

Governance, Government and the State

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Governance is shorthand for the pursuit of collective interests and the steering and coordination of society. During the 1990s, new or emerging models of governance have become debated among social scientists and practitioners alike as a combined result of budgetary cutbacks, the ‘hollowing out’ of the state, the development towards an enabling or regulatory state, a growing interest among politicians to forge partnerships with strategic societal actors, and a ‘multi-layering’ of political authority. Together, these developments have raised questions about the ability of the state to be at the centre of governance. What is changing, in short, is the role of government in governance, and this change has brought with it complex questions concerning democratic input and accountability.

The recent debate on the role of the state in providing governance has featured growing doubts concerning the extent still can effectively play this role. Globalization theorists and ‘hollow-state’ observers alike seem to argue that governance is a process increasingly dominated by other actors than the state and its institutions. This chapter will argue that a more rewarding perspective on these issues is to conceive of recent changes within and outside the state in terms of a transformation of the state and its relationship to actors in its external environment. Theories of governance help us understand the historical trajectory of these developments and the current role of the state in the advanced Western democracies.

One of the fundamental tasks for any society is to govern itself. For most of the past three centuries or more we have associated that task with the state, and its monopoly of legitimate force within a territory. The term ‘Westphalian state’ is commonly used, denoting the inception of this type of governance structure at the termination of the Thirty Years’ War in Europe. In other parts of the world, e.g. China and Japan, analogous state structures had grown independently of this concept. The dominant pattern of governing has been hierarchical, with governments deciding – through democratic means or not – what laws and policies would be adopted and then proceeding to attempt to implement those rules. Especially in

democratic systems societal actors may be involved in this process, on both the input and output sides, but government remained the final arbiter of law and policy.

The state has been experiencing challenges to its traditional role in governance coming from outside the society (globalization) and from within the society itself in the form of networks and other social actors seeking greater autonomy. In this paper we will be taking the currently unpopular view that, although governance has indeed changed, the state continues to play a major, if not the major, role in governing. Further we will argue that especially in democratic states we should value governance through institutions that are broadly, if imperfectly, accountable to the public as opposed to more narrowly conceived patterns of sectoral governance.

Understanding the so-called shift from government to governance

Current use does not treat governance as a synonym for government. Rather governance signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a *new* process of governing; or a *changed* condition of ordered rule; or the *new* method by which society is governed. (Rhodes 1996:652–3; italics in original)

Well, yes and no. Rhodes' oft-cited argument that governance, the 'new governance', as it were, refers to fundamental changes in governing was instrumental in triggering widespread interest in governance as a phenomenon. Rhodes believed that the change in the style of governing in the United Kingdom during the 1980s meant the emergence of a distinctly new governing process summarized as 'governing without government'. Public–private partnerships, market-based administrative reform and the rolling back of the state coupled with the deregulation of markets were all seen as elements of a large-scale transformation of the ways in which the modern state – the 'hollow state' – governed society.

In this 'hollow state' the formal institutions of government have been largely replaced by the capacity of social actors such as networks and markets to govern. To the extent that it is important government is there to legitimate the actions of the social actors and to provide representative democracy, while the 'real' democracy is expressed through the involvement of individuals and groups in networks. Thatcherism clearly represented a new era in British politics and society, and that pattern has persisted, and in some ways been expanded by the Blair government.

All of that having been said, however, it also seems clear that some of the conclusions Rhodes drew from these changes were ethnocentric or

exaggerated, or possibly both. First of all, while the emergence of institutionalized forms of concerted action between public and private actors was a novelty to the British political milieu, it was certainly a familiar phenomenon both in (the rest of) Europe (Katzenstein 1984; Kraemer 1964) and even in the United States (see, for example, Beauregard 1988). Corporatism is perhaps the most obvious example of such public–private co-operation but there exist a wide variety of other forms of either ad hoc or more continuous and institutionalized forms of public–private exchanges at all levels of the political system. Thus, what struck Rhodes as new and original in Britain is part of the political history in many other parts of the world. This is not to denigrate his work, merely to suggest that the novelty of the phenomenon is called into question when applied to a cross-national comparison. Even so, however, the British developments over the past couple of decades have been more profound and have had bigger ramifications on the political system than in most other parts of the world with the exception of the Antipodes.

Second, and more important in terms of theory development, what is changing is not a process of governing from government to governance but the role of government in governance. It is, of course, not the case that contemporary British governance takes place without government; rather, what has changed is the centrality of government in governance and the *modus operandi* of government within that new model of governance. As soon as we conceptualize the developments Rhodes uses to illustrate his argument in that fashion, we can more easily ascertain what is new and what is not. Also, we will be in a better position to apply governance theory in comparative research. And, finally, by doing so we have also escaped the trap of singling out one national context – a case which arguably displays one of the more extreme transformations in these respects – as a norm or a yardstick with which we assess similar developments in other institutional and political contexts.

So exactly what is happening in terms of changes in governance? The next section of the chapter discusses some general patterns in contemporary governance change. Following that, we will briefly discuss how these changes have affected the state. The next section of the chapter looks more at the resilience of institutions and how institutions adapt to changes in their environment.

Emerging models of governance

In a different context (Pierre and Peters 2004) the present authors have elaborated a typology of governance model which aims at distinguishing between different such models along various key dimensions of governance, such as actors, processes and outcomes. One of the overarching problems in designing sustainable governance is how to weigh the significance of

institutions, as carriers of collective interests and objectives, against the autonomy of societal actors and markets.

On one end of the spectrum we see institutions powerful and resourceful enough to do basically what they see fit – either in terms of their own interests or in terms of what they believe to be in the interests of society – in any given situation (see Table 11.1). This model of governance ensures that collective goals are imposed on society but runs the risk of choking markets and civil society. This model of governance is also likely to make ill-informed decisions; the degree of institutional self-sufficiency which is typical to this type of governance provides few incentives for institutions to engage in dialogue with key actors in its external environment. The other end of the spectrum sees governance as a process shaped by inter-organizational networks at the level of the policy sector, pretty much the way Rhodes (1996) describes ‘the new governance’. Here, collective objectives are obstructed by coalitions of sectoral actors and interests. While this model of governance might be said to be sufficiently in touch with society to make good choices, those choices will not reflect the collective preferences of the polity but rather those of a very small segment of society.

Between those two stark alternatives are a variety of forms of governing that relate state and society in different ways, but find a means of balancing the roles of those two broad segments of political and social life. For example, the pluralist (liberal) model of governing retains the public sector as the dominant actor, picking and choosing among alternative representatives of

Table 11.1 *Models of governance*

<i>Model</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
Etatiste	Dominant role for state institutions. Limited involvement and feedback from society.
Liberal	Involvement of limited number of societal actors, selected carefully by state institutions. Pluralist, with government choosing the legitimate actors.
State-centric	State remains dominant actor, but societal actors have some autonomous sources of legitimacy, and some claims for involvement, corporatist bargaining being a prime example.
‘Dutch’	Networks become central, if not dominant, participants, but state retains capacity to make autonomous decisions and ‘steer from a distance’.
Governance without government	Networks and markets are dominant actors. State legitimates the actions of these societal actors

civil society, but yet allowing that civil society some influence over policy. Likewise, a state-centric conception of governing, exemplified by corporatist models (Wiarda, 1996), permits societal actors even greater involvement, but at the price of co-optation into the governance activities of the state. Finally, the 'Dutch' model (Kooiman, 2004) uses networks for a significant portion of governance activity, but government still retains the capacity to 'steer at a distance'.

Given these complex trade-offs between different aspects of governance, it is perhaps little surprise that much of contemporary design of governance appears to be a process of trial and error. One example is the current wave of regional institutional reform across Europe where objectives related to economic development and EU-compatibility are weighed against collective input, democratic debate and accountability. The result, according to one observer, is that few countries, if any, have been able to present a reform which seems to work (Newman, 2000). Another example of problematic governance design can be found in the field of administrative reform. Many countries seem to experience a hangover from the aggressive market-based reforms implemented during the 1980s and 1990s and are now exploring alternative strategies to strengthen the role of political institutions and actors. The Antipodes, for example, were leaders in the market-based reforms of new public management (NPM) but now are finding ways to reassert a stronger governance role for the public sector.

At the same time, it should also be noted that although many of the currently emerging forms of governance display some form of institutionalized exchange between state and society, the object of reform does not seem to be to look back in time at the models of governance that were typical to many countries prior to Thatcher, NPM and deregulated financial markets. Instead, there are signs that the pendulum movement is slowly beginning to swing back towards governance models that accord political institutions a more central role. In the Scandinavian countries, it appears as if the fascination with decentralized government is slowly fading and that processes of subtle forms of recentralization are on their way. In Sweden, for example, several major government commissions are examining carefully both the decentralized local government system and the deconcentrated system of public administration.

If anything, it seems clear from the current debate in many countries that institutions are much more capable of adapting than most observers have hitherto believed them to be. We will return to that issue later in this chapter. The state that remains in the face of the numerous changes in governance is still a powerful actor. There may have been some hollowing out, but when assessed more carefully we can now see that the 'shell' that remains retains much of its real power. While it is difficult to deny that there is now a powerful international marketplace that affects the capacity to make autonomous economic policy decisions, that market is itself, however,

negotiated rather than autonomous, and governments remain the major negotiators in fora such as the WTO, the IMF, and within numerous other international regimes.

Likewise, at the domestic level, clearing some of the baggage of the hierarchical state may produce even more capacity to govern. This enhancement in governance capacity is manifested simply because the power is not used on every minor detail of policy but instead is used to shape the directions of policy and the basic goals for governing. As described in several places the State now 'enables' as much as it 'directs', but it can still make the choice of what things to enable and what things not to support. That selectivity then becomes a means of husbanding resources, choosing those battles that must be fought, and making strategic choices about governance. Thus, the enabling state can also become the strategic state.

The resilience of institutions

States are more than simply an aggregation of institutions, but those institutions do a great deal to define a state, and to shape its capacity for governance (see Painter and Pierre 2004). If there is a well-developed and well-functioning set of institutions then the states blessed with those institutions are likely to be able to cope with increased strength and diversity of pressures coming from both the domestic and international environments. Conversely, in failing states, such as those found in much of Africa or the Caucasus, the institutions are present in form but not in function, so that these states are largely at the mercy of the external forces that impinge upon them. Thus, it may not be so much the state *per se* that has been failing in governance but certain forms of the state operating in certain conditions.

Joel Migdal (1988) has pointed out the importance of different types of matches and mismatches between the relative strengths of states and their societies. The interactions between the state and the environment become more complex when the international market becomes a player also, so that strong states may be able to mediate between their societies and the international environment, while weaker states may be at the mercy of both external forces. In some instances states can use the power of external economic actors – the World Trade Organization or the European Central bank – to overcome the power of entrenched social interests, or perhaps even forge coalitions with powerful domestic actors (environmental NGOs perhaps) against external actors (see Pauly and Grande, 2005). One of the clearest examples is the current fiscal probity of Italian and Irish governments in response to their membership in the EMS, after decades of huge deficits. The fundamental point is that states are not at the mercy of non-state actors and can govern. They may not always govern alone, but they can govern.

We have argued elsewhere (Peters 2002; Peters and Pierre forthcoming; Pierre and Peters 2000), and will continue to argue here, that the most appropriate place at which to begin an analysis of governance is the state, rather than beginning with the external actors – social or economic. This is in part an analytic stance, but it is also a theoretical position. Analytically, beginning with the state enables us to see when deviations from this *a priori* expectation may have occurred, and hence identify the points at which either international economic or domestic social forces may have intervened. Theoretically, we will be arguing that despite the important changes that many scholars of governance (Rhodes 1997; Tihonen 2004) have identified (and in some cases perhaps exaggerated) a great deal of the governance action in most societies, occurs through state organs.

What do state institutions do for governance?

Having said that the state and its institutions are central elements for an understanding of governance, how do we conceptualize that process actually functioning? Given that we have defined governance as a process of steering the economy and society, and have identified four key elements involved in that steering, we can more readily identify the manner in which the formal (and informal) institutions of the state influence that steering process. The central element of this analysis is that we are defining steering, and hence governance, as a goal-directed activity, with the need to establish collective goals and develop the means of reaching those goals. In a democratic context those societal goals would have to be identified by some more or less inclusive process, and attaining the goals would have to be accomplished through a process that recognizes individual rights and due process, but any method of governance will require goal setting and implementation. As Buchanan and Tullock (1962) argued, the general *ex ante* agreement on majority rule in most societies, once enshrined in formal rules, is a powerful means of ensuring legitimacy of decisions.

The most important thing about state institutions for the governance process is that they provide an agreed upon mechanism for establishing priorities, and for making choices among competing priorities. Social and political actors have any number of goals that they would like to see the society pursue, and to use the authority and financial resources of the state to make possible. However, given that resources are finite, there is a need to prioritize those goals. The political process, usually through a legislature of some sort, provides the means for making decisions that have the force of law. Whether by majority rule or other voting rules within these institutions provide a means of making the difficult choices required.

A second requirement for effective governance in the reconciliation of goals and programmes that, even with legislative choices, may be conflicting or at a minimum inconsistent. Governments adopt any number of laws and with the mobilization of different coalitions for different purposes with in governments there is no guarantee of consistency. Therefore, some means of co-ordination and clarification of the policies adopted by government will be required (see, for example, Scharpf 1996) for good governance. Although less formalized means have some potential (Bardach 1998), the general means of producing policy co-ordination is through institutions such as cabinets and central agencies.

A third component of governing is implementation, or the actual steering of economy and society. Implementation conventionally has been considered the province of the public bureaucracy, although increasingly it utilizes non-governmental actors and the instruments of 'new governance' (Salamon 2002), but even those instruments tend to function in the 'shadow of hierarchy' and to be backed by the possibility of using authority. Further, the macro-institutional structure of a country tends to have significant influence over implementation, given the importance of federalism, or other structures of sub-national government, for the implementation of programmes from the central government.

Finally, in order to be able to steer effectively one needs to understand the consequences of previous decisions, and hence feedback and accountability are important to governance. In any society the feedback element is crucial, to provide for on-going correction and change of policy, but for democratic governments the accountability element included in this stage is also important. The public bureaucracy, and its agents when programmes are not implemented directly by public employees, must be held to account for their actions so that citizens can have some assurance that their rights are being respected, and that public money is being used appropriately. Thus, the feedback component of governance involves both policy change and scrutiny of the actions of individuals responsible. This aspect of governance also involves a number of institutional players, ranging from legislatures to specialized oversight and accountability organizations (Hood *et al.* 2004). Arguably, although some private sector 'watchdogs' can be useful, the ultimate responsibility for accountability must reside with public institutions.

Having described the role of existing public sector institutions in the process of governance, it is important to understand the role of these institutions in other than those descriptive terms. The inherited, and persisting, institutional structures of states are crucial first for the legitimation of the policy choices made by government. In a more globalized and inter-dependent world national governments may have to respond to a number of external forces, but policy choices may still need to be legitimated through some rather conventional mechanisms. Likewise, in a world of governance

in which networks of private sector actors are crucial to the formation and especially the implementation of public policy, the interactions of those social partners with government are important for the success of government, but cannot replace the legal mandates of states and governments. Thus, the actions of networks will in most circumstances be carried on within a context of state power, power that can be withdrawn if deemed necessary.

As well as conveying legitimacy, some of the institutions of the public sector are peculiarly well suited for performing certain governance activities. In particular, the institutions of the public sector have been designed to resolve conflicts, while neither markets nor networks are designed to do so. Markets tend to assume away conflicts, or assume that the most powerful economic actors will (and should) win. Networks are generally assumed to be co-operative and non-competitive, but if a network surrounding a policy area is inclusive and has within it a range of socio-economic interests it may well find collaborative solutions to problems impossible, having no *ex ante* method for legitimately deciding between winners and losers. Political institutions were designed under an assumption of conflict, often intense conflict, and their constitutive rules provide the means of providing a solution.

Further, although the critics of contemporary government would certainly not agree, conventional institutions of government do a reasonably good job of channelling the demands from the society into the processes of decision-making. Advocates of deliberative government (Dryzek 2003), communitarianism (Selznick 2002), referenda (but see Budge 1996) and networks argue that these conventional institutions privilege certain types of interests and exclude others. Although there is some logic to that position, there are several other points that should be made. First, the conventional political institutions establish *ex ante* rules for inclusion and have developed structures that channel and aggregate interests, so that the manner of inclusion is known in advance. Further, these structures are widely diverse and can provide a number of avenues for participation. For example, the public bureaucracy increasingly is a major, if not the major, locus of participation for social interests.

We should also point out that the proposed alternatives to the instruments of interest intermediation are perhaps no more inclusive than are the more conventional institutions. For example, although discursive democracy is meant to be inclusive, its reliance on advocacy and discourse advantages the more articulate, especially members of the middle class. Likewise, networks tend to involve the social actors that are immediately concerned with the policy area, but the broader society has little or no ability to exert any influence, even if they may be affected by the policy choices, if for no other reason than they are taxpayers. Thus, the advocates of other forms of governance can point to significant problems in producing better outcomes through presumably more open and democratic means of public involvement.

Institutions and political change

A focus on the institutions may appear to express an excessive concern with the persistence of patterns of governing. The path dependence that has been central to the study of public policy from an institutionalist perspective can also apply to the institutions themselves, so that many vestigial institutions may remain in contemporary governments. Once created, both institutions and the policies they make tend to persist unless there is a strong political force that can produce change. Even as governments are responding more to characteristics in their socio-economic environment, however, they are making those responses in the context of an institutional structure that may have been inherited from decades, if not centuries, before. Institutional, especially historical institutional, analysis tends to focus on the persistence of those institutions, but that should not obscure the fact that there has been institutional change, and that institutions can be adaptive. Still, change may often be in the form of a 'punctuated equilibrium' rather than steady adaptation to changing circumstances, given the capacity of institutions to protect themselves from external pressures.

The state is not as entrenched and inflexible as critics might like to have us believe. One of the standard justifications for the view of governance that stresses networks and other less formal means of action is that the state is bureaucratic, ossified, and non-responsive. Certainly governments at times do appear to correspond to those unflattering descriptions, but the political system has demonstrated that it can also be responsive and reformist. That is true both for the reform of policies being delivered by the state, and for the state itself (Bouckaert and Pollitt, 2004). Three particular forms of adaptation on the part of the state should be noted here, as reflecting their capacity to cope with changing circumstances.

One of the most important patterns of change in contemporary states has been their capacity to cope with blended, or dual, sovereignty, and to find means of continuing to act as state entities even in the face of merger into larger state-like unions – the European Union as the obvious example – or complex transnational regimes such as that managed by the World Trade Organization, or perhaps even more significantly the International Criminal Court. While state institutions persist, they share control over important sections of their policy regimens with other actors, but most have been able to do so with minimum difficulty. Thus, even in areas that have been 'defining functions' of states (Rose 1974) adaptation has been possible, and state-driven (if no longer exclusive) governance persists.

A second important change in the governance patterns of contemporary states has been in the selection of instruments used to achieve their policy purposes. At one level, rather than relying on command and control instruments as in the past governments are now utilizing 'softer' instruments to

achieve their policy goals. For example, social programmes increasingly are implemented through co-operative arrangements with partners in the not-for-profit sector that reduce the costs for government but perhaps more importantly reduce the perceived intrusiveness of the programmes. One of the best examples of the use of 'soft law' of this type is in the European Union, with its use of the 'open method of co-ordination' (Radealli 2003) as a means of achieving European social and employment goals. At a second level, governments have shifted from direct provision of some types of benefits to regulators of private provision, so that again the same services may be delivered but in a less intrusive, and less costly, manner.

Finally, states have changed structurally, and have decentralized and deconcentrated significantly. Part of the administrative logic of the new public management has been to empower managers of autonomous and quasi-autonomous public organizations to make more of their own decisions about policy and management, and to reduce hierarchical control over these managers and their organizations. This administrative policy has been adopted in the pursuit of greater efficiency in the public sector but it may have other policy and political consequences as well. In particular, this structural change may have opened up government for greater influence from social actors, while limiting the capacity of political leaders to control government. Those changes have, however, resulted in programmes in some governments to return to the centre and to attempt to find ways of imposing more central policy priorities on government as a whole (see Peters 2004).

These three types of change are all important, and they have altered some aspects of governance, but they by no means amount to an incapacity of the contemporary state to govern, and to govern effectively. Indeed, to the extent that one of the changes may have been having that effect the state has acted to reassert its influence, and reversed the reform, at least in part. Therefore, the sense of a state structure that is not sufficiently nimble to match environmental change does not appear supported by the evidence. If we were to examine policy changes at even more of a micro-level, e.g. specific types of taxation, we can also find that states have responded to meet the challenges posed by economic change, and have been able to maintain their streams of revenue despite those challenges.

Summary

The state and its institutions have been changing, but they remain viable actors in making and implementing policy, and in governance taken more generally. Indeed, the state to a great extent retains its central position in selecting and legitimating policy goals, although it may do so in a more

co-operative and less intrusive manner than in the past. The international environment can impact the range of possible actions for states, although certainly some more than others, and governments are increasingly involved with social partners in the selection and execution of laws, but the formal institutions do retain substantial importance. Indeed, in many ways the most remarkable feature of contemporary governance is not so much what has changed but what has remained the same.

Governance, the state and political power

To this point we have been painting a picture of the transformation of the hierarchical and autonomous state that had been the centrepiece of the Westphalian State system in international politics, and also the centre of the mixed-economy, welfare state in domestic politics. That model of governing was very convenient for those at the centre of the institutional apparatus. They could make decisions and expect them to be executed with minimal direct involvement of other actors. While the implementation literature made it clear to academics that these systems for making and executing policy did not necessarily function as smoothly as the models might have one believe, they did function, and during the post-World War II period helped produce an era of substantial economic growth and growing equality of opportunity, in the Western democracies at least. Although this form of governance was successful for a substantial period of time, overloads of demands and fiscal problems generated significant problems. Society also changed and demanded greater participation. Thus, both on the political right and the political left there were demands for change, and indeed some substantial change. As noted above, some of these changes involved altering forms of service delivery in order to enhance the efficiency of the public sector. Other changes involved debureaucratization and involving social actors in decisions. We could enumerate a number of changes of both sorts, but the fundamental point is that the linear, autonomous conception of governing had been replaced by far more complex arrangements for making and delivering policy.

The complexity that is inherent in contemporary patterns of governance does not, however, imply that governments have lost their power in governing. What it does mean is that the state is exercising that power in different ways. For example, as partnerships and other means of linking the public and private sectors become more prevalent, the state's power is exercised through bargaining and linking their resources with those of the private sector. In many ways these arrangements may actually enhance public power. First, although government may want the resources brought to the table by private sector actors, government may bring a more central

resource, namely legitimacy for engaging in action in the name of the public. Governments at time squander that resource, but it remains a major asset.

In addition, the public sector can, if it is coordinated and can pursue coherent policy goals, provide a central direction to more diverse and diffuse actors in the private sector. One of the most important criteria for governance is the need to create a set of common goals for the society, and that goal setting function is most likely to occur in government, as opposed to the numerous and diverse groups pressing their demands on the public sector. Therefore, a common set of goals may be more effective in governing than the more complex and perhaps confused set coming from society. The 'central mind of government', in Dror's (2001) terms, and with that the opportunity to govern strategically, can be a decided advantage in governing.

Following from the above point, conflict resolution is a central activity for government and for governing. There are any number of policy views held by members of society, most of which contain some elements of the public interest as well as the more selective interests of the advocates. The difficulty in governing therefore is selecting among this array of worthy policy proposals. The institutions in the public sector have the mechanisms for doing this, whether through voting in legislative bodies, or more technocratic forms of decision-making in the bureaucracy, or even legal decision-making in the courts. Networks do not have such forms of conflict resolution that are agreed *ex ante*. Bargaining does provide a means of resolving some conflicts, but generally not those in which there are direct conflicts among groups. Thus, any movement toward 'governance without government' complicates conflict resolution, but government may have to come back in the end to cope with fundamental disagreements.

One of the luxuries that the development of networks and the involvement of the private sector in governance affords government is that its own involvement in governance can be selective and instrumental. That is, government can now govern with a lighter hand, and can use those instruments of 'new governance' (see Salamon 2002) that may be less obtrusive. So long as the decisions made by networks remain within the bounds acceptable to existing law and the general policy values of the government there may be no reason to squander scarce political capital and intervene. But we should not forget that those instruments still depend upon the power and legitimate authority of the public sector for much of their effectiveness, and that most of the goal-setting will still be done through the public sector.

Conclusion

In summary, the rumours of the death of the state are exaggerated. We would certainly not want to deny that governing has changed, and that

international, and especially societal, actors are important players. That having been said, for many countries they have been significant components of governance for decades if not centuries. Further, the international dimension of governance may have increased, but may serve as much as a locus and arena for state action as it does a real constraint on governing – at least for the affluent industrial countries.

Therefore, we would advocate some caution when considering many of the contemporary discussions of governance. They need to be considered in light of a complex history of governing and government. They also need to be considered in light of the complexity of contemporary governance processes and structures. Governing still involves choosing and therefore advantages structures that have the capacity to produce more coherent and strategic decisions. Despite the numerous critiques of government, it may still be more capable of providing a coherent picture of the future of society than can any other institution, and is more capable of resolving the inherent conflicts among sectors of society that will be required to pursue that vision.

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