

Navigating Polycentric Governance: A View from the Middle



Author: [Fowler, Alan;](#)
[Biekart, Kees](#)

Institution: [International Institute of Social Studies \(ISS\)](#)
[Erasmus University \(Netherlands\)](#)

Address: [Kortenaerkade 12](#)
[2518 AX The Hague, Netherlands](#)

Email: alan@alanfowler.org
biekart@iss.nl

Abstract

For the world's population, polycentrism in governance is not a particularly meta-level international phenomenon, but a lived micro-political reality. Extreme examples of polycentricism in power over daily life are seen in the 'hybridity' of institutions that operate under conditions of state fragility where governments fail to govern and where non-state institutions play significant roles of mediation or control.

At issue is how to obtain a better picture and understanding of what polycentricism in being 'governed' means for whom? More specifically, under what conditions does a country's configuration of governance polycentricism abet or contain popular expressions or 'activisms' with (potential) institutional effects? What are these multiple sites of governance within a society and what might this mean for socio-political agency of 'middle' economic strata? This 'class' grouping is chosen because of its anticipated growth and influence on future development choices, on the evolution of domestic polities and on the nature of polycentric governance associated with 'The Rise of the South' in the global economic and political order.

Exploration of this new focus will combine two analytical perspectives. One is 'civic driven change', a framework specifically designed to interrogate civic agency in socio-political processes. This lens provides categories against which the distribution of actor + power can be mapped. The other is derived from actor-network theory (ANT). The advantage of this latter theorization is incorporation of technology as a network actor, which is an increasing feature of middle class life everywhere.

The approach will compare and contrast the – apparently similar - trajectories of mass activism recently seen in Brazil and Turkey. Both started with agitation against a discrete issue of public policy, which broadened in agenda and gained in scale. In Brazil, the trigger was mounting opposition to the infrastructure costs of the impending World Cup football competition, leading to a much wider demonstration against government performance and integrity. In Turkey, the trigger was the intended destruction of Gezi Park in Istanbul, escalating to mass action against the advent of an authoritarian democracy. In both cases, electronically networked agency played a significant role in mobilization and self-organisation.

Keywords

polycentric governance, activisms, middle classes, brazil, turkey

NAVIGATING POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE – A VIEW FROM THE MIDDLE

Alan Fowler and Kees Biekart

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Evidence is mounting that the “Rise of the South” is challenging a mono-centric modality of international governance premised on the political, military and economic dominance of North America and Western Europe (UNDP, 2013). A move to a more polycentric global arrangement is, however, being paralleled domestically by forces of middle class growth and assertiveness, abetted by mobile and mass communication connectivity enabling new forms of collective action towards multiple sites of governing. Prevailing national power arrangements are being challenged and redistributed, making a country’s governance more, as in Kenya’s new Constitution or, reactively, less polycentric as in Russia, with long-term outcomes that are far from certain.

Mass activism demanding far reaching change between rulers and the ruled across the world involve citizens from all walks of life are one – media-attractive - illustration of what is altering the governance landscape and public discourse about a collective imagined future (Fowler and Biekart, 2008). Manifestations of such discontent are seen, for example in the Occupy movement, the Arab Spring, large scale resistance to democratic authoritarianism in Turkey, education protests in Chile and public disobedience at many other sites across the world. These events portray an ‘unusual’ profile of protagonists, issues and methods. One such distinction is in a composition of such mass civic agency driven from the ‘middle’ socio-economic layers of a society rather than from its margins and peripheries (Biekart and Fowler, 2013). Other distinctions of today’s mass activism are the amorphousness of net enabled, real-time ‘leaderless’ self-organisations (Shirky, 2008) and the emergence of non-movement movements (Bayart, 2013). These processes have generated a new element in the discussion about social mobilizations: the issue of ‘visibility’. The Turkish protests in Taksim square in 2013, for example, were largely ‘invisible’ for Turkish television audience. On the other hand, much of the vibrant social media exchanges, especially on Twitter, were also invisible to those not connected.

A country’s governance is being reshaped by forces within many socio-economic strata which gain less analytic attention.¹ In part the cause is a predisposition in development studies to concentrate on the state and on the economics of poverty and the political-economy of the poor at the cost of more socio-political and socio-economic layers of analysis, for example in terms of elite attitudes and elite roles in political reformation (Reis and Moore, 2004; Buch-Hansen and Lauridsen 2014; Laws, 2012). In addition, relatively little work has been done on the nature of associational life, its structure, rules and micro-politics in terms of the many locations and forms of authority and governing in play. For example, CIVICUS (2013) studies on an enabling

¹ For current purposes we treat governance as the exercise of decision making authority over public and private space and affairs. More loosely, following Lasswell, cited in McGinnis, 2011, page 170, “governance determines who can do what to whom, and on whose authority”.

environment do not factor in traditional rules and authorities as sites that co-govern space and potentials for civic agency. Similarly, research on civil society that could have done so is too often imbued with external categories, formalized-focused lenses with imposition of enumerating, modernized concepts such as volunteering as understood in post-industrial societies (Fowler, 2013; UNV, 2011).

We therefore want to explore this notion of 'polycentric governance': how can we get a grip on this concept, in ways that provide a better insight on authority of different types being complied with and challenged at different levels? Our approach involves taking a citizen's-eye-view by zooming in on the myriad ways in which people in all walks of life navigate the multiple power relationships and authorities that condition their daily lives, well-being, risks and prospects. A multi-country study on what people anticipate from democracy – whether they have it fully or not - by Knight, Chigudu and Tandon (2002) show that expectations about being 'governed' are not simply questions of gaining services and rights from different levels of public administration. There are multiple other places where authority is exercised over different facets of a person's daily experience. For example, professions are often self-regulated, with strong powers of sanction against members' misconduct. Religious leaders can exercise significant influence over what are ostensibly 'secular' affairs of a nation state, its policies and politics. Factions within a population, for example, extremists and elders of ethnic groups, can exercise discipline and enforce norms on members. Members of trade unions or other social organizations often accept the authority of leaders taking them into high risk situations involving confrontation with regimes and their policies. A profound example of institutional complexity in governing is seen in the, often problematic, co-existence of traditional and modern sites of authority found in many African societies. These parallel systems of governing may be codified in constitutional arrangements binding the polity to two interactive 'publics' (Ekeh, 1975). The bottom line of our argument is that governance in a citizen's lived experience is multidimensional and therefore needs to be understood in the complexities of daily life with its choices and decisions.

A middle 'class' grouping is chosen because of its anticipated growth and influence on future development choices, on the evolution of domestic politics and on the nature of governance associated with emerging polycentricism in the global economic and political order (UNDP, 2013:14). Middle class expansion in numbers and influence is identified to be directly related with the massive economic growth in emerging economies in the Global South, particularly in Asia. They have been essential in bringing about democratic reforms in countries like South Korea, Thailand, and Taiwan, even though other parts of the same middle class have managed to keep hierarchies and elitism in place. Obviously, there is no single middle class. Moreover, 'the new rich' in Asia as Robinson and Goodman (1996:3) have dubbed them, "appear as likely to embrace authoritarian rule, xenophobic nationalism, religious fundamentalism and *dirigisme* as to support democracy, internationalism, secularism and free markets."

As this middle class expands and learns to assert itself, it is far from clear or certain where their divisions, allegiances and civic energy will be applied. One option is orienting towards elite

modelling by gaining as much as possible from the current economic system – reinforcing business as usual. An alternative could be to reject the volatile, riskier and questionably sustainable role models that the West had to offer, by searching for more transformative pathways. As a more culturally plural polycentric world order takes hold, other variants might try to recover and take forward historical social legacies that lie deep in personal and collective identities of citizenship, nationality, race, gender, faith, ethnicity, old rivalries, and so on. An issue, therefore, is about the direction taken by a ‘middle majority’ in terms of the future it aspires to, where networked and ‘virtual’ forms of collective action are coming to the fore.

Exploration of this terrain will combine analytic perspectives. One is an expanded and updated framework for analysing governance that draws on more politically-focused studies in developing countries (e.g., Hyden and Court, 2004; de Ver, 2008; DLP, 2012) allied to actor-network theory (ANT) (e.g., Latour, 2005). The advantage of including the latter approach is that (communications) technology is incorporated as an actor in human systems and power relations, which is an increasing feature of youth and middle class life everywhere.

The second perspective is provided by civic driven change, a framework designed to interrogate civic agency in socio-political processes (Biekart and Fowler, 2012; Fowler, 2013). This lens provides categories against which the (re)distribution of actor + power can be viewed. The approach will allow comparison of the – apparently similar - trajectories of mass (urban) activism recently seen in Brazil and Turkey. Both started with agitation against a discrete issue of public policy, which broadened in agenda and gained in scale. In Brazil, the trigger was mounting opposition to the infrastructure costs of the impending World Cup football competition (and more directly a prize hike of public transport), leading to a much wider demonstration against government performance and integrity. In Turkey, the trigger was intended destruction of Gezi Park at Taksim Square in Istanbul, escalating to mass action against the advent of an authoritarian democracy. In both cases, electronically networked agency played a significant role in mobilization and self-organisation. But first, clarity is required about what ‘class’ means for the purposes of this paper.

EMERGING MIDDLE CLASSES – CHARACTERISTICS AND PROSPECTS

The UNDP Human Development Report (2013:3) makes much of the fact that the middle class in the South overall and Asia in particular will become a larger proportion of the world’s purchasing and consuming population. Estimates are of an increase in the middle class from 30% of the world population today to 52% in 2020. In doing so, it relies on a Brookings Institute norm (Kharas and Rogerson, 2011) of a daily disposable income level of 10 to 100 PPP\$ per person (Purchasing Power Parity dollar as of 2005). This figure is set against an international income poverty threshold of US\$1.25 per person per day. Setting a global figure, even corrected for PPP has potentially seriously misleading drawbacks identified by Milanovice and Yitzhaki (2001). They show that blocks of continents exhibit significant differences and reference points for what middle classness means and how it is experienced.

Correspondingly, there are context-specific variations on thresholds where, for example, the 'floating middle class' in Africa has incomes of \$2-\$4 per person per day (Ncube, Lufumpa, and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2011) but are prone to fall back below the international poverty threshold, inviting the idea that vulnerability is a better measure (Lopez-Calva and Ortiz-Juarez, 2012) of when a person is or is not truly 'embedded' in the middle class. Alternatively, it is argued that a more secure indicator of middle class growth is when consumption turns to non-essential products and services, with car ownership advanced as a suitable proxy (Dubash and Ali, 2012).

Putting definitional issues and measures aside, using household surveys involving 13 countries, Banerjee and Duflo (2008:26) tease out how expenditures patterns alter between different income categories, urban and rural. Their conclusion is that having a steady, well-paying job is probably the most pertinent feature of middle-classness as is the fact they have fewer children, spend much more on their children. Both feed a sense of control over the future. In other words, there is a qualitatively significant aspirational element in being middle class that can drive the energy required to make inter-generational expectations real in terms what society should be and do, and with more resources, including free time, to do so.

Our exploration gives attention to what a growing middle class as a proportion of the whole leads to in terms of societal affects. For example, studies of the behaviour and effects of an expending middle class in countries of Latin America show the following picture.

Greater disposable income per capita enjoyed by more people exerts progressive pressures on public policies in education and health as well as improving the quality of governance in terms of democratic participation and anti-corruption measures (Loayza, Rigolini and Llorente, 2012).

Simply put, money plus time brings voice, allied to better access to information and sharper demands on what a state should do. But voice for what? At issue is the global affordability and the ability of states and of nature to satisfy expanding expectations and adjustments of the lifestyle of the existing middle class as the new middle merges and stakes its claim. Consequently, it is reasonable to anticipate that global adjustment will be accompanied by local dissent, placing governance under stress. And one increasingly significant source of such stress is technology enabled. According to research by the Pew Foundation, the capability to access personal information is being accelerated by the positive relationship between income per capita and use of communications technology (Pew Foundation, 2014a), where countries are outstripping the United States when it comes to using social media sites and texting (Pew foundation, 2014b). An interpretation of this data is that there is an unprecedented middle 'class surge'. Mass uprisings in emerging middle-income countries are strong reminders that the middle class drives history, but with less certainty about where to. The spread of materially aspirational majority populations across Asia, Latin America and even Africa - whose food and shelter are assured - creates an unprecedented force of hopes and concerns shaping the future.

What all this means is that the new global middle classes will transform societies, economies and political institutions in ways hard to predict. Unlike the middle-class surges of the 19th century and the post-World War II era, this one will not necessarily be rooted in Western values.²

The uncertain translation of the civic agency associated with the ‘movement of an expanding middle’ into public space and its different sites of governing is already being played out in many countries and is the central focus of this paper. A necessary starting point is to open up the concept of governance as citizens live it day by day.

POLYCENTRIC GOVERNANCE IN THE NETWORKED ERA - A CITIZEN’S EYE VIEW

The notion of polycentricism in governance is largely attributed to the publication in 1969 of a seminal article and the subsequent life work of Vincent Ostrom (McGinnis and Ostrom, 2011). The concept and theory connotes multiple centres of decision making about and over the public domain, associated with some form or authority to do so. Originally, polycentricism brought an explicit recognition of overlapping jurisdictions, for example to be found in the management of watersheds and distribution of water resources downstream. While initially concentrating on governance as a task and property of public administration under some form of democratic political mandate and leadership, the perspective expanded to a multi-organisational networked view when provision of public services expanded to include the contracting of non-profit organisations. There was also an opening out of this analytic framework towards reforms in systems of governing that were producing supra-national bodies while simultaneously applying the principle of subsidiarity to decision rights and decision making at local levels. The European Union is a notable example of such a process (Ostrom, 2005) as is, from the perspective of the African Union, the succession of Southern Sudan which increases the number of sovereign bodies involved in continental decision making and governing.

We argue that this, essentially state-centric, evolution of polycentricism merits broadening by introducing a complementary perspective of citizens who are the substance of any system of governing, democratic or otherwise. In other words, it can be useful to complementing a state-centred focus by adding a citizen’s eye view of to the notion of polycentric governance and its day to day navigation. Figure 1 introduces a frame work for doing so.

A Citizen’s Perspective on Polycentric Governance

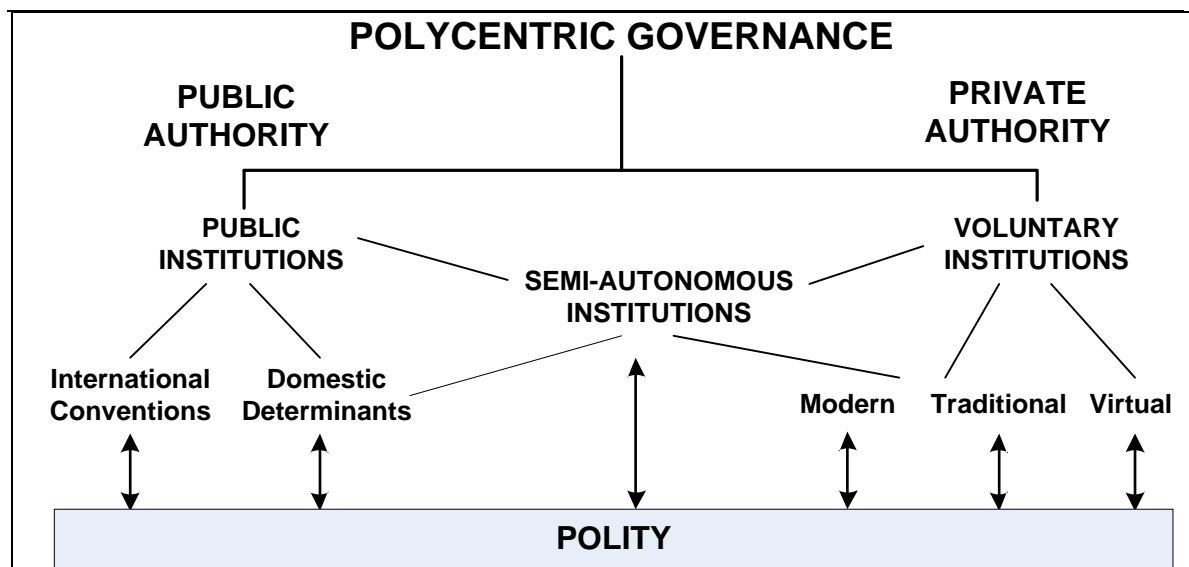
Governing involves the authority to make decisions which influence people’s lives as constituent members of a polity. This condition is satisfied in two principle ways, by binding statutory instruments of a nation state – which could recognise semi-autonomous areas of countries, such as the Basque region - and by people’s voluntary ascription of authority outside of public bodies and legislated rules. These two foundations can be merged or blended by laws which ‘delegate’

² Op-ed, Walls Street Journal, July 18, 2013, by Alan Murray, President of the Pew Foundation.

public authority to self-governed entities while circumscribing the powers they enjoy – a form of semi-autonomy. Examples are entities which regulate professions associated with medicine, architecture, law, education and so on. In addition are politically independent ‘regulators’ of potentially monopolistic businesses providing energy, water, rail transport and telecommunications services. The prices that citizen’s face and rules for changing suppliers are governed by such entities. Semi-autonomous examples are also found in the Constitutional recognition of (relatively) self-governing traditional kingdoms seen, for example, in South Africa, Ghana and Uganda.

From a citizen’s point of view, the content of public authority applied to governance typically stems from both historical domestic processes and needs as well as self-determined compliance with international agreements, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and work place standards set by the International labour Organisation. Pathways to implementation and ensuring adherence to decisions relying on statutory governance are provided by myriad public institutions and features of public administration –civil servants, police, local and national tax collection and licensing authorities being significant and nested levels of hierarchy: wards, (sub) districts, provinces, regions, states, nation, etc.³ Security arrangements and decision making in the Central African Republic (Bagayoko, 2010) illustrate how multiple institutions and locations of governing can operate a different levels or scales.

Figure 1. Polycentric Governance: A Citizen’s Perspective



While often less visible, of importance for governance within a society is people’s voluntary creation of, claim on and self-ascription of authority to non-public entities.⁴ Three major types

³ We treat institutions as socially stabilizing but inherently conflicted and dynamic patterns of collective human behaviour that are guided by emergent rules, norms, beliefs and configurations of power types in actor relations.

⁴ While voluntary association is, in theory if not in practice, a question of free will, statutory requirements for formal recognition are often in play.

can be distinguished: those tied to choice of livelihood; those allied to self-determined membership, such as a religious order; and those linked to identifying with the interests of others, seen in followership activities 'authorised' by networked virtual communities.⁵

Modernity has created numerous forms of voluntary association that function autonomously from public bodies, albeit regulated by them. Some are dedicated to profit seeking wealth creation, others not. Reference has already been made to hybrid or blended forms of authority between public and private seen in self-regulating professional bodies. In some instances, such self-created bodies take on an authority which compels governments to act in certain ways, the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) being an exceptional example. It shuns any government interference in its functioning, while dictating terms on which a country can host the World Cup by, for example, establishing economic exclusion zones around stadiums and gaining impunity for FIFA staff from tax and other laws. Other international sports associations may not have similar clout, but they collectively determine how affairs are run and the access citizens can (cannot) enjoy. The authority to do so is vested in an international body with a questionable record in its quality of self-governance (Jennings, 2008) against which citizens have little redress to, for example, unfair rules of access if they wish to be followers and spectators in global events. The general point is, navigation towards changing authority over decisions of interest to some – or in the case of sport, many citizens – may mean navigating systems of poorly accountable governance. Many faiths exhibit similar citizen's-eye characteristics.

Perhaps less observed outside of public ceremonies and rituals, are deep rooted cultural-ethnic social formations that people are born into that function with age old systems of governing that are/need to be respected. These less visible multitudes of 'non-registered', self-organised, self-supported organisational arrangements which make up the dense fabric of associational life with self-determined decision rights and authority which members adhere to (e.g., Fowler, 2013). These entities are not necessarily benign. For example, local self-organised security arrangements provided by vigilantes such as the Sungu Sungu in Kenya and Tanzania can employ extra judicial punishments.⁶ They can function alongside mutually supportive child care systems and voluntary provisions of a place of safety for women escaping domestic violence. The general point is that, from a citizen's point of view, what you (can) chose to belong to typically comes with a responsibility to accept – be governed by - decisions that are made, otherwise the associational set-up will not work, negating the value of belonging.

We observe that these 'traditional' sites of non-statutory governance are fast being paralleled by 'virtual' locations with governance attributes seen, for example, in the elevation of individuals and groups through spontaneous networks of 'followership' in social media. An authority is attributed to them, or to their ideas and ideals, which can have significant effects across society.

⁵ This categorization reflects to a tri-sector structure of a society on the one hand and a fuzzy border between public and private on the other.

⁶ <http://www.refworld.org/docid/52a7305f4.html>

In other words, as Actor Network Theory describes, *Aramis*, or the love of technology (Latour, 1996) has become embedded in and is part and parcel of modern human systems. In this sense, the Internet is but the latest in a history of communication technologies – print, telephone, mobile phone, internet - transforming ways that people can share knowledge and collaborate which, in new ways, disrupts socio-political arrangements.⁷ The technology is best treated as a system-enabling actor to be understood in its own right, rather than just as a neutral ‘tool’.

There is now a power of organising without organisation which is consciously intended to have an impact on the public arena and its decision making processes. There is a technology-based widening opportunity for ‘virtual’, fluid, transient and ‘subterranean’ (Kaldor and Selchow, 2012) citizen engagement in public affairs outside of the formal system of political parties, elections and so on is demonstrating an impact on statutory governance. Examples can range from mass challenges to regimes and the existing economic order as well as small scale civic assertions, exposing local corruption and abuse of public and non-statutory authority, for example against forced ‘traditional’ circumcision of boys and girls (Theocharis, et al, 2013; Stohl, 2014).

Accompanying this dynamic is the question of who is in a position to engage with virtual and other mechanisms for active citizen engagement. More specifically, is there a middle class dimension to be seen in the where, when and how of citizen’s navigating the polycentric governance which is part and parcel of daily life? Comparisons of Turkey and Brazil are used to explore answers.

In sum, polycentrism in governance is not a particularly meta-level international phenomenon, but an extant lived micro-political reality. Extreme examples of polycentricism in power over daily life are seen in the ‘hybridity’ of institutions that operate under conditions of state fragility where governments fail to govern (Berghof, et al, 2008; Kharas and Rogerson, 2012) and where non-state institutions play significant roles of mediation or control.

MIDDLE CLASS NAVIGATION - PERSPECTIVES AND CHOICES

Analysis of citizen action directed at socio-political change has adopted a variety of frameworks and perspectives. In development studies, over the past decades, a frequent frame of reference has been that of civil society with its contending interpretations (e.g., Hodgkinson and Foley, 2003; Glasius, 2010). This concentration on agency expressed through visible associational life often obscured the underlying drivers of a polity’s energy and tended to treat civil society as either a non-normative, enumerable category or as if its functions are directed at pro-social objectives: ‘uncivility’ was more or less ignored in favour of civility (e.g., Salamon, 2004). Both are questionable assumptions (e.g., Dekker and Evers, 2009). Consequently, 2007 saw the start of a

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http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/high_tech_telecoms_internet/the_disruptive_power_of_collaboration_an_interview_with_clay_shirky

research programme to explore how citizen energy and agency - be it for civic or uncivil purposes – could be studied. A result is a systemic approach to enquiry of socio-political processes in relation to power and governance known as civic driven change (CDC) (Fowler and Biekart, 2012; Biekart and Fowler, 2012). This composition of lenses, described briefly below, provides analytic categories applied to the country situations used as cases.

Applying Civic Agency Spectacles⁸

Civic Driven Change is a comprehensive approach – a pair of spectacles - to investigate the energy and agency of citizens as they seek to navigate and change the world they live in, both near and far. As an addition to the analytic repertoire CDC combines: framing, grounded propositions, a meaningful set of political concepts and empirical categories which make inter-related sense from a process of narrative discovery.

The Frame: Domains

Civic Driven Change relies on the ‘framing’ concept of socio-political *domain* centred on an imagined future of a different societal condition. The idea of a domain has a strong affinity with Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of ‘social field’, understood as arenas governed by distinctive values which emphasise their contested nature and the role of power in resolving conflicts. The significance of social fields is their detachment from any particular actor because they also exist as internalised mental elements or frames of reference or norms and cultural rules that co-inhabit a person’s psycho-social construct, their *habitus*.

In practical terms, a domain can be viewed as a *relational system* operating around a substantive theme or desired future condition which holds (part of) a society’s attention and attracts civic agency from any quarter. Examples are: corruption as a non-sector specific uncivil behaviour; as is discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation; social enterprises heralded in new institutional forms of low profit limited liability company (e.g., Morgan, 2013). Domains can incorporate a polity’s transnationalism fostered by technology and user-driven media (e.g., Kanter and Fine, 2010). Figure 2. illustrates the centrality of civic agency in the CDC narrative. The figure is a visual aid to look above the ‘handy’ perspective but coarse simplification of sectors (market, civil society, government, political system).

Specifying domains are a way of ‘grasping’ complex processes of change that do not inhabit a particular sector but seek to break out of such ascriptions. With a domain selected and framed, propositions give CDC parameters to orient the mindset, while lenses provide political focal points and categories to observe power in domain behaviour.

CDC Propositions

The first CDC proposition is that societies are treated as ‘*political projects*’ where all walks of life contain various types of power, political forces and players. Whatever citizens do, or not do, with their lives they are, by definition, acting politically (Dagnino, 2008). This perspective implies that, 24/7, citizens and their collectivities continually make and (fail to) act on choices about the society they want, allied to differences in possession of or access to power needed to do so.

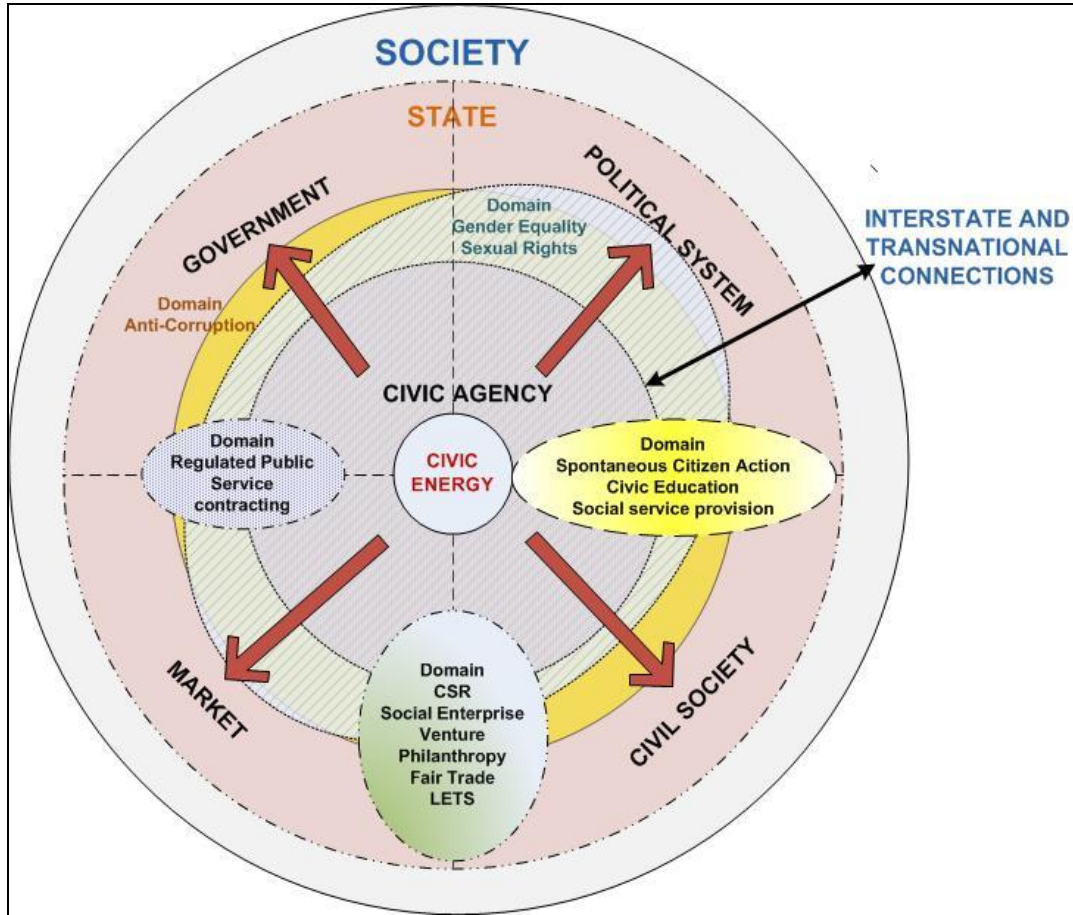
⁸ This section extracts from and condenses Fowler (2013).

Second, in exerting agency being '*civic*' is understood to mean *pro-social behaviour* that respects differences in opinion, life orientations and political choices between citizens, whilst also showing concern for the whole of society and not just for one self (Fowler, 2009).

Third, people living together inevitably generate dilemmas of collective action (Ostrom, 2005:3). Solutions rely on people imagining a resolved future situation that is strong enough to attract adequate collective initiative, innovation, energy and agency for socio-political change. Today's 'big' guiding and mobilizing images are of a sustainable ecology and a world without gross inequalities, insecurity and hunger. Therefore, '*civic dreams*', or collective future visions, are appreciatively (Srivasta and Cooperrider, 2009) understood as the unfulfilled imagination of a preferred situation that acts as a domain energiser and innovator.

The fourth proposition stresses that development and political change are inherently uncertain and hard to predict. Change processes often involve conflict, contention, disappointment and struggle, as well as solidarity, collaboration and sharing without assured results. CDC therefore involves a *complexity-informed non-deterministic view* on how and why societies change (Hokikian, 2002; Rihani, 2005).

Figure 2. CDC: Illustrative framework



Source: Fowler, 2013

Taken together, these propositions offer an analytical basis which translates into a constituent features which characterises CDC, and which *together* 'define' what can be understood as a civic driven change 'perspective' or analytic 'lenses'. One lens focuses on the politics of actants and their attributes; the other lens on power (re)distribution.

Lens #1: Focal Points

The politics of belonging: CDC relies on a rights-based understanding of political agency: *inclusive citizenship*. This usually ascribed but sometime acquired identity is simultaneously individual and collective. An amalgam of citizenship and other identities configures the socio-political terrain of power relationships, which can be imagined in terms of peaks of power acquisition, schisms and canyons between groups and flows of relational rivers that both connect and divide. A CDC lens takes as a maxim the requirement for *equity of political agency* rather than *equity of economic opportunity* that informs dominant sector-based theories of change. Equity of political agency exhibits strong gender differences socially structured, for example, in many Arab states.

The politics of action: A CDC lens focuses on *civic agency* for good or ill throughout all realms of society. A CDC perspective is therefore not institutionally 'located'— it is not 'owned' by civil society, as is often assumed with citizen's action. In whatever they do, people's agency contains 'political' choices which co-determine how a society thinks, feels, functions and evolves. From this mass of choices, what becomes 'political' on the streets, in the media in the economy and in systems of governance emerges from how power has been gained, distributed and controlled in society. Consequently, civic agency means that a CDC lens does not focus on the mechanics of politics, such as voting. Rather, it begins with identifying a domain of change described above where (enough) people decide to alter the society they live in as a conscious act. In doing so, people's individual and collective decisions bring together past experience, an imagined future and a real-time assessment of the effort and risk involved in changing things locally or globally.

The politics of scale: The Tahrir Square rebellions and similar events illustrate another core feature of a CDC lens: *scalability*. A CDC framework of analysis is applicable at local, regional, national and global levels. This feature is particularly valuable when change processes span multiple horizontal (networked) and vertical (hierarchical) aggregations of civic agency, socio-political arrangements and the different types and sites of governance and authority (see Pearce, 2012). For example, the governance landscape is showing growth in self-regulation to make organisations more accountable without the heavy hand of legislation. The women's movement works locally and globally to end gender based violence. The UN Global Compact for Business and the impact of transnational citizen networks on multi-lateral institutions involve micro to macro scaling of civic agency, most actively in responses to environmental concerns.

The politics of knowledge with communication: A fourth constituent feature of the CDC politics lens is attention to the fact that civic agency is shaped by autonomy over 'knowledge power' (Haugaard, 1997). CDC recognises the multiple knowledges that inform agency. It is important for civic actors to explore their own paths of change. Focusing on the ability of people to use their own knowledge with communication is therefore a crucial ingredient of applying a civic-driven change lens.

The development of a CDC lens has required a corresponding systematic way of examining power relations from the perspective of civic agency. The following section describes how this has been approached and the categories involved.

Lens #2: Practical power analysis

Power can be appreciated in terms of types: with, for, over, and within (Gaventa, 2007) as well as their relative (in)visibility (Lukes, 2005). Combining these into a matrix can disaggregate power as an interactive property that can be collectively generated and applied (Fowler and Biekart, 201; 25). They include, for example, a 'power from within' which shows up in reflexive elements, such as questioning compliance with externally imposed rules and norms; choosing to gain and deploy capacities to act in the public sphere associated with activism; self-selecting what 'belonging'

means and its interpretations towards 'the other' which can feed intolerance, uncivility and conflict.

Navigating Towards Polycentrism: Brazil and Turkey

Two examples elaborate and explore citizens' encounters with polycentric governance allied to Actor Network Theory. The approach compares the – apparently similar - trajectories of mass activism recently seen in Brazil and Turkey. Both started with agitation against a discrete issue of public policy, which broadened in agenda and gained in scale. Contrasting processes of civic agency in these newly emerging economies located in different parts of the world allows for comparative examination of socio-cultural contexts.

Civic protests in Brazil and Turkey emerged almost in the same period (May-June 2013), even though they had no direct relationship with each other. The Turkish protests in Gezi Park could be understood as a local response to the Arab Spring. But this would probably not do justice to the diversity of the demands being voiced: reversal of Erdogan's closure of political space, an end to corruption, etc. The trigger was the intended destruction of Gezi Park in Istanbul, escalating to mass action led by middle class sectors against the advent of an authoritarian democracy. Similarly, one can consider the Brazilian protests as a middle-class response to yet another left-wing government after Lula had been succeeded by Dilma Rousseff of the same Workers Party (PT). The trigger was mounting opposition to public spending (such as the infrastructure of the impending World Cup football), leading to a much wider demonstration against government performance and integrity. In both cases, electronically networked agency played a significant role in mobilization, self-organisation and citizen's self-governance in terms of following collective decision making with anticipated risks of physical injury. We will examine both examples to illuminate active middle class engagement with polycentric governance at scale.

The wave of protests in Brazil started to become massive in June 2013, after a small rally against public transport hikes in Sao Paulo was brutally beaten up by the riot police. This demonstration had been organised by the (left-wing oriented) Free Fare Movement whose members gave it an authority to act and followed its decisions by coming back the following days, again being beaten up by the police. Journalists initially reported rather negatively about the protest against the price hike of bus fares by nearly eight per cent as out of proportion to the decision taken by the agency governing public transport pricing. But when the mobilizations gradually attracted more and more people and journalists were beaten up as well, public opinion started to shift. Soon protests came massive, also visible on television and social media, rapidly spreading to other cities in Brazil. By early July 2013 it was estimated over a million people were daily taking the streets, basically lower class workers, students, young urban unemployed, voicing their disagreement with price hikes for public services beyond transport alone. Saad Filho (2013) notes that the composition and focus of the protests changed as soon as mainstream television stations and mass media – as actants - started to take over the lead, trying to de-radicalize the movement and drawing in different crowds. The protest soon became more 'white' and middle-class-based with demands related to the FIFA World Cup, gay rights, legalization of drugs, abortion, and more

in general a rejection of the PT government of President Dilma Rousseff. Four sites of governance in public decision-making were under threat: the city council; the transport agency; public service agencies; and the national assembly.

In Istanbul the protest started in late May 2013 when a small group of environmentalists staged a picket line objecting to the destruction of Gezi Park, which is located at one of the corners of centrally located Taksim Square, in order to construct a shopping mall. Police used tear gas to disassociate the peaceful protestors, but they came back in bigger numbers as the message spread via social media, especially Twitter. This expansive reaction was also caused by the decision of the conservative Erdogan government that state-controlled television stations were to ignore the protests and instead broadcasted other programmes, such as a documentary on penguins and cooking classes. This behaviour further ignited self-mobilisations, which started to include broader demands ranging from freedom of press (with people dressed as penguins), redressing income equality, gay rights, women's reproductive rights, as well as the right to consume alcohol and the right to get together and to disagree with the elected government. A very diverse crowd of students, young professionals, football hooligans, as well as feminists, Kemalists, nationalists, Kurds, LGBT activists, sex workers, and anti-capitalist Muslims took the streets in one of the largest manifestations of public dissatisfaction seen in recent years in Turkey (Özgüler 2013: 10). Popular agitation towards sites of governing included the city council, the state media, the security services as well as the telecommunications regulator. Twitter can be singled out as a particularly important actant enabling rapid scaling and inclusion of a wide diversity of citizen groups and interests.

The more striking commonalities between the protests in Brazil and Turkey can be summarized in three points. First is that civic energy started with a very small group of activators and very soon after the police repression unfolded into a very diverse and massive protest movement which was dominated nor steered by any political party. It was a spontaneous protest very similar to the Arab Spring which had no clearly defined programme or discourse other than resistance to current government behaviours and policies. The core of the protesters were predominantly young middle-class professionals and/or students, combined with a variety of sector-specific dissenting groups which led to a very broad array of demands, without any particular individual leadership being emphasised. In both countries it also represented the largest and broadest popular revolt since the end of military rule in the 1980s.

A second common element was that this protest movement 'from the middle' demanded a change of public policies which were undermining the position of economically middle groups. An example is the resistance to pay more income tax in a setting in which corruption of government bureaucracies was flourishing. Both the Lula and Erdogan governments had demonstrated to be deeply permeated by corruption scandals which were not properly prosecuted, leading to a sense of impunity which has proven to be one the key sources of civic activisms, similar to the wave of popular protest against 19th century global capitalism analysed by Polanyi. The economic rise of the BRIC's raised the income of an impoverished layer of poor generations, and also generated the expectation for better life standards of the population as a

whole. Erdogan managed to keep the 'silent' minority for a long time to supporting his AKP party also due to his control over the mass media which condemned the left and neutralised the more extreme right. His response can also be interpreted as a strategy to undermine a perceived informal source of authority associated with the exiled cleric Fethullah Gülen,⁹ as can his transfer of military and security officials to further disempower the armed forces as guardian of a secular public authority. In Brazil the PT governments were actually better able to disarm the political right by strengthening the state and simultaneously preventing the more radical left from taking advantage of the popular protests.

Even though differences between the effects of mass activism can be seen in Brazil and Turkey, a third common element was the role of the media as actant. Erdogan believed he could defuse the protests by ordering his TV stations to ignore them, for some reason wrongly assessing the vast impact of social media. As soon as his party won the local elections in March 2014, Erdogan announced to block Twitter, Facebook, as well as YouTube as these were undermining his position. Here we can see again how different governances were overlapping, since the media became an actant which was not controlled by Erdogan. The same goes for Brazil, here privately owned TV stations joined the protest movement and actually contributed to its rapid expansion, but likely also to its depoliticisation as soon as the government gave in and overruled the local government transport price hikes. Social media also were used widely for people to contact each other, to convene somewhere without having a clear organisation and to march in a particular direction without a clear plan. This spontaneity probably took the political angle out of the protest, which therefore also illustrates the potential downsides of polycentric governance.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

This paper explores the application of a Civic Driven Change lens and polycentricism in governing to citizen's agency (at scale). The two illustrations point to critical interactions between the spontaneity of the politics of belonging and the technology-enabled politics of knowledge and communication circumventing non-state mediated information which combined into an amassed moment of civic power directed at, but also informed by, multiple types of governing and institutional locations of governance. The example also exposes the connections between and layering of power associated with governance where ostensibly autonomous entities are simply politically overruled or intimidated. These combinations show, but only touching the surface, of the substance of complex interplays present in socio-political processes that involve the energies of a growing middle class across much of the world. These assumptions will be further explored in a planned empirical research programme, for which this paper served as a first exploration.

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BClen_movement

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