Towards Self-Governance: Strategy as a tool to promote real inclusive development in future self-governed communities

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Resumen/Abstract:

This paper makes an exploratory reflexion about the idea that societies will evolve increasingly towards models of self-governance and that the discipline of Strategy - and some of its components and tools - can be one of the most effective approaches to help regions and communities cope with Complexity and the 'dangers' and 'benefits' of interdependence. The author believes that by adopting the model of self-governance with the help of some of those mentioned tools, there is a real possibility that regions and communities can benefit from tangible and inclusive development, one that reaches the real aspirations of people, bringing at the same time, cohesiveness and the celebration of diversity across many dimensions.

Palabras clave:

Introduction

This article states that in the highly complex and uncertain world we live in, where established models of governance across the world continue to struggle to fulfil the basic needs of so many millions of citizens increasing, in this way, the levels of system risk in the social, economic, political and environmental arena, we must find a radical new and better approach to govern our communities. This better and radical approach, the author believes, can be self-government. Self-government seems to contain mechanisms of self-regulation and self-evolution inherent in open systems allowing: the management of complexity and uncertainty that threat the healthy living state of the system; the capacity to fulfil through its mechanism their basic needs then contributing to its stability (homeostasis) and the self-expression of the full potential and richness of the system allowing it to organically evolve and so adapt itself to any environment[1].

Since countries, regions, organizations, communities and people can all be considered open systems interacting with each other in highly complex environments we believe this approach fits with adequacy.

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[1]For this observation we take into consideration the approach on systems and social systems as developed by the field of System Theory (see Hangs-George Moeller in the References section)

What is Governance?

Performing a theoretical literature review on the idea of "governance" Denita Cepiku (n.d) recalls how this word "is a multidimensional concept, for which it is not easy to find a shared and widely-accepted definition". Nevertheless, after analysing the international literature in the specific concept of "public governance", namely Anglo Saxon, Dutch, German, Scandinavian and Italian literature (mainly from 1983 to 2005) and despite the diversity of definitions, Cepiku highlights the prevalent and most important expressions and ideas across them showing what is described about the concept. Regarding the Anglo-Saxon research Cepiku cites Lynn, Heinrich and Hill (2001) who tell that Governance has to do with "regimes, laws, rules, judicial decisions and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe and enable the provision of publicly supported goals and services"; for Pierre (2000) Governance is about "the capacity to coordinate and make coherent actions and behaviours of a multiplicity of actors – political institutions, private firms, civil society, international institutions, etc. – which pursue different goals". In the Dutch literature Cepiku finds that authors consider "public governance as the influence that the public administration exercises on social processes inside complex networks composed of autonomous but interdependent actors, each of them following its own objectives and interests, which may, sometimes, diverge." For German-speaking researchers the governance definitions "are focused on collaborative relationships and inter-institutional networks, through which participation in policy making and implementation is made possible. (op.cit:7). In the Scandinavian literature she finds definitions of governance as "a coordination mode of different actors, which can be investigated either from a structural point of view (hierarchy, market and heterarchy), or focusing on processes (steering and adaptation)" or governance linked "closely to networks and partnerships" (ibid). In the Italian body of research, the author finds that some models of governance can "consists of formal and informal exercise of authority, with the aim of building consensus on specific decisions" and others implied that "decision-making authority is legitimised by formal institutional rules, it is commonly exercised through top-down tools and has compulsory effects".

If we look at more recent definitions coming not from the research literature but from current operational and existent institutions with enough power (due to its resources and scale of influence across the world) to shape in some form the way governments approach the subject of governance, we see no major differences in the content and concepts displayed in the definitions.

The World Bank states, for instance, that "Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them" (World Bank)[2].

On the same line of thought OECD states that: "Public governance refers to the formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and how public actions are carried out, from the perspective of maintaining a country's constitutional values when facing changing problems and environments. The principal elements of good governance

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[2] See link: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home

refer to accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and rule of law. There are clear links between good public governance, investment and development. The greatest current challenge is to adapt public governance to social change in the global economy. Thus the evolving role of the State needs a flexible approach in the design and implementation of public governance."[3]

Derivations of the concept of Governance that have being emerging in the recent years go in the same direction of formality and abstraction. New Public Governance NPG (Torfing & Triantafillou, 2013:7; 10) is about: "empowered participation, public and private actors, collaboration between levels, public and private sectors, engaging stakeholders, public problem-solving, service production, accountability, standards, organizational learning, negotiation, interaction, networks, partnerships and relational contracts".

Multi-level-governance: (Chardas 2012: 5) is defined "as a process of regionalisation through which sub-national actors are empowered to challenge central government's decision making authorities. The interaction between these actors is both vertical and horizontal (…)"

Transparency International UK says that Open Governance: "describes the relationships between leaders, public institutions and citizens, their interaction and decision-making processes. Open governance is comprised of three main elements – rights, institutions and policies, and tools.".

And we could go on with other definitions. What do we want to express with all these diversified descriptions and citations?

Well, while in today's world, it is a fact that, Governance, at many levels, has to deal with the management of stakeholders, relations, networks, complex process, and all the many factors mentioned above, it is also true that this prevalent recognition make us forget that by constantly recalling this abstract, institutionalized, bureaucratic discourse we lose space for words that should be the cornerstone of that same discourse: words like 'people' 'to serve' 'wellbeing' or 'happiness'.

If we check the learning and educational programs on Governance available on the official webpages of Universities and other educational institutions around the world (those that provide learning experience on this subject) we see that the same type of language and definitions are reproduced.

The question here, is not that these definitions depict and adopt that formal language and with it the concepts and ideas associated with a complex interconnected world. The point here is the absence of expressions that would remind us about what should be the cornerstone of Governance: people, just the people, and the pursuing of their wellbeing.

We can think that with this prevalent definitions, present and future leaders and officials are mostly taught and persuade that Governance is essentially first, about the complex management of actors and process, and only after that, the satisfaction and pursuing of the wellbeing of citizens.

This is of the upmost importance since these definitions are the ones that help to shape the rational and the institutional speech of officials and leaders on every level of Governance, as

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[3] See Public Governance: http://www.oecd.org/investment/toolkit/policyareas/publicgovernance/

well as their conscious and subconscious approach on governance. If they shape their speech and rational and their conscious and subconscious approach it is most likely that they shape their practice too.

And we are all aware that, at least in the most recent years, that the positive perception of citizens about their elected officials in different countries are not at the highest level, due to the way mistrust spread across population who experienced the 2008 Crisis and who in the following years, witnessed so many scandals of corruption and lack of transparency in many types of institutions, including those of governance (WEF 2017). But beyond that, could it be possible that those previous mentioned abstract definitions on governance play as well an indirect role, influence or effect on the way people perceive politicians? [4] And with this is mind could it be that there is also some kind of impact on the way people vote (and don't vote) in the different elections in their own countries?[5]

Crisis in Deliberative Democracy

Despite of all of this people have been trying to make hear their voice so they can express their expectations on what is governance for them.

The changes seem to be started 30 years ago with "the emergence of a new governance imagery that embodies a novel understanding of what entails to govern in an efficient, effective and democratic manner." (Sørensen & Triantafillou, 2016: 1). What the authors were witnessing was the emergence of what we call today Deliberative or Participatory Democracy. "According to the emergence government imagery, market and civil society are not spheres of freedom beyond the reach of public, but rather important contributors to the production of public governance due to their alleged ability to produce public value through self-governance. "(ibid).

Today we witness the many ways in which Participatory Democracy uses a vast array of instruments and procedures so the citizens can be better listened by their elected officials in their hopes and expectations: procedures as pools, participatory budgets and digital platforms are being adopted in many countries (in their regions and cities) in several continents to harness the potential of creativity of the civil society. Thanks to those ideas, many interesting

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[4] Take for example a survey conducted in 2015 by the Pew Research Institute that found that 74% of American citizens believe their politicians put their own interest ahead of the country's and another 74% say that "politicians don't care what people like me think" and finally only 19% trust their government all the time. See "Beyond Distrust: How Americans View Their Government". Articles available at: http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/6-perceptions-of-elected-officials-and-the-role-of-money-in-politics/

[5] The numbers vary widely but we can see examples of statistics for voter turnout in recent elections (since 2010 in different periods of time) in different countries. For Parliamentary elections in Europe we can see voter's turnout in Estonia, Finland, Hungary and UK in the range of 60%; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Portugal in the range of 50%; or Switzerland and The Russian Federation in the range of 40%. Also since 2010, parliamentary elections in the America Continent show us some figures: Canada, Paraguay and USA in the range of 60%; Chile, Colombia and México in the range of 40% with the other countries displaying higher results but showing in some cases a decrease of participation in more recent elections when compared with previous ones. See the database of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Link: http://www.idea.int/

and even innovative projects are being developed in different locations to solve challenges of governance across several sectors (transportation, education, health, business, social issues) and a few millions of citizens are benefiting from the implementation of these projects in a tangible way (OECD, 2017). And the successful as well as not so successful results of those approaches are being documented and reported so they can both serve as learning experiences for both government and citizens.

But things are all not always what they seem to be. Despite these successes, something else is happening in the Deliberative Democracy movement.

The Summer Issue 2017 of the Daedalus Journal [6] is entirely dedicated to the subject of "The Prospects & Limits of Deliberative Democracy" and starts with a first line that says: "Democracy is under siege". We reproduce the first paragraphs on the introduction that highlights the critical aspects in consideration: "Democracy is under siege. Approval ratings for democratic institutions in most countries around the world are at near-record lows. The number of recognized democratic countries in the world is no longer expanding after the so-called Third Wave of democratic transitions. Indeed, there is something of a "democratic recession." Further, some apparently democratic countries with competitive elections are undermining elements of liberal democracy: the rights and liberties that ensure freedom of thought and expression, protection of the rule of law, and all the protections for the substructure of civil society that may be as important for making democracy work as the electoral process itself. The model of party competition-based democracy–the principal model of democracy in the modern era–seems under threat" (James S. Fishkin & Jane Mansbridge, 2017).

The text continues with more bad news identifying many things we have seen displayed on the media but have not being able so far to see as something more significant that could be changing or asking for change: public discontent and citizens divided about unexpected results (as the Brexit referendum), political elites widely distrusted by their electors, angry populism raising, etc, etc.

It seems, then, that here is something emerging in this field, perhaps "a crisis of confidence in the ideal of democracy as rule by the people"[7] or perhaps some disappointment to see that Participatory practices are not fully delivering on its promises.

In one way or the other it seems we are standing between mixed results. Because besides the previous mentioned 'disappointments' and doubts there is also the good results of these practices that we have previously mentioned as reported by international organizations.

But, once again, as we acknowledge all these good results and the impact that they have created on the life of so many millions of people in developed and developing countries (meaning the improvement of their life conditions thanks to the solutions brought to light trough these participatory practices) we can understand why there could be some space for disappointment.

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[6] From MIT Press, which substitutes the Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
[7] A short excerpt from the PR Newswire-USNewswire Press release promoting the Summer Edition 2017 of the Daedalus Journal. June 28, 2017.

We suggest at least one reason for that: we (all of us in the several sectors across all the spectrum of society) have been ignoring or at least not giving the deserved critical attention to the segments of population that year after year seem to be constantly left behind, dragging their social degraded condition one year after another, with no critical improvement and, in so many cases, transferring their social degraded status to the following generations, as a structural generational burden that they and their relatives (even neighbours and their closest communities) are fated to carry on for the future. Basically, their basic needs are not being met.

These are the ones that, for sure, have been asking about the promises not delivered of the Deliberative Democracy. And these are the ones that cannot continue to be ignored.

We'll see why.

People's Basic Needs and "The Risks that just won't die"

Inequality, is raising to the level that is becoming a structural world risk. The alert is from the World Economic Forum in its latest report on Global Risks (WEF 2017) but the alert is not a new one, since this year is just highlighting what in previous years was already reporting by other words.

An excerpt of an article in the WEF page says it clear: "in 2011, the Report focused on "economic disparity and global governance failures"; in 2014 it highlighted "societal concerns including the breakdown of social structures, the decline of trust in institutions, the lack of leadership and persisting gender inequalities"; in 2015 it observed that "the fragility of societies is of increasing concern" and cautioned against excessive economic optimism, noting that it might "reflect a false sense of control, as history shows that people … are often taken by surprise by the same risks"; last year, it focused on the paradox of "the (dis)empowered citizen.". In this year of 2017 the organization talks as well about 'the unemployed and underemployed". All together they are "The Risks that just won't die" (WEF, 2017).

The Report extracts its own data and makes its own analysis about the sources of those social risks. They are related mainly with migration, the discredit of the Democratic systems of governance, the restriction of civil rights in some countries, the impact of technology disruption on employment to underline the most important.

We are not going to disagree with the analysis of such report (and the institution behind it) and with the fact that these are all potential or concrete sources of those social risks. But beside those factors we would like to talk about other important data. They are just a few examples of figures that continue to remain in the official statistics (and official reports as well), year after year with not big or dramatic changes that could display some kind of evidence that "it is this time" that things are going to change.

We would like to bring the attention then, to the 760 million of people that according to the World Bank 'live' with less than 2 dollars per day and, actually, cannot afford to have food, shelter, clothes and access to clean water because they represent those who 'live' in the scale

of Extreme Poverty. These people are mostly located in developing countries but not exclusively (WB: 2013)[8].

We would like to bring also the attention to the one billion of people "from Bombay to Manila to the favelas in Rio" that are estimated to be currently living in slums "With no roof or solid walls and no access to clean water or toilets, living conditions that are unhygienic and hazardous"[9].

In UK, one the richest countries in the world and according to The Food Foundation (2016) 8,4 millions of people "struggle to put food on the table"; 5,6% of young people aged 15 or over "reported struggle to get enough food to eat and further 4,5% reported at least once they went a full day without anything to eat" (ibid). We would like some attention to those too.

What about the 1,5 billion of people who cannot prove who they are, because their proof of identity relies in the official authorities of their countries (and for lack of education, extreme poverty and other degrade situations) they have no access to their own documentation and because of that they are "often excluded from property ownership, free movement, and social protection (…) and are more exposed to corruption and crime, including people trafficking and slavery[10]"?

It is worth to recall here that Abraham Maslow presented in 1943 his essay "A Theory of Motivation" where he identified the pyramid of Human Needs. The characterization of those needs is widely known and they are often reproduced not only in academic or scientific research documentation, but in other sources too. These needs are divided in 5 segments: Physiological (breathing, food, water, shelter, clothing, sleep) Safety (health, employment, property, family and social stability) Love (friendship, family, intimacy, sense of connection), Self-Esteem (confidence, achievement, respect of others) and Self-Actualization Needs (morality, creativity, spontaneity, acceptance, experience purpose, meaning and inner potential) .

The text states that "Human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need." (op.cit: 371). To make things even more clear, Maslow explains what the 'hierarchies of pre-potency" signify by detailing what is like to be an individual whose need of food is not satisfied: "For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. He dreams food, he remembers food, he thinks about food, he emotes only about food, he perceives only food and he wants only food (op.cit:374). And to conclude Maslow says: "Freedom, love, community feeling, respect, philosophy, may all be waved aside as fripperies which are useless since they fail to fill the stomach. Such a man may fairly be said to live by bread alone."(ibid)

Putting together all these disperse reflections (disperse figures, disperse descriptions of a scientist about what are really human needs) what do we get? We get a conclusion which is is

[8] Poverty Overview. World Bank: http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview
[9] World Bank , 2013. "In the Midst of Slums, a Pool of Talent Waiting to be Tapped". October 1st. See Article on: http://blogs.worldbank.org/category/tags/slums
[10] Michael Mainelli, 2017. "Blockchain will help us prove our identities in the digital World.". March 16. Article available on: https://hbr.org/2017/03/blockchain-will-help-us-prove-our-identities-in-a-digital-world

a Self-fulfilling Prophecy: The most basic needs of people are not being met, and we have a large percentage of the population that is in a state of complete physical and emotional imbalance and represents a threat to the other rest of the human population because is potentially capable of any act of violence to find some way of satisfying their most human vital needs.

So if we didn't know the answer for the question posed by the WEF that looks at the present state of the world and asks "Where does this risk that threat the system comes from? ", if we did not the answer before, now we do. The risk comes from inside. From the basic element of the system that should be the core element of its balance: the people. Why? Because the root of the problem has remained over the years, decades perhaps: their most basic needs are not being met.

Self-governance and The Current Signs Emerging

If the Basic Needs of People are not being met with the present systems and models of Governance perhaps it's time to make a reflexion on other alternatives and see if they have any potential to make better.

Ahead of governments, it seems that citizens in several domains with different specialized backgrounds or no particular ones, are already making experiments in that field. They are experimenting what it is like to act fully by themselves and in areas where governments have been, so far, acting in total exclusivity. They are experimenting about Self-governance.

For the context of this article the author presents an operative definition of self-governance as the way a community[11] connected by any type of tie (cultural, nationality, sense of belonging with potential shared interests and vision) connected to a place or reality (be a territory or an organization or other dimension) take on themselves the full responsibility and accountability for the management of its wellbeing as individuals and as well a collective, managing for that purpose, all the tangible and intangible resources that are intrinsic to that collective bound. In the case of a territory, this means the population of a country of course, but as well its variations, meaning a region, a village or other territorial reality within the identity of that country, or outside that identity by itself. In this context we are referring they are entirely free to choose the 'modality' of self- governance they want to pursue: following a leader or not, emulate some form of cooperative structure of power or not, etc, etc.

In the following paragraphs the author introduces what she believes are concrete emergent manifestations of Self-Governance approach: 'signs'. These signs are present in the form of new forms of organizations and business, new and disruptive ways of using the power of Computation and particularly, the considered disruptive technology called Blockchain. Other examples as well are new forms or managing land resources on large and medium scale, and also approaches on political/public governance.

What we see for the moment as common traits across these signs are two apparent contradictory realities, but just apparently contradictory because they end up to complement perfectly between them. These two apparent contradictory realities are: The concern for and

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[11] Or it could be even an individual. But for this specific approach another detailed reflection is needed.

the take care of the self (being the 'self' a person need, a business or an organization need, a community need, etc) and the concern for and the take care of the collective.

These 2 approaches manifest in the several examples we are going to present trough, at least, 3 transversal traits:

- Self-Accountability and Common or Collective Accountability

- Self-Care and Common Care or Care for the Collective

- Self-Management and Collective Management or The Management of the Common Good

Let's see the examples.

- **Blockchain**

Blockchain is the technology created in 2008 by someone or some group under the name of Satashi Nakamoto and in lay terms can be described as a new way of organize, structure and exchange digital code directly between users and without a 3d party (Peer to Peer) through a distributed network, where the exchange happens with transparency and incorruptibility at the highest level according to the experts (Blookgeeks). The first application of this technology was the Bitcoin, the first of today's hundreds of cryptocurrencies. Explaining the technology through the application of Bitcoin its inventor states that this one is "an electronic payment system based on cryptographic proof instead of trust, allowing any two willing parties to transact directly with each other without the need for a trusted third party" (Nakamoto, 2008). No commercial or central bank play any type or role in this type of currency.

The digital code exchanged (any type of information we can think of) is not hosted anywhere is just 'spread' trough the network as "a chain of digital signatures" (Blookgeeks) and nothing happens to each piece of code that escapes the automatic verification of this distributed voluntary network. "The blockchain network lives in a state of consensus, one that automatically checks in with itself every ten minutes. A kind of self-auditing ecosystem of a digital value (…) Each group of these transactions is referred to as a "block" (ibid).

Blockchain technology can be utilized across several applications with very disruptive effects as we see with the emergence of the cryptocurrency industry with hundreds[12] of digital coins all based in the blockchain technology.

- **Descentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO)**

Descentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs) are emergent forms organizations based on the Blockchain technology. As explained in the BlockchainHub [13]: "The idea of a decentralized organization takes the concept of traditional organizations, and decentralizes it. Instead of a hierarchical structure managed by a set of humans interacting in person and

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[12] The report Global Cryptocurrency Benchmarking Study (2017) identifies 150 cryptocurrencies companies from 38 countries in 5 continents but underlines that actually there are hundreds of them. See the report at: https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/research/centres/alternative-finance/downloads/2017-global-cryptocurrency-benchmarking-study.pdf

[13] BlockchainHub "What is DAO?" (n.d). Article available at. https://blockchainhub.net/dao-decentralized-autonomous-organization/

controlling property via the legal system, a decentralized organization involves a set of humans interacting with each other according to a protocol specified in code, and enforced on the blockchain." The assets of the organization can be converted in digital assets i.e in code (the same website gives the example of a shareholder-owned corporation whose shares held by the shareholders are 'transplanted' into the blockchain) making the DAO like the materialization of the value of the organization. The value is then like contained/safeguarded in the code.

Because DAOs work effectively in the world of rules and all type of structured information, there are those who believe that a Government and governance structure can be built into a DAO (with a voting system and many other procedures that deal with verification of data, authentication, etc). That is the perspective of Buterin (2014) the young founder of Ethereum an organization which is considered the real first DAO owning its own bitcoin, Ether. Buterin perspectives so many applications based on this structure (Finances, Commerce, Real Estate, and others including Government). He underlines that DAOs are incorruptible and transparent. A DAO does not need humans to make decisions "as is something that, in some fashion, makes decisions for itself" (Buterin, op.cit.)

We can also talk of the Golem Project as a potential future tool for the development of DAOs. The Golem Project is also an emerging form of business organization structured as a network of users (on the basis of Peer to Peer protocol as the Bitcoin) that calls itself "The first Global Supercomputer".

The best way to explain the project is by quoting their own website that declare: "Golem is Airbnb for computers. Rent your unused CPU/GPU cycles and get paid in cryptocurrency. A decentralized network powering true cloud computing. Anyone can use Golem to rent their unused computing resources. Simultaneously Golem enables every user to buy computing time from other users to complete virtually any computationally-demanding task."

- **Evolutionary-Teal Organizations**

According to Frederic Laloux (2014) a new paradigm is emerging in the area of business and organization management. Basing his research on the evolutionary and developmental theory, namely the work of Ken Wilber and his approach, The Integral Theory (2007) Laloux devoted his attention to analysed the evolution of organizational structures on the context of the evolution of human history, since Primitive times, up until the contemporary era.

And then, certainly inspired by the challenges presented by our contemporary times, where words like scarcity, competition, complexity, control and many others are presented in the minds and leadership style of many managers and organizational leaders, Laloux started off a quest to find answers to the questions that were emerging in the course of his work: "Can we create organizations free of the pathologies that show up all too often in the workplace? Free of politics, bureaucracy, and infighting; free of stress and burn out; free of resignation, resentment, and apathy; free of the posturing at the top and the drudgery at the bottom? Is it possible to reinvent organizations, to devise a new model that makes work productive, fulfilling, and meaningful? Can we create soulful workplaces—schools, hospitals, businesses, and non-profits—where our talents can blossom and our callings can be honoured?" (Laloux, 2014:13). What he found out through the course of his field research was that yes, It was not

only possible but there were already real organizations and business working in accordance with this paradigm.

He named these organizations Evolutionary-Teal, the most recent and advance stage on his model of organizational paradigms, where he paired each organizational structure type with the human history period that gave rise to each one of them (assigning one colour for each type of organization, since the Primitive times, the Ancient time, The Industrial Revolution and so on until the present days).

From health to Agriculture, from Energy to Information Technology, in the Educational or Food Processing industries and so many other sectors, Laloux found organizations employing thousands of people and highly successful (well managed and profitable) that operate in accordance with the following traits identified by the author:

- Self-Management: a system of work based on peer relationships with no hierarchy, no established systems of verification or control, no bureaucracy or extremely very residuals signs of it, where resources are managed by all trough self-coordination.
- Wholeness: wholeness, a term used by the author to explain that in these organizations, people are invited to 'show up' in their whole self and personality in the context of their several activities during their work daily life, and not only displaying their 'professional' self or eventually hide behind every one social masks. People are invited and motivated to speak authentically and live authentically in accordance with what they really are.
- Evolutionary purpose: in the sense that these organizations are considered to be like living organisms with its own evolutionary path, which means that there is no fixed Vision to follow (Vision is flexible). They contain the potential to become whatever they want (Laloux, op.cit)

- **Managing The Commons**

According to Tine De Moor, former President of The International Association For the Study of The Commons (IASC) commons and other forms of institutions for collective action have been in the spot light of attention from both academia and society in the most recent years. "Europe even seems to experience a new 'wave of collective action' in virtually every sector of society" (De Moor, n.d).

What are commons? Commons is an approach to organize, manage and share resources that are needed for the development of any community. This approach is based on the research and work of Elinor Ostrom, a political scientist at Indiana University, who won the Nobel Prize of Economy in 2009 and who developed a framework of principles by which any community can implement these approach in several sectors and levels of society. "Ostrom's achievement effectively answers popular theories about the "Tragedy of the Commons," which has been interpreted to mean that private property is the only means of protecting finite resources from ruin or depletion. She has documented in many places around the world how

communities devise ways to govern the commons to assure its survival for their needs and future generations."[14]

The Commons are mostly about natural resources but today it seems that the approach is reaching other territories too with examples in industry sectors like health care, infrastructure, energy, education or communities that manage public spaces[15]

Nowadays The Commons seem to be a very strong movement of people and organizations that work together to spread this philosophy. One of this organizations is the already mentioned The International Association For the Study of The Commons (IASC) which has been organizing an international conference every two years. In last July took place in Utrecht (the Netherlands) the XVI edition of this biennial event, and the theme was 'Practicing the commons: Self-governance, cooperation, and institutional change'.

IASC has also in place a set of courses regarding common resources governance meant to teach the principles and implementation of The Commons to every person or community that want to learn these teachings.

- **Other signs: in formal Government**

As we have seen by the adoption of many modalities now in place of Deliberative Democracy, the increasing distrust in many government institutions (among other factors) is having a concrete impact on the way people perceive institutions and processes in the government field. People seem to be eager to create innovative solutions even within the established structures of public governance organizations.

In this sense we would like to present the brief account of an interesting case reported by Sørensen & Torfing (2016) about an 'experiment'[16] in Local Governance that took place in the Danish municipality of Gentofte.

Note that researchers do not qualify this case as a model of 'self-governance' but we actually see it as an example where the 'seeds' of the 'self-governance' approach are present since, in this case, a community took in their own hands the full management of part of public common good of their own locality.

So, in this municipality of 75,000 people called Gentofte, an official meeting organized by the City Council took place in 2015 to discuss a new model of local governance able to engage in a common ground of action the established local government institutions, the citizens and the local stakeholders. The result of that meeting was the approval and adoption of a model where the City Council and its Standing Committees 'divided' the governance of the municipality with other new open and thematic committees (8 in total) called 'Task Committees'. These 8 committees were constituted by citizens that assumed active roles as councillors helped by other individuals acting as administrators and experts.

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[14] Jay Walljasper, 2013. "8 Principles for Managing a Commons". December, 16. Article published in "On The Commons". Available on: http://www.onthecommons.org/about#sthash.qHAUKwUi.dpbs
[15] See: David Sloan Wilson. 2016. "The Tragedy of the Commons: How Elinor Ostrom Solved One of Life's Greatest Dilemmas". Article published in Evonomics Magazine. October, 29. Available on: http://evonomics.com/tragedy-of-the-commons-elinor-ostrom/ See also several examples depicted on Commons Magazine in: http://www.onthecommons.org/magazine#sthash.MvS5IEwu.dpbs
[16] Commas from the author of the present text.

As we read the report of this experience we cannot help to notice the exciting work that was done by the Task Committees: they assumed the accountability for the local challenges that need to be solved in their municipality and for each one of them they defined an evaluation, a communication strategy, an action plan to be executed, the profile of the resources needed (including the profile of the people to perform or conduct certain activities or projects) and a wide array of events and procedures so they could fulfil the responsibilities of governance they were assigned to. The final decision to finance and implement each of the designed solutions was then decided by the City Council.

The results of this experiment as reported in the article of Sørensen & Torfing seem significantly successful as reflected in the surveys conducted afterwards by the researchers[17]. This success was also perceived by other localities in Denmark and a large number of Danish municipalities have adopted in some way this model by implementing committees with the profile described in the municipality of Gentofte.

The help of Strategy: Tools towards Self- Governance

As we mentioned in the title of this article Strategy can be an instrument towards building a society based on the approach of Self-Governance.

There are two specific tools in the Strategy field that, in the paradigm[18] of cooperation and self-government we have been addressing can be, the author believes, very helpful to fulfil and execute the processes or tasks related with those approaches. These tools are the *Vision* and the discipline in the field of Strategy called *Strategic Intelligence* (Santos, 2015). We will explain briefly why and how they can be of help.

Strategy has been mostly associated with Competition[19] an approach that we are not addressing here since what have been talking about is how society are finding new ways of organize itself based on models more close to cooperation, sharing and self-management. It is in fact, in those approaches, that aspects (tools) of Strategy can be applied and reveal to be of help.

First of all, there are as we know many definitions of Strategy. For the purpose of the present reflexion we recall the definition of Eli Goldratt (2002) that says "Strategy is the direction you want to conduct the organization now as well as in the future" (cited in Santos, 2015). In this definition Strategy is the path chosen (and the means and resources necessary to build that path) towards one 'place'/reality somewhere in the near or more distant future. If strategy is the path, what is that reality /place in the future ahead?

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[17] The surveys were either about the negative and positive expectations with the positive expectations surpassing the negative ones.

[18] This is let's say a 'ways of expression' in the context of this paragraph. The author is not affirming that we are entering a new paradigm in terms of Governance or that society will become fully organized in models of cooperation. Well at least not yet. Further research will be need. But the signs are there and it is becoming a trend.

[19] See for instance Michael Porter, one of the main authors on this field and his book: "Competitive Strategy. Techniques for Analysing Industries and Competitors". The Free Press, New York. 1980

That 'place' is Vision. Vision is a critical tool, a component at the forefront of the Strategy plane[20]. "To choose a direction, a leader must first have developed a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This image (…) we call a vision …" (Campbell & Young quoting Bennis and Nanus, 1985). In the case of self-governance 'the leader' is each and every one of the subjects that are part of the self-governance reality.

So in this case we think that is more appropriate to recall and adopt the widely known concept of Shared Vision by Peter Senge (1990: 9) "a shared vision is the shared picture of the future we want to create".

This is not about an artificial statement to make any organization or community move ahead. In this definition 'we' and 'shared' are key words and they are not opposite to the 'I' that manifests in each individual. What Peter Senge declares is that shared vision is a "deep conversation among people" about what they want to accomplish. "When we are really ourselves, when we are really connected with who we really and what we care about, we discover the innate deep commonalities in our aspirations"[21]. And that is the ground where shared vision emerges.

On the other hand, we have Strategic Intelligence (SI). Simply put SI is the process of systematically collect and analyse information about the external environment to help any organizations, region or community [22] identify the challenges and the opportunities inherently existent in that context as a result of the Complex and mutable atmosphere that societies experience in the present times (Santos, op: cit). The result of that process is 'intelligence', basically insights, new information or knowledge that allows to see trends or identify solutions for the challenges or opportunities that are waiting to be developed or implemented. So, simply put, SI equals an instrument to find solutions and foster Innovation.

Vision and SI, play their role in the context of self-government and cooperation, in the sense that they provide practical and effective help to fulfil the potential of any cooperation or self-government reality/process: they provide innovative solutions and, as far as they can, guidance as well, to help the organic evolution of the projects, organizations, localities, communities that live ruled by the paradigms of self-governance.

If we think of Vision as a more natural emergent element in the origin, establishment and development of any self-governance (or cooperation) reality (and in this case the work to be done almost can be summarized as letting the subjects and beneficiaries of self-governance express what they 'dream' about, and what they want to accomplish in the present moment and a bit ahead on the future) in the case of SI, we need to take more proactive approach. SI actually has to manifests itself through a small set of critical resources that perform the activity we have described as the "process of systematically collect and analyse information about the external environment to help any organization, region or community [23] identify the

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[20] Along with others components of Strategy that we are not mentioning since they are more related with approaches of Competition and in that case do not apply here.

[21] Peter Senge on Shared Vision. Excerpt of a video available on Youtube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaw_xAaxZPo

[22] Or even a person, an individual.

[23] Or even a person, an individual.

challenges and the opportunities inherently existent in that context". The critical resources are: People and Technology.

The people are the ones able to know and execute the procedures of collecting and analysing the information about the context; the technology is the element that collect the information and bring it to the 'table' so it can be analysed.

In the context of a self-governance reality with a vision shared among the subjects guiding them and inspiring them towards the desire future, we see a team of SI working in cooperation with the self-government entity as an operational unity that works to find brand new opportunities and innovative solutions to manifests the goals and aspirations of the self-government community. We see it discovering innovative solutions for social issues across education, housing, health care; identifying new markets or new customer niches for local business; providing context and deep understanding of complex issues to make more informed decisions; and it so many other contexts providing tailored answers and approaches to local specific needs.

Concluding Remarks.

The limit (an exploratory) approach of the present article does not allow the author to further expand its reflexions on many of the ideas, concepts, and real cases manifesting on the ground exemplifying the approach of an evolving reality adopting in many sectors of society as an approach based on 'self-governance'.

In this article we presented a rudimentary operational definition of self-governance described as: a community connected by any type of tie (cultural, nationality, sense of belonging with potential shared interests and vision) connected to a place or reality (be a territory or an organization or other dimension) that take on themselves the full responsibility and accountability for the management of its wellbeing as individuals and as well a collective, managing for that purpose, all the tangible and intangible resources that are intrinsic to that collective bound

Self –governance could only work with one condition: if the basic element of the system of self-governance is well taken care of. The 'basic' element is each individual, the fundamental unity of any evolving community or society.

If the governance models in place have not being able so fare to take fully care of the most basic needs of the individual, perhaps is time to expand our reflection to new approaches.

We should be compelled to ask again and again: What are Governance institutions made for? Why do we have elected officials? What is the role of an elected government? What are the answers that came across with these questions? Are they palpable or rhetorical ones? Are the most common, most basic and most vital needs of common people represented in those answers? What those answers tell us?

Because of these questions and so many others have not been fully answer, a new way to rule the common good is needed. Perhaps that new way is Self-governance.

Self-governance may restore the people to the centre place in the management of Public Affairs and Policy.

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