

Edited by
JAN KOOIMAN

*modern
governance*

New Government –
Society Interactions

SAGE

MODERN GOVERNANCE

New Government-Society Interactions

Edited by
Jan Kooiman



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SOCIAL-POLITICAL GOVERNANCE: INTRODUCTION

JAN KOOIMAN

Background

Collaboration on this book started with an ECPR Workshop titled: 'GOVERNANCE: new patterns of interaction between government and society', in Essex, England, in April 1991. The purpose for which Prof.dr. Jan Kooiman convened this Workshop was to see whether changes taking place in more traditional patterns of governing and governance in The Netherlands, can also be found in other West-European countries.

In many countries the main tendency in recent years has been to shift the balance between government and society away from the public sector and more towards the private sector. Partly, this added up to privatization and sometimes to deregulation. But there are also efforts to shift the balance towards a sharing of tasks and responsibilities; towards doing things together instead of doing them alone (either by the 'state' or by the 'market').

New patterns of interaction between government and society can be observed in areas such as social welfare, environmental protection, education and physical planning. These new patterns are apparently aimed at discovering other ways of coping with new problems or of creating new possibilities for governing.

Examples show experiments with co-regulation, co-steering, co-production, cooperative management and public-private partnerships on national, regional and local levels. We regard these examples as concrete, often new, ways of governing on the borderline between government and society; as non-traditional mixtures of the public and private sector.

More generally, there are many indications that the governing capacity of political/administrative systems (by which we mean all those institutions, authorities, groups or individuals who separately or together perform governing actions) either has crossed the threshold of the law of diminishing returns or is quite close to such a boundary. In those situations, actors, either as parts of governing systems, or separately, or in a combination, not only try to reduce the need for governing (let problems solve themselves) but also rephrase their capacities (let others help). Such changes do not take place in a vacuum. They may be the expression of a change in preference of ways of governance. One could say that they have to do with efforts to deal with matters of governability. In other words, the discussion about new patterns of interaction between government and society takes place on two (analytically) distinguishable levels. On a

concrete governing level there is the search for new models of governing in terms of 'co' such as co-steering, co-managing, co-producing and co-allocating. Such changes can be empirically observed in several sectors and in different countries. But one can also observe changes in terms of patterns of governance: broader and maybe more pervasive efforts to come to grips with fundamental developments and structural characteristics of the societies we live in. These are what we would like to call changes taking place on the governance level (or even 'meta governance level'). In the conceptualization we try to develop in this book, we use concepts such as 'dynamics', 'complexity' and 'diversity'. These concepts play an important role in trying to understand the purpose of the changes at the governance level.

In terms of working definitions: by governing we mean all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage (sectors or facets of) societies. To distinguish these new or modern interactive forms from others, we call them social-political governing and governance in this study. Social-political forms of governing are forms in which public or private actors do not act separately but in conjunction, together, in combination, that is to say in 'co' arrangements. The interactive aspects of these forms are quite important. By 'governance' we mean the patterns that emerge from governing activities of social, political and administrative actors. These patterns form the 'emerging' outcome as well as a more abstract (higher level) framework for day-to-day efforts at governing. Modes of social-political governance are, in our opinion, always an outcome of public and private interaction. Governability of a social-political system can be seen in terms of a balancing process. It is not something static, but a constant process of coming to grips with the tension between governing needs on the one hand (problem situations or the grasp of opportunities) and governing capacities (creating patterns of solutions or developing strategies) on the other hand. We consider sectors of societies to be appropriate empirical levels to study and analyze governing, governance and governability.

These new ways of governing and governance may have reached a phase in which (broad) evaluations can be developed. Against this background the convener of the Workshop asked for contributions which focus on particular forms of social-political interaction as expressions of social, economic, technological and cultural forces that are complex and dynamic and have to do with 'primary processes' in sectors of society. Secondly, contributions might deal with the ways these (new) patterns of interactions are organized, for example in partly public, partly private inter-organizational networks. Thirdly, contributors might show new forms of interactive steering, managing, controlling or guiding in certain sectors of society. Finally, reports might have a more conceptual nature, dealing with matters such as governing needs, governing capacities, questions of governability and conceptualizations of aspects of social-political governance and governing.

In all categories of invited studies contributions were made, albeit not in the same amount. On the basis of the scope of participation in the Workshop, the convener invited a few others to participate in the project after the meeting in Essex. The contributors to the present volume came together for a second meeting in The Netherlands, February 1992. At this meeting general conceptual issues and suggestions about rephrasing individual chapters were discussed.

Aim

The aim of the project, of which this book is an expression, is to explore the possibilities of developing conceptual frameworks for analysis and (practical) applications of new ways of interaction between government and society in terms of patterns of governance and governing. Interactive social-political governance means setting the tone; creating the social-political conditions for the development of new models of interactive governing in terms of co-management, co-steering and co-guidance. Social-political governance and governing are not primarily looked upon as acts of governments, but as more or less continuous processes of interaction between social actors, groups and forces and public or semi public organizations, institutions or authorities. There is a division of labour between them, which may shift during the interaction. This is their strength, yet also their weakness. The possibilities and limitations of the interactional qualities of these forms of social-political governing and governance may become apparent in those new ways of governing and governance.

In a theoretical perspective our explorations contain elements of systems-theory, of theories of inter-organizational networks, of theories of public administration and public management, of communication theory and of theories of the state. In trying to come to grips with the tendencies we do not (yet) pretend to form a new theory. Partly, we take issue with existing theoretical notions, partly we develop some new notions ourselves. We are convinced that both our conceptualizations and the empirical illustrations we show, point in the same direction. This direction is partly defined by the recognition of new patterns of governance related to basic changes taking place in the societies we live in and look at. Changes we do not see as temporary but as structural. Changes we try to conceptualize under the heading of growing 'complexity', 'dynamics' and 'diversity'. As we will show more explicitly in the final chapter, differences of opinion do exist within our group, not on these changes as such, but on the degree of their pervasiveness. However, these are questions of either conceptualization or of empirical substantiation. We all agree on the need to make serious efforts to work on the two levels we have distinguished: on the governance and on the governing level; and to do this against the background of more stringent conceptualizations in three areas: firstly in the area of interactions between government and society;

secondly in the area of complexity, dynamics and diversity of our societies and the problems and opportunities these qualities create, and thirdly in the area of governance, governability and governing. These three areas in conceptual terms and in terms of empirical illustrations, are the main subject of this book. In this introduction we will indicate concisely what we mean by them. The following chapters will show more detailed aspects of them. In the final chapter we will bring the results together and sketch the outlines of a potential theory of social-political governance.

Interaction

There seems to be a shift away from more traditional patterns in which governing was basically seen as 'one-way traffic' from those governing to those governed, towards a 'two-way traffic' model in which aspects, qualities, problems and opportunities of both the governing system and the system to be governed are taken into consideration.

Besides varieties such as shifts to the private in terms of deregulation and privatization other forms of more systemic interaction are being tried out. These new forms can still be put under headings such as management, control, steering and guiding but the emphasis is not on the uni-lateral but on the bi-lateral or even multi-lateral aspects of these models of governing. This means that the place of boundaries between state and society changes, but also that the boundaries themselves change in character. One could say they are becoming more permeable. Where government begins and society ends, or the other way around, becomes more diffuse. The borderline between public and private responsibilities itself becomes object of interaction. These are basic matters of governance. These interactions are often themselves based on the recognition of (inter)dependencies. No single actor, public or private, has all knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified problems; no actor has sufficient overview to make the application of needed instruments effective; no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate uni-laterally in a particular governing model. These are basically matters of the relation between governance and governing.

Some decades ago Chandler promoted 'structure to follow strategy'. This is directly opposed to the traditional view of the way in which the public sector works where strategy usually follows structure. It seems that finally Chandler's advice is being followed now. In other words: it seems as if in contrast to, or at least somewhat different from the usual, the emphasis is less on formalization and structuring (as in (neo) corporatist models), but more on putting a central focus on problems or opportunities (in all their aspects). By doing so the structural components follow as part of the outcome of interactions. 'Let us do something together (for example: try to approach a complex problem situation), later we will worry about the form in which we do this' seems to be the message. These are basically matters of governing.

We call such approaches interactive social-political forms of governing. The (macro) conditions under which these models develop within complete sectors or within even broader societal contexts, form what we call (interactive) social-political governance.

Social-political Governing

We look upon social-political governing as a collection of rather specific models of interaction between the public and private sector in terms of co-managing, co-steering, co-guiding of actors (individuals, authorities, organizations) with public as well as with private responsibilities. We are not primarily interested in these actors themselves, but in their governing activities in conjunction with each other. This makes the 'who' somewhat less tangible, but we expect to gain in terms of insights in the more systemic aspects of these sectors and the way they are governed. How do interactions develop, what kinds of forces do they express? How are interdependencies translated into decision-processes? What kinds of positive and negative feedback processes and loops can be determined?

We presume that these new ways of governing have reached a phase in which more systematic conceptualizations are needed to evaluate, underpin and analyze them: to explain why these new forms of governing are being developed; why more traditional ways of doing (maybe the same) things no longer work in terms of steering, management and control, and why these new forms might do better.

A first hypothesis might be that such interactive forms of governing can not be explained from an 'official policies' point of view. It might be exactly dissatisfaction with or ineffectiveness of approaches such as 'the administrative politics of policies' that lead to the search for other - more interactive - governing models. Social-political governing must be seen as a continuous process of interaction between public and non-public actors. The division of labour between them and the sharing of responsibilities are all part of the same process. Their connection (probably based on perceptions of mutual dependencies) seems to be their essence. In other words, structure, process and substance, interrelated in dealing with complex, dynamic and divers problem situations and the creation of new ways for solutions, are their specific characteristics.

In our opinion, we need other conceptualizations of these new ways of governing. More traditional policy models or arrangements seem to be either too government-oriented or too limited in scope. Our endeavour is more in line with theoretical efforts such as developed by the 'Bielefeld' Project (Kaufmann et al.) which itself builds on earlier work by Dahl/Lindblom, Etzioni, Deutsch and others.

Social-political Governance

In this book we want to develop the argument that for a conceptual (and empirical) understanding of new forms of interaction of government and society in different new models of governing, it might help to pay systematic attention to questions/aspects/conceptualizations of governance and especially to social-political governance in terms of coping with the complexity, dynamics and diversity of modern societies.

It seems as if in these new developments more basic characteristics of modern societies are finally beginning to emerge. By this we mean that the growing complexity, dynamics and diversity of our societies, as 'caused by social, technological and scientific developments', puts governing systems under such new challenges that new conceptions of governance are needed. So far these developments have been taken for granted, or just considered to be nasty and difficult. Why not take them seriously and put them in the centre of new ways of thinking about how to govern, steer, manage, control and use them?

A second hypothesis we could phrase here is that changing patterns of governance might be connected to the growing recognition on the part of social and political actors of the complexity, dynamics and diversity of social-political systems.

What social-political governance is about is expressed - for the time being - in words, concepts and images such as conditions, qualities and opportunities for more concrete governing models such as co-managing, co-steering and co-guidance. As a starting point we consider these conditions as specific to a certain sector. Different mixtures of complexity, dynamics and diversity show differences between and within sectors of societies. Different realizations of them will lead towards inter-sectoral and inter-cultural differences. At the moment we do not have worked-out theoretical concepts or concrete data on the level of social-political governance. This means that what we want to show in this book about social-political governance and about its relations to more specific governing models will still be predominantly pre-theoretical in nature. However, we are confident that what we have to offer in this project may be the beginning of a more profound way of looking at the many shortcomings of more traditional models of governing against the background of more traditional modes of governance on the one hand and the first signals of new ways of governing against the background of new modes of social-political governance on the other hand. We realize that we will probably raise more questions than we will be able to answer and that there is a certain element of normativeness in what we are doing. In the final chapter we will return to matters such as these in a somewhat more systematic way, after having presented our theoretical notions and having looked at empirical illustrations to indicate what we are talking about.

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

The first part of the book contains three chapters of a predominantly conceptual nature. Although the argumentation in these chapters partly is to be seen against the background of discussions and experiences in the countries the authors come from (Renate Mayntz from Germany, Andrew Dunsire from the UK and Jan Kooiman from The Netherlands), the scope of their argumentation is such that these contributions set the tone for the conceptions developed in the book.

In the first chapter Renate Mayntz uses the concept of steering - and the debate as carried on in Germany about this concept - for at least two purposes. In the first place she argues that we should make the problem of what (un)governability is, as clear as possible. Too often a remedy for failures is suggested which is a normative preference rather than a good problem analysis. Secondly, she shows that problems of governability are related to the dynamic and complex character of (sectors of) modern society and actual power distributions in them rather than to the so-called 'auto-poetic' character of social subsystems. Forms of social-political steering are necessary, but forms that differ from the more traditional 'state-oriented' ones.

In chapter 2 Andrew Dunsire argues that in situations of high complexity, dynamics and diversity, the role of government is one of what he calls 'collibration': steering by making use of opposing forces. Traditional forms such as regulation and central control are no longer adequate. He considers collaboration as such as a new way of interactive governing, using complexity, dynamics and diversity, rather than reducing them in inappropriate ways.

In the last chapter of this section, Jan Kooiman places complexity, dynamics and diversity as 'basic characteristics' which call for new modes of governance, in the centre of the conceptual discussion. He argues that instead of seeing complexity, dynamics and diversity as contributing to ungovernability, they can be seen as useful to enhance governability. This line of thought requires a new theoretical approach. As a starting point of such an approach he develops a concept of governability, consisting of the balancing between social-political needs and social-political capacities.

In the light of the discussion on different forms of governing, the three chapters show some possibilities and limitations of social-political

governance and governing. In their approaches they use the concepts of complexity, dynamics and diversity to indicate their importance for the outline of a conceptualization of governance and governing which makes a systematic use of those central societal characteristics.

GOVERNING FAILURES AND THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNABILITY: SOME COMMENTS ON A THEORETICAL PARADIGM¹

RENATE MAYNTZ

Starting Point: Governing Failures

For some twenty years now we have spoken of the, at least partial, failure of the modern state to perform its duties. Three areas of concern can be distinguished in the debate, each related to one of the main functions of the central state: regulation, welfare, and development. Especially in the 1970s the discussion about regulation focused on the imminent ungovernability of Western democracies. Central to the second discussion, which started in the 1960s and still continues today, is the so-called crisis of the welfare state. In the third discussion the scale and causes of governing failures play an important role. Although the three discussions overlap in terms of the problems addressed, three different theoretical lines of thought can be distinguished.

The issue of ungovernability stresses problems related to the acceptance of political leadership, a lack of conformity and a decreasing level of compliance. Ungovernability becomes manifest in political radicalism, a turn away from the party system, the emergence of new social movements and unorthodox forms of protest, increasing crime rates and a move to re-privatization of force. Explanations have been sought in societal factors (e.g. failure of socialization, loss of traditional values), political factors (failure of party system to represent popular will and to bring about consensus) and in the government system (inability to decide and to prevent popular distrust in and disagreement with the state).

The crisis of the welfare state appears mainly as a financial crisis. The problem is not so much whether a comprehensive welfare system is desirable or not, but whether it can be financed in a situation of increasing demands. Furthermore, the comprehensive welfare state emphatically shows problems deriving from bureaucratization: deficits of efficiency and legitimacy, the latter manifested in the critique of overregulation.

Although the debate about the welfare state has not been concluded yet, in Germany the theme of governing failures is particularly popular.

¹ Translated, with revisions especially in section 2, from: Politische Steuerung und gesellschaftliche Steuerungsprobleme - Anmerkungen zu einem theoretischen Paradigma. In: Jahrbuch zur Staats- und Verwaltungswissenschaft, volume 1, 1987. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

The assertion basically is that the state, because of the inherent shortcomings of its traditional instruments, is not able (any more) to solve the economic and social problems it has identified. Since the state is not able to steer social development in a preferred direction, in order to prevent unwanted developments it is either necessary to look for alternative instruments or to lower the aspirations of central-state control. In this connection, alternatives to law as well as alternative legal instruments are considered.

The following observations deal with the paradigm of governing failures, and more in particular focus on the presumed relation between the causes of these failures and the particularities of the suggested solutions. It may be obvious that in the realm of governing one cannot sensibly speak of possible therapies if there is no diagnosis. The main alternatives that are presently suggested - decentralization and a change of political instruments - should match the presumed causes for governing failures. However, in the debate to suggest new ways of societal guidance, the methodological principle that a proper diagnosis of problems precedes the formulation of solutions seems to be widely neglected. In practice we see the well-known habit of jumping to conclusions. No doubt every solution that has been suggested implies a certain problem diagnosis. However, when the relation between diagnosis and solution remains implicit or is not scrutinized itself, there is a danger that the theoretical assumptions underlying a reform proposal are used uncritically to justify an essentially normative preference, for instance for decentralization. In other words: we should also question whether the search for alternatives (such as decentralization) to the more traditional mode of political guidance is really primarily based on the experience of governing failures. As long as a relation between reform strategy and problem analysis has not been clearly established, a possible reform effort will almost automatically lead to disappointments. Before I will address the presumed causes of governing failures, a conceptional clarification may be useful.

On Governing and Governance

The German-language debate on the effectiveness or failures of political control - or governing, in the definition used by Kooiman - is couched in the terminology of 'Steuerung' (steering), a term that became increasingly popular in the 1970s and 80s. The concept of 'Steuerung', when it first appeared in German macro-sociology, was probably the translation of the Anglo-Saxon term 'control'. In German micro-sociology, 'soziale Kontrolle' had been used as a translation for 'social control'. However, the German 'Kontrolle' is a much narrower concept than 'control', which is more properly rendered by the word 'Steuerung'. Thus, Parsons' control hierarchy is translated into German as 'Steuerungshierarchie'; similarly one speaks of 'Steuerungsmedien'.