

Towards Reflexive Governance for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: This paper proposes a new way of governance for sustainable development that involves reflexive governance in order to tackle the contradiction and tension between the practices of governance and the objectives of sustainable development. This can be accomplished using the theoretical perspectives on governance for sustainable development, ‘sub-politics’ in ‘reflexive modernization,’ for creating the epistemological grounds for new forms of governance for sustainable development, and deliberative and green democracy in relation to applying methodological principles to new forms of governance for sustainable development. This paper highlights necessary change to reflexive governance for sustainable development, pointing out that we should move our focus from ‘rationalist problem-solving’ (first-order) approach to governance to ‘second-order problems’ that work to disrupt the structure of modernist problem-solving. Reflexive governance for sustainable development can provide more adequate treatment of sustainable development problems and a better quality of sustainable development objectives.

Keywords: governance, sustainable development, sub-politics, reflexive governance for sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

In the context of sustainable development (SD), while requests for a more sustainable political and institutional arrangement are growing, the idea of governance has been an essential partner for dealing with SD. It is generally understood that governance practices and arrangements are pivotal for realizing (and institutionalizing) SD. Nevertheless, even though governance—characterized by consensus-building, interac-

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tion, cooperation, and the participation of various stakeholders—deserves attention as an alternative management system, this participatory and communicative process may not actually guarantee the substance or content of SD (or sustainability), thus creating a ‘substance-procedure divide.’ In fact, decision-making through democratic governance does not always result in rational SD outcomes; democratic forms and procedures often limit the demands of SD. Hence, a reconstitution of the concept of governance is required to ensure the substance of SD in terms of governance for SD (GoSD).

One of the ways to tackle this tension (and contradiction) is to define new forms of governance for the substance of SD and consider what this would mean theoretically. First we should create epistemological grounds for new forms of GoSD under the heading of sub-politics in reflexive modernization, focusing on a transformation from the first modernity to a second modernity (Beck 1995, 1997). The second is linked to methodological principles for new forms of GoSD and securing procedural legitimacy; this process, as well as dealing with sustainability problems, must be done justly. It should be explored from the point of view of deliberative democracy and green (ecological) democracy.

THE LINK BETWEEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

SD is a complex concern that involves multiple actors and sectors. As Zeijl-Rozema, Cörvers, and Kemp (2007, 1-2) have stated, it has three aspects: contents (recognizing sustainability as a serious problem that requires institutional change), process (involving multiple parties in policy making), and context (strengthening the institutional setting for sustainability initiatives). Because many of its problems cannot be solved by traditional, hierarchical government measures, it requires new forms of cooperation between the state, the market, and civil society (Zeijl-Rozema, Cörvers, and Kemp 2007).

For example, it is difficult to pinpoint the causes of environmental problems and respond promptly to them, because of the complex synergistic effects between pollutants; by the time environmental damage is apparent, it has often spread beyond its place of origin and become global in dimension. The existing governing system cannot respond effectively to complex ecological and environmental problems because it operates on short timescales under the influence of electoral politics and thus focuses on immediate and visible results.

With regard to the necessity of governance in the SD context, the concept of sustainability is also indeterminate and normative. As Barry (1996, 116) has stated, sus-

tainability is “discursively created rather than an authoritatively given product.” Sustainability is not a measurable scientific or economic phenomenon; furthermore, it requires fundamental ethical consideration. Thus, it requires social consensus (not simply between experts but also among citizens) regarding what should be made sustainable and how to make it so (Lee 2005). In this sense, as Bell and Morse (2005) have explained, the objective of sustainability is open-ended and is influenced by different ideas expressed by people in various sectors. The process of realising SD requires broad stakeholder participation, and its success should be collectively considered and retrospectively determined.

According to Farrell et al.’s (2005) view of governance, disagreement about the definition and character of sustainability is an intrinsic part of SD. They explain that GoSD does not signify unitary “construction and control” of the sustainable future but “the deliberate adjustment of practices of governance” for development along a sustainable trajectory. SD requires governance as an essential partner because governance can transcend “parochial, short-term focused, partisan politics,” and through it, the social and ecological goals of SD can be realized in a democratic, transparent, and participatory way (Farrell et al. 2005, 132-133). The constitutive side of politics, a feature of governance in terms of “who sets what rules, when, and how?” relies on “the rules guiding political choice and action” (Hyden, 2001: 17-18). This is important in relation to SD, since SD demands “a change in the rules and also a shift in power relations,” which is based on the constitutive side of politics (Hyden 2001, 18).

As a result, governance has salience for the multidimensional concept of SD. SD, which calls for new forms of problem handling, definitely requires certain principles of governance such as participation and cooperation (Voss and Kemp 2005; Zeijl-Rozema, Cörvers, and Kemp 2007). In terms of promoting SD, governance is not only a set of activities but also a tool through which a problem can be dealt with in view of the ‘big picture,’ modifying systems of ‘rule to changes’ and encouraging consensual solutions (Hyden 2001). Moreover, this implies the “strategic aspects of change” as catalytic intervention or steering for SD, which is fundamentally driven by governance that can bring about numerous significant opportunities for new initiatives for SD (Hyden 2001).

Governance, in this context, could create a number of possibilities for solving environmental problems. For example, it could enhance the socio-institutional capacity of coordination, steering, and regulation through the comprehensive participation of stakeholders and self-regulating and cooperative endeavors between stakeholders (Jung 2002). This environmental governance incorporates the principles of governance into the sphere of environmental management—related in practice to SD—and is clearly different from the existing government-led and market-led environmental

management methods.

Government-led environmental management focuses on environmental legislation and its enforcement, which assumes that environmental problems can be tackled through technical and end-of-pipe processes to abate or control undesirable substances (Jung 2002, Cho 2002b). Hence, it uses a command-and-control management style. On the other hand, market-led environmental management emphasizes market mechanisms such as incentives (op. cit.). However, this strategy has maintained the basic frame of the existing governing mode, which shows clear limitations in dealing with environmental problems, especially those that now extend to the global level.

One of the most representative examples of cooperative governing of the environment, or environmental governance, is Local Agenda 21, a strategy for implementing SD at the grass-roots level. This is part of Agenda 21, which was adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. Local Agenda 21 was developed in a public-private partnership in which the government decides on institutions, laws, administration, and finances, and the private and voluntary sectors choose the agenda for SD through their participation, service, and practice.

John (2004, 222-27) described environmental governance in terms of national policies and local issues and divided it into four categories:

1. Interest-group environmental governance operates at the national level and consists of a number of loosely related programs on different issues; it can be seen as the backbone of environmental policy.
2. Rational environmental governance operates at the national level with a systemic and holistic focus. It consists of programs that frame issues broadly based on environmental, economic, and social values. It can be seen as the eyes of environmental policy.
3. Populist environmental governance focuses on specific issues at the local level. It is concerned that interference by national powers may cause problems locally, and thus has a narrow view of the range of governance. It can be seen as the conscience of environmental policy.
4. Civic environmental governance operates at the local level with a systemic and holistic focus. It is useful for creating “local social capacity” and stimulating “latent capacity,” which can be effective for dealing with various environmental problems. It can be seen as the muscle of environmental policy.

These four categories are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Four approaches to environmental governance

| Geographic locus | Substantive focus | |
|------------------|--|---|
| | Symptom by symptom | Systemic, holistic |
| National | Interest-group environmental governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory statutes • Administrative Procedures Act • Federal grants or incentives • National campaigns • Lobbying, legislation • Expert bureaucrats | Rational environmental governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive planning • National commissions • National Environmental Policy Act • Broad consensus • Ringing declarations of purpose • Far-sighted visionaries |
| Local | Populist environmental governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Not in my backyard” • Local cleanups, recycling • Local land trusts • Protests • Common law, class-action lawsuits • Charismatic local leaders | Civic environmental governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem communities • Shared goals, implemented projects • Contract law, site-specific legislation • Shadow communities of experts • Local “spark plug” leaders • High-placed sponsors |

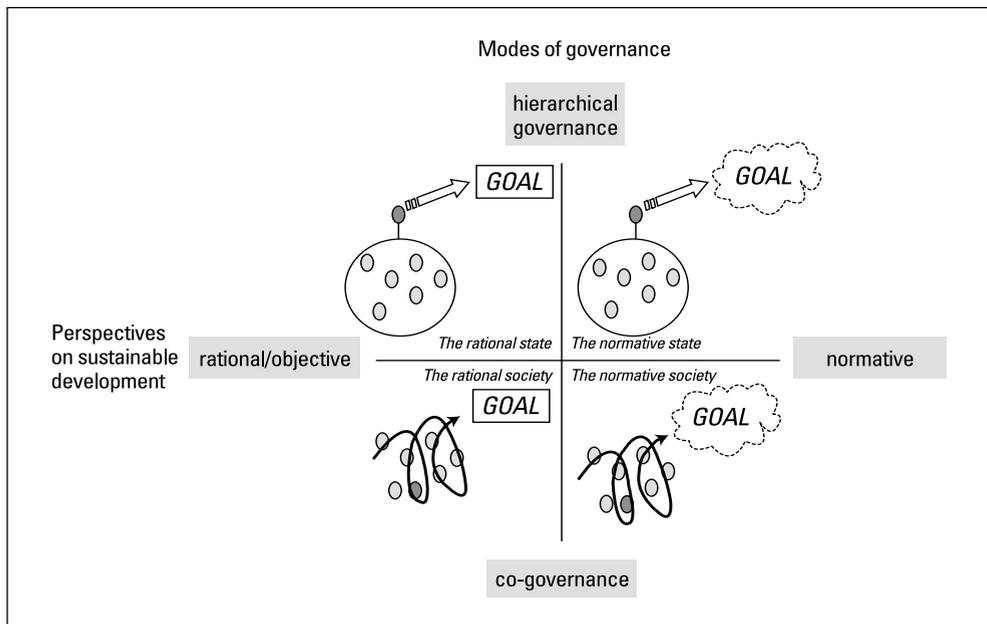
Source: based on John 2004, 222.

To sum up, we can see that governance is the most appropriate and effective structure and process for institutionalizing SD. The basic constitution and operating logic of the governance system can provide the institutional basis on which various stakeholders with equivalent rights and sufficient information can participate and build a consensus on the objective value of SD through discussions and learning processes (Cho 2002a; Jung 2002). Hence, governance is highly likely to work as the structure on which this consensus can be based.

Zeijl-Rozema, Cörvers, and Kemp (2007, 10-15) said governance for SD (GoSD) can be characterized in different ways based on different perspectives on SD and governance: SD can be perceived either as clearly defined or as unclear and uncertain, and governance can be either hierarchical governance or ‘co-governance’” depending on state-society relations and power sharing. Thus they divided GoSD into four types: the rational state, the rational society, the normative state, and the normative society.

The ‘rational state’ approach regards the state as the main decision-maker in a vertical relationship between state and society and sets up SD goals that are measurable and based on scientific, value-free evidence. The process is linear and follows an instrumental approach with a directive policy. The ‘rational society’ approach is based on a horizontal relationship between representatives of the state, market, and civil society. Society establishes objectives (value-free goals) and seeks solutions through “negotiation and learning by doing” between actors, and this encompasses a delibera-

Figure 1. Types of Governance for SD



Source: Zeijl-Rozema, Cörvers, and Kemp 2007, 12.

tive approach and an adaptive policy.

In the ‘normative state’ approach, the ultimate goal of SD is not clearly defined and is therefore dependent on ‘the result of societal preference,’ which can lead to uncertainty in terms of a “value-laden” goal-setting process. Although the state relies on society in this process, once the goal of SD is clearly established, representatives of the state can take the lead in deciding how to achieve this goal. However, this process often takes place without the support or involvement of nongovernmental representatives and can push society and private actors to follow a fixed path. This causes tension between the circular concept of SD and the linear approach to SD. In this regard, the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS or NSSD), which aims to integrate economic, social, and environmental policies and to make each policy more sustainable, is an example of this problem. In this situation, the state is the main coordinator, although other actors are required to actively take part in the formulation process (UNDESA 2002).

Finally, the ‘normative society’ approach is characterized by a consultation between the state, market, and society, in an open process of setting, implementing, and adjusting goals as they develop. The deliberative process is able to deal with uncertainty because it is able to adapt policies as they are made. As Voss and Kemp

(2005, 4) have proposed, the idea of reflexive governance can be presented as an example of this, which is characterized by “understanding reflexive governance to be part of the dynamics which are governed” and focuses on “broader dynamics.”

THE LATENT CONTRADICTION AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

As discussed above, there appears to be a general agreement that governance is a good match for SD. Numerous GoSD programs and projects have been implemented and supported by various entities such as civil society organizations, governments, and international organizations. However, inasmuch as GoSD is a multifaceted concept, there exist latent contradictions and tensions between the practices of governance and the aims of SD. For example, in terms of the four types of GoSD described above, specifically in the case of GoSD of the ‘rational state,’ there is ‘a danger of oversimplification’ and of ignoring the inter-linked nature of SD due to a “linear and rationalist approach.” The GoSD of the ‘rational society’ may be more accepting of SD if the debates were focused solely on scientific and technological issues. The GoSD of the ‘normative state’ runs the risk of producing a unilateral approach to SD, dominated by the government. In particular, if we apply this philosophy (of the normative state) to sustainability it often creates tension, because programs for SD based on governance may become caught in a pitfall of ‘firm, rigid and linear’ practices in any compromise between stakeholders, including the government (Bell and Morse 2005).

As Lafferty (2004) has argued, there is much more tension between democratic norms and the essential demands of SD than is normally assumed. Democratic norms and procedures are comprised of governance principles such as participation, cooperation, and collaboration between stakeholders. The origin of governance can be recognized in the context of deepening democracy from an aggregative democracy—focusing on democratic processes to solicit citizens’ (given) preferences and aggregate them together—and representative democracy to a more participatory and deliberative democracy (Lee 2002). Governance is important in terms of leading a recovery of the political process and a change in the governing system, as it can unleash a new process beyond the limits of representative democracy. For example, it has the potential to establish horizontal networks, voluntary communication, and coordination in a new system in which the state, economy, and society can coexist.

According to Lafferty (2004), democracy, including principles such as transparency and accountability, often limits the demands of SD. This is because the nature of SD goes beyond the existing market liberalism or ‘economy-first’ principle that gives

priority to the economy, and therefore is not in harmony with the wishes of citizens. If the majority of citizens or participants in the governance system do not support SD, it is impossible to pursue it. Therefore, one of the dilemmas of participation based on democratic rule is responsive rule (Doherty and de Geus 1996). It can be argued that democratic norms and procedures do not always guarantee the substance or aims of SD, creating what will be referred to as the ‘substance and procedure divide’ (Goodin 1992; Dryzek 2000).

In relation to this fact, it appears that there are latent problems and contradictions in putting GoSD into practice. For example, there is often a lack of consensus on the authority of governance—to what extent power and authority could be given to governance for the achievement of SD. In particular, civil servants may accept advice and guidance from the voluntary sector, while civic groups expect to fully participate in the decision-making process on SD issues. Concerning the matter of responsibility, moreover, governmental actors seem to consider that they are only in charge of an outcome of (policies through) governance in the end. Thus, the extent and limit of governance recognized by each participant varies substantially. This may create a dispute in relation to the power and resource symmetry in the participant relationship.

This point can be clarified in terms of the relationship between governance and representative democracy. Klijn and Skelcher (2007, 589-601) suggested that this relationship can be characterized by four different assumptions: ‘incompatible,’ ‘instru-

Table 2. Four Conjectures on the Relationship between Governance and Representative Democracy

| Conjectures (Assumptions) | Features | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| | View of decision-making | View of account-ability |
| Incompatible | Decision-making takes place in closed networks. | Primary accountability lies with the elected political officials (classical accountability). |
| Instrumental | Decision-making is complex, but takes place under the ‘shadow of hierarchy’ (political authority) | Accountability is secured by the dominant role of elected politicians (instrumental accountability). |
| Complementary | The increasing complexity of decision-making requires governance networks. | Accountability is shared between political office holders and other actors (shared accountability). |
| Transitional | Modern society is characterized by networks and complex decision-making with interdependencies. | Accountability is in the first place achieved by checks and balances in the decision-making process (constructed accountability). |

Source: based on Klijn and Skelcher 2007, 592

mental,' 'complementary,' and 'transitional.' These characteristics are relevant to, and are embedded in, the contradictory views of governance actors, as described in table 2 and the text that follows.

The 'incompatible' assumption regards governance as a threat or challenge to representative democracy (the primary means of societal decision-making). This assumption focuses on the model of classical accountability which political office-holders are invested with, and on decision-making in closed networks.

The 'instrumental' assumption views governance as a means to improve the authority of representative democratic institutions 'in the face of societal complexity,' and characterizes representative democracy as working through procedures with less weight on public scrutiny and as paying attention to agreement over outputs. It considers, in addition, that elected politicians secure accountability and use other forms of it so as to manage other actors as well as the decision-making process; this assumption argues that 'instrumental accountability,' and its process of decision-making, is under the 'shadow of hierarchy' (political authority), although it is still a very sophisticated system.

The 'complementary' assumption regards governance as 'additional links to society,' arguing that it can, based on deliberative and participative democracy, coexist with representative democracy (which always has political primacy). This assumption looks on accountability as a shared responsibility between elected political officials and other actors, attending to multiple forms of accountability. It also emphasizes that governance must bring relevant actors into the decision-making process, which increases complexity.

Finally, the 'transitional' assumption considers governance with greater flexibility and efficiency as the "primary mode of societal decision-making," often at the expense of representative democracy that can be substituted by other modes of social decision-making. With a focus on the openness and transparency of decision-making, accountability is accomplished by checks and balances and by 'constructed accountability.' This assumption focuses on complex decision-making and interdependencies in a society influenced by the information revolution and globalization.

With this in mind, this paper notes that there have been various attempts to deal with or bridge the divide between problems involving democratic procedures and the substance of SD. One of the most effective ways to do so is to clearly define a new form of governance to achieve SD and reconsider its meanings from a theoretical perspective. This governance must involve both structures and processes that share responsibilities and allocate power across society (Bressers and Rossenbaum 2003; Clarke 2004).

Benn and Dunphy (2005) suggest, first, tackling SD problems in light of the idea of

sub-politics, which has been defined as “small-scale, often individual decisions that either have a direct political frame of reference or achieve political significance by way of their aggregation” (Holzer and Sørensen 2001, 3); and second, to ‘do so justly’ when dealing with SD problems. The former creates the epistemological grounds for the new forms of GoSD under the heading of “sub-politics in reflexive modernization.” The latter is linked to these methodological principles and provides procedural legitimacy. The latter point can be explored in connection to both views of deliberative democracy that focus on the process of building consensus between various actors, and also the idea of green (ecological) democracy in which ecologically friendly principles are embedded.

Sub-politics in Reflexive Modernization in Relation to GoSD

SD aims to create a development path that serves the interests of both present and future generations and takes into account ecological and social risks and side-effects (Grin 2006). This can be seen as a transition from “economism” to “earth ethics” or “greening the economy” (Henderson 1995).

SD can be seen as a form of reflexive modernization in the sense that it reorients modernization toward a second or ‘radicalized’ modernity (Beck 1995). Beck (1995, 1997) described the existing era as the ‘first modernity’ (‘simple modernity’) and emphasized the need for a ‘second modernity’ (“radicalized modernity”) in response to risks and side effects that society can no longer tolerate. Beck argued that “western industrial societies have entered a second, reflexive phase of modernity” and also that “while first modernity has modernized tradition, second modernity modernizes modernity itself” (Holzer and Sørensen 2001, 3).

Beck considered modernization a process of dismantling traditional society and applying western development principles to it. Hence, modernization seeks urbanization, technical improvement, and economic growth, which can cause unbalanced development and become an ecological threat, creating a ‘risk society’ (Beck 1997). Therefore, modernization itself collides with the natural structure and principle of modernity. However, modernization is a self-aware, innovative process and, in this sense, reflexive modernization completes the modern age by reflecting on itself and dealing with outdated ideas. In other words, it refers to an automatic process of social transformation which makes the future more modern by addressing and removing the old-fashioned foundations of modernization based on any risks or threats that it has itself produced (Beck 1995, 1997). Given this process, the first or classical modernity—which introduced technical improvements, economic growth, and urbanization—can bring alternative technical improvements, ecologically friendly economic growth, and

ecological urbanization if it undergoes the process of reflexive modernization (Beck 1997).

On the one hand, with regard to resolving conflicts between modernities, Beck (1997) argued for a reinvention of politics as ‘being politics,’ which is not dominated by institutions and states but in which constituents rather than politicians take the lead and get rid of or alter rules. ‘Being politics’ also underlines an aspect of a political process in which citizens get rid of or alter rules through their involvement. Reflexive modernisation thus starts when ‘individuals return’ to being political subjects. This idea stresses individualization as a pillar of reflexive modernization and regards self-expressive individuals as political subjects (Beck 1997; Lee 2002).

Sub-politics refers to situations where individuals declare their intentions and also make decisions in various fields related to their own lives (op. cit.). Beck (1995, 1997) defined sub-politics, which was developed in the context of reflexive modernization, as occurring in “decentralized decision-making and knowledge-sharing arenas.” Individual citizens and organizations interact with each other in citizen groups, corporations, and various government and quasigovernmental bodies (Beck 1995, 1997; Benn and Dunphy 2005, 2).

I agree that sub-politics could be narrowly understood as “being placed beneath the nation-state” and more generally as being “outside and beyond the representative institutions of the political system of nation-states”; however, ‘sub’ means ‘less institutionalized’ in this case, not less important (Holzer and Sörensens 2001, 3; Beck 1996, 18). Sub-politics suggests re-defining individual citizens as self-fulfilled subjects concerned with political and social issues, transcending class and status barriers. Hence, it focuses on “the shaping of society from the bottom-up” and also emphasizes that the citizenry should voluntarily take on political roles in various social areas (Lee 2002). In a new ‘sub-political,’ extra-parliamentary arena, it would be possible to have more inclusive, democratic ways of decision-making with regards to managing areas of risk, which could be led by multiple decentralized, self-determining and flexible stakeholder networks (Beck 1992; Benn and Dunphy 2005).

In this context, the concept of sub-politics, or sub-politicization of society, has many points in common with the idea of governance. For instance, governance refers to an alternative government operating system which allows numerous stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process, and it provides a premise for citizen participation in policies as political subjects. The theory of reflexive modernization, as Grin (2006) has stated, can be used to qualify the concept of governance, and governance can be one of the transformative ways in which various actors in the areas of government, market, and society can deal with each other.

Beyond ‘the modernist control fashion,’ governance provides a number of new

alternatives through ‘network management,’ ‘public participation,’ ‘promoting self-organization,’ and so on (Grin 2006, 60). Governance practices have the capability to embody a radicalized modernity through “a profound institutional transformation” as well as through their modes of activities (Grin 2006). As Benn and Dunphy have argued (2005, 18), governance should be seen, not as a line of coordination and accountability, but rather as an inclusive “construction of decentralized arenas of decision-making at the sub political level” where sustainability problems can be dealt with by innovative and creative solutions. This would require organizations and individuals throughout the governance system to use diverse kinds of information and coordination across different disciplines. This feature of governance can be regarded as symbolic of sub-politics in light of reflexive modernization.

In sum, the importance of both SD and governance, and their epistemological significance in the context of reflexive modernization, have important implications for GoSD if it is to overcome the tension between democratic governance and SD. With regard to arrangements for new forms of GoSD, reflexivity or reflexive capacity, which would be accomplished by a second modernity, is required for both individual citizens and organizations to develop an informed perspective on SD (Benn and Dunphy 2005). Reflexivity is a key aspect of GoSD and it can be accommodated as part of “reflexive governance” for SD. The features of reflexivity—such as reflexive capacities of adjustment, regulation, or coordination—are requisite procedures for new forms of GoSD, which can obviously be found in the principles of deliberative democracy.

Deliberative Democracy and Green Democracy in Relation to GoSD

This paper considers that deliberative democracy is consistent with governance because both focus on the process of building consensus or public decision-making between various actors and on guaranteeing voluntary citizen participation. However, they differ inasmuch as deliberative democracy originates from a recognition of the inadequacy of aggregative democracy, which uses a voting system for ‘counting preferences’ and ‘selecting preferred outcomes’ (Meadowcroft 2004, 184), and focuses on building consensus through debates and deliberation—while governance is derived from an understanding of the state and market failure and focuses on social networks and voluntary steering (Yoon and Ahn 2004).

Deliberative democracy has an important role in terms of making decisions on complex issues with various differing perspectives, such as SD. It also supplements representative democratic institutions by creating more ‘discursive institutional forms’ and permits greater citizen involvement in political and nonpolitical fields (Barry 1996, 122). Ultimately, deliberative democracy provides public justification and politi-

cal legitimacy, based on a “free and reasoned agreement among equals” (Cohen 1989, cited in Saward 2001b, 67). Through the process of deliberative democracy or deliberation, citizens can actively participate in decision-making; they are able to be well informed; and they can “contribute to the critical assessment” of SD issues, which consequently improves their capacities (Benn and Dunphy 2005, 7).

This paper underlines that the most effective decision-making is achieved on the basis of participants’ mutual understanding by creating a public sphere in which concerned stakeholders are able to take part equally in the deliberation process and debate freely. Deliberative democrats argue, focusing on the quality of the process of decision-making through much deliberation, that the legitimacy of democracy does not lie in votes or the aggregation of interests but in decision-making through genuine deliberation and reflection (Meadowcroft 2004).

Deliberative democracy that eschews the liberal system of “strategic bargaining or power trading” between self-interested actors ultimately aims for “impartiality and full knowledge of critical issues” rather than just consensus (Eckersley 2004, 115; Benn and Dunphy 2005). It consists of three major features: ‘unconstrained dialogue’ (a requirement for justified arguments); ‘inclusiveness’ (a requirement for impartiality in deliberative dialogue); and ‘social learning’ (a requirement for its participants’ open and flexible thinking for the sake of public dialogue) (Eckersley 2004, 116-67).

In this context, deliberative democracy is linked to Habermas’s concept of full or ideal communication (Benn and Dunphy 2005, 7). These ideas emphasize ‘communicative rationality,’ in which behavior is based on seeking mutual understanding, and which is understood as a process of dialogue where participants arrive at an agreement by adjusting their interpretation. In this regard, neo-Habermasian John Dryzek (1997, 2000) emphasized ‘communicative norms’ based on “reciprocal listening, civility, and full transparency” in the deliberation process (Benn and Dunphy 2005, 7). This point has potential implications in relation to governance practices and arrangements for SD. As a result, the communicative model, through its deliberative process, is significant and relevant to GoSD, which has inherent social or political uncertainties and complexities (Harding 1998; Benn and Dunphy 2005).

Meanwhile, the extent to which democracy heeds ecological concerns is significant in the trajectory of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy is suited to making collective decisions on SD. Deliberation strengthens governance structures and processes for handling SD problems (Eckersley 2004). According to ecological democrats, including Eckersley, Dryzek, Goodin, and Saward, although there is no unified definition of green or ecological democracy, it can be said to represent an ideal type of democratic society based on ecological principles; that is, it refers to the political intentions and institutions that seek a ‘nature-circulating society’ over an ‘anti-eco-

logical society.’

For example, green democracy emphasizes ‘nature’s intrinsic value’ and “the moral standing of animals and other animate objects” by expanding the definition of democracy to include “a democracy of and for the affected,” one that is set on ‘enfranchising the earth’ and also “listening to natures’ cries of distress” (Saward 1996, 92; Ball 2005). In other words, green democracy looks for “progressively less anthropocentric political forms” which are based on the core green values of ecological responsibility, social justice, grassroots democracy, and nonviolence (Dryzek 2000; Eckersley 1996).

Deliberative democracy is a precondition for green democracy (Cha and Min 2006); a decision-making process in which reflection, participation, and deliberation are guaranteed is much more likely to bring about a change in the existing order and also makes it more possible for a democracy to encourage various lifestyles based on ecologism. In this regard, green theorists are sympathetic to the idea of deliberative democracy. Given Dryzek’s (2000) explanation of green democracy, it is likely that more ecologically rational decision-making can be established on the basis of communicative rationality with more authentic and inclusive forms of communication.

RECONSTITUTION OF GOVERNANCE FOR SD

The Epistemological Ground of Sub-politics for GoSD

In terms of creating the epistemological ground of sub-politics for GoSD, this article first looks at the potential of sub-politics in reflexive modernization and its implications therein. In particular, the theoretical argument of sub-politics (which highlights both the individual and the collective level of political activities outside the traditional political sphere) carries weight in creating new epistemological grounds for GoSD. This supports and corresponds to both “complementary” and “transitional” perspectives on the relationship between governance and representative democracy.

As explained above, the idea of sub-politics emerges in the context of reflexive modernization, which focuses on a second, reflexive phase of modernity, a radicalization and self-confrontation of modernity (Holzer and Sørensen 2001). Sub-politics is different from formal politics and particularly from traditional forms of power and influence.

Based on Holzer and Sørensen’s argument (2001, 17), there are three ways in which influence or power may be exercised: negative sanctions, positive sanctions, and *uncertainty absorption*, which refers to situations in which “inferences are drawn from

a body of evidence and the inferences . . . are then communicated” (March and Simon 1958, 165, cited in Holzer and Sorensen 2001, 17). The first two are relevant for some forms of sub-politics—consumer boycotts and green consumption, for example. This paper focuses on uncertainty absorption. This clandestine form of power is highly regarded in that it has an influence on politics and society at large, and politics requires that it is provided by nongovernmental actors, including professionals—that is, through sub-politics.

This paper argues that the implications of sub-politics have significant points in common with both the complementary and transitional viewpoints on the relationship between governance (qualified by the theory of sub-politics) and representative democracy (traditional politics). The complementary perspective believes that governance ‘oils the wheels’ of representative democracy inasmuch as it engages a range of actors in the policy process and provides a flexible means of institutional design (such as quasigovernmental institutions) “to mediate the relationship of representative democracy with citizens and other parties” (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, 595). From this viewpoint, governance contributes to ‘democratic anchorage and legitimacy’ in several ways—for example, engendering a ‘democratic ethos and consensual decision outcomes’; stimulating a wide range of participation, from agenda setting to implementation; and building social capital through the process of interaction and debate (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, 595-96).

Governance can “bridge the boundary between the formality of the state and the informality of civil society,” for instance, by establishing quasigovernmental forms (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, 596-97). The transitional view focuses on large and lasting changes to the relationship between representative democracy and governance, underlining that representative democracy will “no longer be the pre-eminent mode” (op. cit.). In other words, from this point of view, governance is part of a transitional process “from state-centric government to a network form consisting of decentered, distributed nodes of authority” and, in particular, decision-making is regarded as ‘a complicated negotiation about values,’ based on the principle of deliberative democracy (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, 596-98). As a result, democracy becomes “more a societal model than a representational mode” so “democracy is a design task” to be implemented through governance practices and arrangements (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, 598).

Thus, both perspectives on the relationship between governance and representative democracy have merit. The argument of sub-politics demonstrates the rationale that governance (which is beyond incompatible or instrumental one to representative democracy) is of a transitional change in society and the nature of decision-making, highlighting that democracy becomes a process of deliberation, and that governance also contributes to democratic principles and legitimacy in terms of the reconciliation

of the relationship of representative democracy with citizens—for example, by enabling civil servants to interact on a deeper level with affected citizenry and stakeholders, including civic groups.

Towards Reflexive GoSD

With the above view in mind, this article suggests a new approach to GoSD in the name of reflexive GoSD, and, to this end, it focused on the idea of reflexivity or reflexive capacity. As described above, reflexivity, based on a second modernity of the principles of deliberative democracy, is requisite for an enlightened perspective on the issues of GoSD (Benn and Dunphy 2005). Based on Voss and Kemp's (2005) argument on reflexive GoSD, as a central orientation for governance, we should move our focus from "rationalist problem-solving" to "second-order problems" that work to disrupt the structure of modernist problem-solving.

This kind of problem-solving is aimed at getting rid of problems such as "uncertainty, ambivalence and interference of uncontrolled influence" in order to "decide and act rationally," "concentrate the perception on a specific slice or dimension of complex reality," and so on; for instance, to "linearise cause-effect chains" and "put goals in hierarchical order" (Voss and Kemp 2005, 5). This approach is characterized by a "pattern of productive reduction of complexity," which is usually a force behind bureaucratic organization, policy-making, and the like (op. cit.).

However, there is a fundamental limitation or dilemma in adopting the problem-solving approach for particular instrumental purposes. Voss and Kemp (2005, 5-6) have argued that "the more [the] process of problem-solving is disengaged with the full messy intermingled natural reality, but oriented towards the worlds of specialists, the larger is the shape of interdependencies and dimensions of embeddedness."

In this regard, 'second-order problems,' which are newer, more severe problems caused by unintended consequences, should be paid more attention. For instance, the gap between the practices of governance and the substance of SD can be said to be a part of this. This requires us to "leave the isolation of instrumental specialization," "engage in interaction with other specialists," and ultimately transgress cognitive and institutional boundaries (Voss and Kemp 2005, 6).

This article focuses on the two meanings of reflexivity, first-order and second-order reflexivity, coined by Voss and Kemp (2005). The former refers to dealing with the implications and side-effects of modernity, particularly the mechanism related to instrumental rationality—for example, focusing on legitimacy and the effectiveness of democracy (Voss and Kemp 2005, 7). The latter, with a critical stand on modern problem-solving, focuses more on 'the application of modern rational analysis' to to prob-

lems, its own working, conditions and effects (op. cit.). Consequently, the interplay between first-order and second-order reflexivity forms reflexive modernization and reflexive governance (Voss and Kemp 2005).

In particular, the fact that reflexivity is concerned with ‘institutionalized feedback relations’ implies that de facto governance practices and arrangements become reflexive (Rip 2006, 85). Reflexive, or ‘second-order’ governance is symbolic of an integrative, unrestrained, and open-ended character, which is characterized by “a procedural approach towards reflecting the interdependencies,” “understanding aggregate effects of specialized concepts and strategies” and “organizing problem-oriented communication and interaction among distributed steering activities” (Voss and Kemp 2005, 8). This idea is essential in taking account of the complexity of SD and its interlinked social, economic, and ecological development—for instance, the fundamental uncertainty and the ambiguity of its criteria and assessment (op. cit.). Basically, the idea of reflexive governance is salient in regard to finding a way of organizing governance processes in order to “provide for more adequate problem treatment” of SD problems (Voss and Kemp 2005, 17).

Following two principles of reflexive governance (a diversity of perspectives in the interaction process and an interaction which is not “dominated by one or a group of actors”), reflexive governance has the potential to tackle SD problems more effectively than conventional governance (Rip 2006; Voss and Kemp 2005, 18). In fact, a better quality of SD objectives can be achieved in the following ways: through reflexive governance strategies we can first “avoid repercussion[s] from unintended effects and second-order problems and thereby contribute more effectively than narrow problem-solving approaches”; second, we can learn about the objectives of SD and create “complementary interaction platforms to conventional political decision-making” for the realization of SD; third, we can further the quality of SD problem classification by means of actively engaging diverse views (Voss and Kemp 2005, 19).

SD problems require a transformation in the fundamental institutional structures of modern society, but the overarching authority needed to create structural change—‘the governance of governance change’—has not yet been established (Rip 2006; Voss and Kemp 2005, 15). This fact demonstrates that such transformation can happen in reflexive governance networks for SD, in which the perception of specific problems, practical knowledge, and the competencies and responsibilities of various stakeholders become linked, “without anyone controlling them,” based on second-order reflexivity (Voss and Kemp 2005, 15-16).

The context of reflexive governance is also highly relevant to one of Zeijl-Rozema, Cörvers, and Kemp’s (2007) types of GoSD, discussed in the previous section: ‘normative society’ GoSD (characterized by the ‘normative perspective’ on SD and by ‘co-

governance’). This type of governance emphasizes consultation between actors from the public, private, and voluntary sectors, based on a deliberative process to deal with any uncertainty in goals and implementation. Deliberation focuses on creating an impartial decision-making process and securing citizen involvement (Eckersley 2004), through which each actor can make an ‘individual return’ to being a political subject, thus transforming individual preferences into mainstream values.

Actors in reflexive GoSD are required to equip themselves with an ecological imagination and responsibility—that is, to bear in mind that extended democracy (ecological democracy) includes a democracy of and for the affected; and not only affected people but also affected nature and the environment. This is in line with the “necessary deliberation” principle, in which, as Eckersley (2000) and Saward (1993) have pointed out, diverse interests and excluded voices should be included or represented. Particularly, this point should remind us of the necessity to reshape modern democratic institutions and representation (Saward 2001a, 8). In other words, it is necessary to re-institutionalize a deliberative (communicative) and ecological rationality with which citizens can build consensus on SD alternatives.

CONCLUSION

Noting the latent contradiction between the practices of governance and the objectives demands of SD, this article tried to establish new ground for GoSD under the heading of reflexive GoSD in order to tackle this second-order problem. We should take a hard look at the limits of a problem-solving (first-order) approach to governance with rigid and linear practices, and focus on the potential of reflexive governance, which provides an effective treatment of SD problems.

There are many examples of GoSD. In South Korea, the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development (PCSD) carried out several important objectives in relation to the achievement of SD. In particular, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) was formulated as part of a mission to build the institutional basis for SD. It was set up to develop sector-based strategies for SD in various areas and integrate these strategies through effective coordination and consensus building between different sectors and departments (PCSD 2008). In addition, the Framework Act on Sustainable Development (FASD) was enacted as a legal basis for SD.

The processes of the NSSD formulation and the FASD legislation were carried out on the basis of governance principles, based on ideas like the multistakeholder participation of civic groups and government departments and PCSD’s coordination. However, even though the institutional and legal basis for SD had been established, it

appeared that there was a lack of democratic procedures and processes to determine public opinion, and their results and performances achieved much less than was expected in the beginning. Various aspects of dissonance were exposed through these processes, which thus attracted serious criticism not only of the process but also of its outcome and consequences. The National Strategy and the Framework Act currently exist in name only, and they are on the brink of extinction or, at least, modification due to the Green Growth initiative that the Lee-Myung Park government has worked on since 2008.

It is instructive to take a critical look at this failure of the PCSD, NSSD, and FASD in light of the argument of reflexive governance. In this context, it is necessary to create or renew a system of reflexive governance for the realization of SD, which has 'grey zones and interstices' within existing traditional political orders (Rip 2006). It should be based on second-order reflexivity with deliberative and ecological rationality beyond the first-order problem-solving principles, including linearizing cause-effect chains and putting goals in hierarchical order.

For instance, a discussion about extending the institutionalized green public sphere between the public and voluntary sectors, in which a wide range of stakeholders can link together and carry out wide consultation on SD alternatives, would be very meaningful. It would allow them to try to create new civil associations and build up a communicative route between them and the government. The possibilities explored in this study could help to promote reflexive GoSD and apply it with a variety of stakeholders of governance, including governmental and nongovernmental actors.

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