BEYOND NEGATIVE POLITICS: RECONNECTING GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS

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“All countries whose citizens will be executed will certainly approach the government, but they cannot influence our sovereignty” (General M Prasetyo).
But the French citizen avoided the firing squad

- France’s President Francois Hollande warned Saturday that Indonesia would face diplomatic consequences if it executes Frenchman Serge Atlaoui…

- "If he is executed, there will be consequences with France and Europe because we cannot accept this type of execution," Hollande told reporters
And so did the Philippine woman
What I’ll be talking about:

- Sovereignty: the core of hard power.
- Hard power as repression and hegemony.
- Hard power and the civic culture (old liberal democracy).
- Soft power – reconnecting government with individual choice.
- Neoliberal culture governance – a new form of systems colonization
- From individualism and collectivism to connective action and everyday making.
- The politics of truth
Sovereignty as threat and violence

- Death is the moment of the most obvious and most spectacular manifestation of the absolute power of the sovereign.
- For the relationship of sovereignty to really hold, there is always the need for a certain supplement of threat of violence, which is there behind the relationship of sovereignty, and which sustains it and ensures that it holds. The other side of sovereignty is violence, it is war.
TONY ABBOTT: We are examining suspending some of the privileges of citizenship for individuals involved in terrorism.
Old liberalism: minimizing hard power

- The government that governs least governs best….I love my country and I love our system, but government can't fix the problems - government is the problem
- (Sarah Palin, the Tea Party)
Hard power cannot be ‘stopped’

- ‘The political in its antagonistic dimension cannot be made to disappear by simply denying it’ (Mouffe 2013: 3-4).
- ‘The political is from the onset concerned with collective forms of identification, since in this field we are always dealing with the formation of ‘us’ as opposed to ‘them’” (ibid: 4).
Hegemony as the forming of a collective ‘we’ is the basis of hard power
Tony Abbott before his meeting with the Muslim community:

“Everyone has got to put this country, its interests, its values and its people first, and you don’t migrate to this country unless you want to join our team and that’s the point I’ll be stressing.”
Hard power as negative politics

- Whether repressive or hegemonic political power is never merely about A) having more power than B)
- Political power is always about A) having *power over* B)
- Political power presumes the existence of antagonism and conflict to be overcome
- A) has political power over B) to the degree and extent A) is able to impose a common interest or collective identity on B)
Is hard power for men?


• "What if men are by physiology or by temperament more adapted to exercise authority or to issue commands?" Mr Abbott remarked in 1998.

• Well…
Hard power and civic culture

- Citizens orientations towards inputs and outputs (Almond and Verba 1963)
  - By “political” or “input” process we refer to the flow of demands from the society into the polity and the conversion of these demands into authoritative policies [parties, interest groups, and mass media].
  - ‘By the administrative or output process we refer to that process by which authoritative policies are applied’ [bureaucracies and courts].
The civic culture relies on hard power:

- It is the duty, as well as the right, of centralized power to guide and exercise command over each private citizen:
  - ‘[People] are constantly disputing as to the hands in which supremacy is to be vested, but they readily agree upon the duties and the rights of that supremacy… All secondary opinions in politics are unsettled; this one remains fixed, invariable, and consistent’ (Toqueville 1805-1859)
The civic culture

- *The subject culture*: obedient subjects oriented towards outputs.
- *The parochial culture*: apolitical subjects forging social networks based on trust, spilling over to the political system.
- *The participatory culture*: active citizens doing what they can to keep coercive political power legitimate, effective and responsive to the voice of ‘We, the People’.
- *Democracy* is about finding the right blend to secure political and social stability.
Modern citizenship

- *If citizens are to make a difference they must:*
  - Unite around a common interest or identity
  - Be highly organized and incorporate hierarchized decision-making processes
  - Have thick affective ties and common origins
  - Be prepared to obey and show duty towards the common good
The modern participatory model

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Young people as the problem for modern citizenship

- Making up about 30% of the electorate, but not oriented in any persistent ideological direction, young people remain untapped as a political resource.
- 493,113 young people were unenrolled as of March 31, 2013
A well-trodden trope maintains that young people are democratically apathetic, lack civic and political knowledge, and make a lesser contribution to society than older folk. Young people are increasingly accused of having “tickets on themselves”.

This doesn’t necessarily mean that young people are apathetic: they may just be unconvinced that the political machinery is the best way to pursue the issues they care most about.
Young participants

- do not primarily orient themselves towards, or feel motivated by, what governments say and do;
- refuse to obey without further reasons as complying subjects (negation of the subject culture);
- reject that social capital can generate self-appreciation and self-governance (negation of the parochial culture);
- insist that political participation is personal and driven by engagement norms and not merely collective and prompted by duty norms (negation of the participatory culture).
Soft power – reconnecting government with individuals

- one cannot govern a population like one governs a territory;
- governing the framing of a space is not the same as protecting and serving a home or place;
- governance is functional rather than territorial
- Governance is about the capacity to lead and direct in ways that involve people and expand their freedoms
• opening up public services - enabling voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprises, and employee-owned co-operatives to compete to offer public services
• social action - encouraging and enabling people to play a more active part in society
• community empowerment - giving local councils and neighbourhoods more power to take decisions and shape their area
Soft power and individual choice

- To attract, co-opt and engage with people without deceiving or threatening them and without paying them.
- Tied to a notion of leadership as:
  - Someone who is nudging individuals and groups to make the right choices
Soft power over free individuals

- If the young are not collectivistic they must be individualistic which requires soft power to be managed.
- Soft power implies that A can persuade B to go along with her purposes without any explicit command, threat, exchange or deception taking place.
- A exercises soft power over B in order to learn B constantly to value or appreciate herself.
Soft power as nudging (Merriam-Webster def.)

- to touch or push (someone or something) gently
- to push (someone) gently with your elbow in order to get that person's attention
- to encourage (someone) to do something
- to exhort, goad, press, prod, prompt
- Synonyms: graze, kiss, shave, skim
- Antonyms: deter, discourage, dissuade; brake, check, constrain, curb, hold back, inhibit, restrain
• Nudging is exercised:
  ◦ From above through the framing of individual choice and by persuading the individual to change behaviour.
  ◦ From below as moderator of individuals’ conflicts and as enabler of their free choice.
• The Federal Government will trial a cashless welfare card, with payments not allowed to be spent on alcohol or gambling
• "This could have a dramatic impact on the community in terms of rates of violence and rates of assaults, particularly against women," [Mr. Tudge said].
• "Labor does believe that targeted income management can be helpful for vulnerable Australians [Ms. Macklin said]."
Income Management is a way to help you manage your money to meet essential household needs and expenses. Through Income Management you can learn to better manage your finances in the long term.

Money that is income managed cannot be spent on alcohol, tobacco and tobacco products, pornographic material, gambling products and services, gift cards, homebrew kits or concentrates.
Soft power is also domination, but as culture governance

- Governing through freedom, choice and agency is thus linked to a governing that tries to make people responsible and which might view ethical self-governance, moral character building or even a religious faith as a means to do so.’ (Mitchell Dean 2007: 61).
Culture governance manifests a new form of systems colonization of laypeople’s life-worlds based on competence development and empowerment rather than prohibitions, commands, deception and seduction.

Culture governance invades all everyday practices with its message that self-appreciation and freedom come from learning how to master and win its competitive game for success.

In culture governance, public reason, public engagement, public deliberation, and so on, are placed in the hands of those who have most self-appreciation and perform the competitive game best.

Culture governance attempts to take charge of the working of the more spontaneous; less programmed and more lowly organized politics of the ordinary in political communities.

Culture governance represents a derogation of the lay actor and of the very idea of a non-strategic public reasoning as founding the practices of freedom and equality.
The young generation contest culture governance

- Personalized politics need not be scattered, disorganized, or ineffective.
- Digitalized communication enables highly personalized publics including large numbers of very different people who experience a common problem, issue or risk and seek common solutions.
- Different technology platforms embed in each other and help people coordinate activities, establish relationships, and transfer information.
- The principle for the young’s new action or project communities is neither individualistic nor collectivistic but connective: it is based on mutual acceptance and recognition of difference.
Connective action (Bennett and Segerberg 2013)

- In the model defined by the logic of connective action, digital media change the dynamics and scope of the politics of the ordinary.

- Distinct from old forms of collective action, connective action is not dependent on having strong organizational resources and having developed a thick, symbolic ‘we’.
FIGURE 1.1. Defining elements of connective and collective action networks.
Everyday Makers with a project identity are subjects of connective action

- Do it yourself (alone or with others).
- Do it where you are (for instance at home, on the web, at work, in school and in the university).
- Do it to feel engaged and to make a difference (however ‘insignificant’ and ‘irrelevant’ it may appear to them in power).
- Do it ‘ad hoc’ and ‘on and off’ (not 24/7, but when you have time for it and feel like it).
- Do it with a specific case or project in mind (and not abstractly and ideologically).
- Do it without, with, for or against ‘experts’ (depending on what suits the realization of the project best).
- Do it to express yourself in relation to a common cause (rather than by opposing your individual self to community building).
Everyday makers need guidance and direction too

- But not from the hard and soft governors who seek to dominate their political existence but from a truth-telling politician who has:
  - the courage to tell them the truth about what has to be done, insisting that this truth can help and direct them in the ethical formation of the self required for exercising self-governance
  - the courage to manifest the truth about oneself, to show oneself as one is, in the face of all opposition.
Power is not equivalent to domination

‘Domination is a particular case within the different possibility of power relations. You can have a power relation without this type of domination.’ (Foucault 1996: 417).
Domination must be distinguished from the exercise of legitimate ascendancy within a democratic structure by one who has the courage, power and knowledge to assert the truth in an open discourse.
And power is governmentality being about

- ‘how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor – all these problems, in their multiplicity and intensity, seem to me to be characteristic of [the] problematic of government[alization] in general’ (Foucault 2001: 202).
Nelson Mandela showed the way

- ‘Courage is not the absence of fear — it’s inspiring others to move beyond it.’
- ‘It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.’
Beyond antagonism and consent to connective action and self-governance

- ‘To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.’
- ‘If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.’