, Former Director of Democratic Governance Division of the UNDP, writes, it is first and foremost a question of promoting interaction between these three spheres. The actors involved at the point where the State, the private sector and civil society meet are the keys to governance.¹³

Thus, from the experience of international cooperation, globalisation and economic interdependence, it is possible to derive this approach to governance, which can be seen as a process of coordinating actors, social groups and institutions that produce compromises and political and social consensus on achieving specific goals—which are discussed and defined collectively—in fragmented and uncertain environments. This view of the concept clearly addresses the issue of the State’s role in the organisation of society. Although it radically alters the nature of the relationship between citizens and the State, the governance model cannot replace the function of government. We are dealing here with a complementary approach, which involves the decision-makers and increases their expectation of collective action by relying on the other pillars of society.

We can see this in the convergence between the various definitions of the concept of governance and the issue of the position of civil society, while the capacity of civil society to enter into a global dialogue with the political sphere is central to the revitalisation of democracy and the rehabilitation of politics. The key element in both understanding and promoting governance is probably the notion of *stakeholders* of the particular policy or issue, which turns such parties into potential actors. It is through their action or campaigning that actors find the legitimacy of participating in the political and social arena. As for the public sector, and particularly the government, such involvement may offer it a new opportunity to rethink its role and, consequently, a new vitality.¹⁴ Indeed, politics retains its rightful place in the new model. Its own, new political vision leads it into the heart of the system, as a facilitator and organiser of the debate and of the decisions being taken between actors. In this respect, it appears to be *the mastermind*, like the State.¹⁵

2. Six Mutations that Influence Governance

At a particular moment in history—in the early 1990s—a search for a new equilibrium was launched between market, political and civil society actors. It may be that the third of these served to complement the first two, to try and correct the excessive pendulum swing caused by the neoliberal deregulation introduced by Reaganism and Thatcherism. Economic and civil society actors have also been able to join forces in developing countries to maintain

cohesion mismanaged by discredited regimes, and have therefore been parties at the international level. The same geopolitical causes that put an end to the bipolarity of the world clearly had an effect on ideologies. Their erosion, and even their partial or total discrediting, no doubt contributed to the development or consolidation of the individualist vision that marks the supremacy of personal sovereignty over state sovereignty and reconnects with the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment and the social contract. Individualism, a philosophy in which the individual is not created for the State, but rather the State is created for the individual, is emerging as a significant trend in contemporary society.

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In parallel, and faced with increased globalisation, the key players are operating increasingly at the international level and are, themselves, structuring the political and social arena.¹⁶ The European Union is a good example of a public actor, as are multinational businesses and organisations such as Google, Uber, Greenpeace and the Millennium Project.

We wanted to highlight at least six mutations that influence governance, before examining how they influence our model: (1) the Knowledge Revolution (2) the transition to sustainable development, (3) the new social trifunctionality, (4) open government, (5) the conservative and populist zeitgeist, and (6) the increasing influence of businesses.

2.1. The Knowledge Revolution

There is no need to dwell on this mutation, except to point out that it is a single trajectory which originates in the Information Revolution of the 1970s, the communication highways, the cognitive revolution, the knowledge society, the digital revolution, the internet, the genome, robotics, artificial intelligence, etc.: all these transformations, these waves of technological and societal innovations, stem from the same dynamic. This structure of structural change leads us collectively towards something else whose magnitude we have barely perceived. One of the major results is clearly the higher levels of education among citizens and the significant increase in the number of intellectuals, defined as individuals who are engaged in critical thought, supported by research and reflection on society, and who offer solutions to address its normative problems. Unlike the far too negative perception people have of it, social media is a source of training and education for many. The internet, meanwhile, contains a considerable amount of information and knowledge which helps to train citizens. Social media is producing a multitude of new tools for building communities and promoting a more deliberative and more participatory democracy, even if its harmful effects cannot be denied. As early as 1974, in *The Coming of Post-industrial Society*, the sociologist Daniel Bell dedicated a chapter to this key question: *who will lead?*¹⁷

2.2. The Transition to Sustainable Development

This transition, which also began at the end of the 1960s with increasing awareness of the limits imposed on growth, grew too slowly through the various reports produced by the United Nations, scientists, NGOs of all kinds, political parties, States and, now, businesses. Nearly all accepted the notion that sustainable development is a systemic dynamic and a quest for harmony, as advocated in the Brundtland Report in 1987. The implementation of Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by heads of states and governments at the Special United Nations Summit on 25 September 2015, shares this systemic aspect and takes into account the critical need to save the planet and the urgency of climate change,* highlighted further in the IPCC report of October 2018.†

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2.3. The New Social Trifunctionality

It was the anthropologist and religious historian Georges Dumézil (1898-1986) who showed, through his work on ancient myths, how societies of Indo-European origin organise human activity based on a trifunctional approach. He consistently describes three functions in the societies studied. These are exercised as separate, hierarchical powers: a religion and sovereignty function, a military function and a production and reproduction function.¹⁸ Thus, after the Aristotelian model,¹⁹ we note the feudal system model with its three orders, described by the historian Georges Duby (1919-1996), which is based on the work of Adalbéron, bishop of Laon (1027-1030),²⁰ and the French Ancien Régime model with its three states, conceived by René Rémond (1918-2007)²¹ but previously described by the legal scholar Charles Loyseau (1566-1627) at the beginning of the 17th century. The governance model currently in force is a continuation of this trifunctionality, but it has the particular characteristic of seeking, as we have seen, a balance between stakeholders rather than a restrictive leadership of one party over the others.

As with all of Dumézil’s analysis, each of the models has been criticised. Take, for example, the well-known issues raised by Abbé Sieyès (1748-1836)²² or by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895).‡ The model of governance by stakeholders has also been criticised and will be criticised again and again. It has also been described as a new form of corporatism, which clearly evokes some highly charged images.

* *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 21 October, 2015. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

† *Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments*, 8 October 2018. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

‡ K. Marx & F. Engels, *Manifesto of The Communist Party* (1847).

2.4. Open Government

Taking its inspiration from the works of the OGP (*Open Government Partnership*) and the OECD, an open government can be conceived as a citizen-centred culture of governance that utilises innovative and sustainable tools, policies and practices to promote government transparency, responsiveness and accountability to foster stakeholders' participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth.* This process is intended to lead to the co-construction of collective policies that involve all governance players (public sector, businesses, civil society, etc.) and pursue the general interest and the common good. Such initiatives have been taken by leaders said to be above politics, such as Tony Blair, Barack Obama and Emmanuel Macron, and are continuing, particularly in the action plans developed under the guidance of the OGP, such as the UK-NAP: *3rd OGP National Action Plan*.†

2.5. The Conservative and Populist Zeitgeist

Whether you like him as a person or not, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his speech to the TUC (Trade Union Congress) in Brighton on 12 September 2006, perfectly captured the unease felt at that time by citizens and politicians, an unease which was still in its infancy but which would continue to grow until today. The quality of this analysis deserves a lengthy quotation.

“What has changed is the interplay between globalisation, immigration and terrorism. Suddenly we feel under threat: physically from this new terrorism that is coming onto our streets, culturally as new waves of migrants change our society, and economically because an open world economy is hastening the sharpness of competition. People feel they are working longer, but are less secure. They feel the rules are changing and they never voted to change them. They feel, in a word, powerless. This is producing a pessimism that is pervasive and fearful because there seems no way through, or at least a way under our control.

There is a debate going on which, confusingly for the politicians, often crosses traditional left/right lines and the debate is: open vs closed. Do we embrace the challenge of more open societies or build defences against it? In my judgement, we need an approach that is strong and not scared that addresses people's anxieties but does not indulge them, and above all has the right values underpinning it. The challenge won't be overcome by policy alone, but by a powerful case made on the basis of values, most especially those that combine liberty with justice, security with tolerance and respect for others. We have to escape the tyranny of the “or” and develop the inclusive nature of the “and”.

* OECD, *Open Government, The Global context and the way forward*, p. 19, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2016. In November 2017, the OECD published this work in French, with the following definition: *a culture of governance that is based on innovative, sustainable policies and practices inspired by principles of transparency, accountability and participation to promote democracy and inclusive growth*. OECD, *Gouvernement ouvert: Contexte mondial et perspectives*, Editions OECD, Paris. 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264280984-fr>

† Policy paper, *UK Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18*, 12 May 2016. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-open-government-national-action-plan-2016-18/uk-open-government-national-action-plan-2016-18>

The answer to economic globalisation is open markets and strong welfare and public service systems, particularly those like education, which equip people for change. The answer to terrorism is measures on security and tackling its underlying causes.

*The answer to concern over migration is to welcome its contribution and put a system of rules in place to control it.**

“The adoption and implementation of the SDGs since 2015 represent a tangible acceleration of the transition towards sustainable development and the prospect of a new generation of governance.”

And Tony Blair goes on to condemn economic protectionism, isolation and nativism, the political current of opposing any new immigration:

Protectionism in the economy; isolation in world affairs; nativism within our society; all, in the end, mean weakness in the face of challenge. If we believe in ourselves, we can be strong. We can overcome the challenge of global change; better, we can relish its possibilities.†

The opposite of this open concept is clearly populism, which we mentioned at the outset. In June 2017, Anthony Zurcher, the BBC News correspondent in the United States, described this attitude and its consequences: challenging the legitimacy of elected representatives, distrusting the parliamentary system, criticising the media and a financial oligarchy that seems to run the world, along with challenging scientific evidence, particularly by maintaining a sense of confusion over certain issues: the case analysed was typical: *Does Trump still think climate change is a hoax?*²³

2.6. The Growing Influence of Businesses

The growing influence of businesses is a clearly visible reality. There is little doubt that the role of businesses is better recognised in society and that their impact on governance has increased at the global and the local level. In June 2014, alluding to integrated governance, a new governance model for sustainability, the United Nations Environment Programme observed that *companies have been the engine behind the unprecedented economic growth of the past century. The big companies through their operations have managed to raise billions of people from poverty, provide employment and education opportunities, and unlock the human potential for innovation and creativity.*[‡]

* Full Text of Tony Blair’s Speech to the TUC (Trade Union Congress), Brighton, Sept. 12, 2006. in *The Guardian*, 12 Sep. 2006. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2006/sep/12/tradeunions.speeches>

† *Ibidem.*

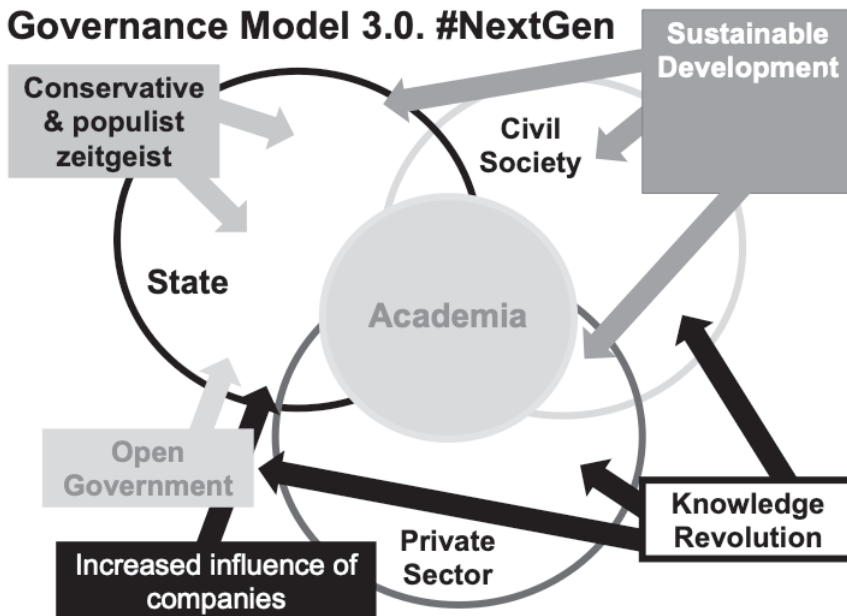
‡ *Companies have been the engine behind the unprecedented economic growth of the past century. The big companies through their operations have managed to raise billions of people from poverty, provide employment and education opportunities and unlock the human potential for innovation and creativity. Integrated Governance, A New Model of Governance for Sustainability*, p. 8, United Nations Environment Programme, June 2014.

If we analyse the UNDP’s ‘three spheres of governance’ model, we can already see that, in what we call the first generation (*Governance Model 1.0. #1st Gen*), from the 1980s to the middle of the 2000s, the influence of the Knowledge Revolution was already being strongly exercised over the private sector and civil society. The transition towards sustainable development was recognised mainly within civil society, whereas the social trifunctionality model was disseminated in the public sector through international institutions.

It seems that this pattern has evolved since the middle of the 2000s towards a second-generation governance model (*Governance Model 2.0. #2nd Gen*) in which sustainable development is widespread throughout all levels of the public sphere to the point of becoming the official norm. The effects of the Intelligence Revolution have continued to be felt everywhere, but they are especially extensive in the public sector, particularly through the open government movement, and particularly under the influence of Barack Obama, starting from his first term in 2009. But in a world in which knowledge is valued, a new sphere is emerging out of the world of research and universities (*Academia*). This represents an interface, being both autonomous and a meeting and activation point for the private, public and civil society spheres, particularly through its capacity to activate collective intelligence and its academic freedom. This new sphere is challenging the social trifunctionality model.

It could be argued that the adoption and implementation of the SDGs since 2015 represent a tangible acceleration of the transition towards sustainable development and the prospect of a new generation of governance (*Governance Model 3.0. #NextGen*).

Figure 2: Governance Model 3.0 #NextGen



The growing influence of businesses may, in this key area of the SDGs which are the primary focus of their societal responsibility, provide valuable support, especially since awareness of sustainability in the business world has increased considerably and the resources available to public “authorities” are effectively eroded. Nevertheless, the conservative and populist zeitgeist which is disrupting the public sector and civil society may have some annoying effects, namely blocking or confusing the information and communication flows.

The impacts of the six mutations in progress on actors of governance are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: The impacts of the six mutations in progress on actors of governance

Six Mutations in Progress	Impacts on the actors of governance			
	State	Civil Society	Private Sector	Academia
Knowledge Revolution	Need for foresight and anticipation	Knowledge Number of Intellectuals	Networks Innovations	Emergence as a governance circle
Sustainable Development	Evaluation. Leaving no one behind.	Fiscal Sustainability	High Sustainability Firms	Emergence CEPA 17 th p. 15
New Social Trifunctionality	Weakening Aligning interests	Corporate Social Responsibility	Recognition of the importance	Quadri- functionality Leadership?
Open Government	Moving to collective pol. Multilevel Gv.	New models Collective Intelligence	New way of working Engagement	Innovations Status of expertise?
Conservative & populist Zeitgeist	Authoritarianism Liberticidal	Confusion Handling	Freedom to oppress? Instability	Mistrust
Increasing Influence of Companies	Budgetary Performance Transparent Reporting	Mistrust vs. New partnerships	Awareness & commitment facing issues	Mistrust vs. New partnerships

3. Governance for Agenda 2030

The United Nations Committee of Experts in Public Administration (CEPA), set up by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2001, is composed of 24 members who meet every year at the UN headquarters in New York. The Committee supports the work of ECOSOC to promote the development of effective public administration and quality governance among Member States, particularly in the context of Agenda 2030, in support of the implementation and evaluation of progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. CEPA updates ECOSOC on the various aspects of governance and public administration of sustainable

socio-economic development. Its particular focus is on topics relating to development of human capital, participatory governance, development of skills in countries experiencing crises or emerging from conflict, and on the various innovations in public administration and governance.

At its 17th session, which was held in New York in April 2018, CEPA worked on the subject of preparing public institutions for the implementation of the SDGs (*Making public institutions ready for implementation of the SDGs*). CEPA put forward recommendations on three issues it considered fundamental: firstly, preparing institutions and politicians with a view to ensuring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Programme by 2030, then the implementation, at all levels, of efficient, responsible institutions that are open to anybody, and, finally, measures aimed at strengthening the institutions and giving them the necessary resources to transform societies and make them viable and resilient. Based on its earlier work, CEPA created a set of principles of effective governance to support the urgent and total achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.1. Effectiveness

3.1.1. Competence: *to perform their functions effectively, institutions are to have sufficient expertise, resources and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority* (commonly used strategies include: promotion of a professional public sector workforce, leadership development and training civil servants, financial management and control, investment in e-government, etc.).

3.1.2. Sound Policymaking: *to achieve their intended results, public policies are to be coherent with one another and founded on true or well-established grounds, in full accordance with fact, reason and good sense* (commonly used strategies include: strategic planning and foresight, strengthening national statistical systems, risk management frameworks, data sharing, etc.).

3.1.3. Collaboration: *to address problems of common interest, institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors should work together and jointly with non-State actors towards the same end, purpose and effect* (commonly used strategies include: centre of government coordination under the Head of State of Government, collaboration, coordination, integration and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas, raising awareness of the SDGs, network-based governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships, etc.).

3.2. Accountability

3.2.1. Integrity: *to serve in the public interest, civil servants are to discharge their official duties honestly, fairly and in a manner consistent with soundness of moral principles* (commonly used strategies include: promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies, codes of conduct for public officials, elimination of bribery and trading in influence, conflict of interest policies, whistle-blower protection, provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants, etc.).

3.2.2. Transparency: *to ensure accountability and enable public scrutiny, institutions are to be open and candid in the execution of their functions and promote access to information,*

subject only to the specific and limited exceptions as are provided by law (commonly used strategies include: proactive disclosure of information, budget transparency, open government data, registries of beneficial ownership, lobby registries, etc.).

“To ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, public policies are to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society.”

3.2.3. Independent oversight: *to retain trust in government, oversight agencies are to act according to strictly professional considerations unaffected by others* (commonly used strategies include: promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies, arrangements for a review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies, independent audit, respect for legality, etc.).

3.3. Inclusiveness

3.3.1. Leaving no one behind: *to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, public policies and to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination* (commonly used strategies include: promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy, promotion of social equity, data disaggregation, systematic follow-up and review, etc.).

3.3.2. Non-discrimination: *to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedom for all, access to public service is to be provided on general terms of equality, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status* (commonly used strategies include: promotion of public sector workforce diversity, prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery, multilingual service delivery, accessibility standards, cultural audit of institutions, universal birth registration, gender-responsive budgeting, etc.).

3.3.3. Participation: *to have an effective State, all significant political groups should be actively involved in matters that directly affect them and have a chance to influence policy* (commonly used strategies include: free and fair elections, regulatory process of public consultation, multi-stakeholder forums, participatory budgeting, community-driven development, etc.).

3.3.4. Subsidiarity: *to promote a government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all people, central authorities should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more intermediate or local level* (commonly used strategies include: fiscal federalism, strengthening urban governance, strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems, enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks, multilevel governance, etc.).

3.3.5. Intergenerational Equity: *to promote prosperity and quality of life for all, institutions should construct administrative acts that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations* (commonly used strategies include: sustainable development impact assessment, long-term public debt management, long-term territorial planning and spatial development, ecosystem management, etc.).*

“To achieve harmony, democracy requires rationality and organizational methodology from citizens and politicians. Education and training are fundamentally what sustain them on a daily basis.”

These principles of effective governance, drawn by the UN CEPA to support the urgent and total achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, are a genuine roadmap from which all actors in governance must be able to draw inspiration. Not only administrations and associations, as we have seen, but also citizens, businesses and researchers. Not only will the implementation of these principles contribute to increasing sustainable development and help it to achieve its goals by 2030, they may also improve our world and our societies, here and now.

4. Conclusion: Rationality and Organization in Democracy

The governance models highlighted in the paper have not been advocated only for Europe and the United States. They are recommended for the entire world, and these models are enriched considerably by the work undertaken by major international institutions, associations and foundations. Naturally, these include the Club of Rome, the UNDP, the World Bank, the ECOSOC CEPA and the Open Government Partnership. There are others as well, such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the OECD.

The objective of these initiatives is, first and foremost, to improve democracy and governance. These cannot function without being organised through structured and often procedural dialogue between stakeholders. To achieve harmony, democracy requires rationality and organizational methodology[†] from citizens and politicians. Education and training are fundamentally what sustain them on a daily basis. This should never be forgotten.

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Notes

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