

Commons-Based Peer Production and the Neo-Weberian State: Synergies and Interdependencies

Vasilis Kostakis
The P2P Foundation, Greece

ABSTRACT

After the demise of the New Public Management (NPM) and the rise of the concept of the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) as one possibility for the post-NPM Public Administration (PA) paradigm in Europe and beyond, one of the problems the NWS may face is that, while it takes into consideration the genuine lessons learned from the NPM experience, it may have a tendency to go back to a dirigistic, top-down, rigid form of governance in which citizens and government are each other's "Other". This could possibly be ameliorated if one could combine the NWS with one of the recently emerging and most intriguing modes of political economy, namely Commons-based peer production. This alternative mode of production and governance can arguably offer interesting chances for successful PA reform, stressing the essence and the importance of abundance, distribution and intrinsic positive motivation for and within a responsive state.

Keywords: New Public Management; Neo-Weberian State; peer production; peer governance; commons

1. The demise of the New Public Management and the emergence of the Neo-Weberian State

The concept of the New Public Management (NPM) originates from the early 1980s, when neo-liberal governments dominated the scene while the Welfare State model was allegedly in crisis. (Drechsler 2005a) Founded "on themes of disaggregation, competition, and incentivization" (Dunleavy et al. 2006, 467), it has often been described as "a useful model for developing countries to follow". (Manning 2001, 297) It has been widely claimed (e.g. Greer 1994; Zifcak 1994; Mascarenhas 1993; Walsh 1995; Larbi 1999) that a common feature of the states which took the NPM route has been the economic crises that triggered the quest for efficiency and for lowering the costs of public services. NPM techniques are drawn from the private sector with an increasing use of market principles and business practices and an

emphasis on efficiency and performance. (Drechsler 2005a) They may come from Anglo-America, as Drechsler (2005a) mentions, but, according to Barzelay (2001, 160-161) “the equation of NPM with an Anglo-American approach to public management policy is hardly a recipe for policy analysis and learning on an international scale.” Larbi (1999) claims that in the 1990s, variants of NPM techniques and practices were applied in several transitional economies as well – many of them, though, have chosen only some items from the NPM menu. (Turner 2002)

Manning (2001, 297), a senior public-sector-management specialist with the World Bank, argues that the “victory of NPM was very partial” as it changed the debate over the models of Public Administration (PA), but “did not silence other public management voices and certainly did not take us to the end of managerial history.” Drechsler (2005a) sees NPM as “part of the neo-classical economic imperialism within the social sciences” that is based on the idea that all human behaviour is always motivated by self-interest and, more concretely, profit maximisation. One of the main arguments of Drechsler’s (2005a) critique is that NPM considers public and private interests as identical. “The use of business techniques within the public sphere”, he writes, “confuses the most basic requirements of any state, particularly of a Democracy, with a liability: regularity, transparency, and due process are simply much more important than low costs and speed.” Lynn (2008, 24) argues that “the managerialism promoted by global capitalism is highly vulnerable to the forces of democracy in significant part because it has lacked democratic legitimacy.” In a similar vein, Greve and Jespersen (1999, 147) articulate that “the concepts of citizen, citizens rights and citizen participation are almost non-existent in NPM debates.” Moreover, there is no empirical evidence that NPM reforms have increased either productivity or welfare; but on the contrary, already van Mierlo (1998, 401) outlines that “several years of attempts and experiences of public management reforms in western Europe and other OECD countries give evidence of relative failure rather than success.” However, Larbi (1999) does not see the problem in the concept of NPM itself, but claims that the main reason for the unsatisfactory results of NPM is the institutional environment that persists and constrains the implementation capacity.

On the other hand, Drechsler (2005a) makes another point attacking the very essence of NPM economics where quasi-markets are created within administrative organisations in order to create market behaviour. He argues that:

Such a behavior can only develop in genuine and not in quasi- (i.e. pseudo-) markets. For example, if there are product monopolies and no free consumer choice – if one administrative institution is supposed to have a contract with a predetermined other, regarding a product or service that cannot be delivered by anyone else, for instance –, then there cannot be a free market either, nor its beneficial consequences.

Batley (1996, 748) maintains that “the presumption that involving the private sector makes for higher levels of performance is given only partial support” by the evidence. In addition, Clarke and Newman (1997, ix) notice that “NPM is often portrayed as a global phenomenon – a core element in the process of convergence between states, overriding distinct political and cultural characteristics.” Bouckaert

and Mikeladze (2008, 7) also stress this point stating that “we are providing the right answer to the wrong question”, as “culture and context do matter”.

Drechsler and Kattel (2008, 98) conclude that the demise of NPM is, nowadays, a fact: “NPM is certainly dead – not as dead as a doornail, perhaps, but among scholars not a viable option anymore.” Despite the fact that the NPM reform message has become sympathetic to states that had been rather resistant previously, such as India (Chakraverti 2004; Shah and Bakore 2006) or Japan (Yamamoto 2003), nowadays it seems that this wave has largely stalled or been reversed: The “NPM is arguably as much a casualty of the global economic crisis as are the markets and market mechanisms which underpin it”. (Levy 2010, 234) Dunleavy et al. (2006) argue that the cognitive and reform scheme of NPM may still be afloat with few of its elements in an active development; however, NPM policies are intellectually dead-ends being gradually replaced by a variety of information-technology-centred approaches:

The overall movement ... is toward ‘digital-era governance’ (DEG), which involves reintegrating functions into the governmental sphere, adopting holistic and needs-oriented structures, and progressing digitalization of administrative processes. DEG offers a perhaps unique opportunity to create self-sustaining change, in a broad range of closely connected technological, organizational, cultural, and social effects. (Dunleavy et al. 2006, 467)

Dunleavy et al.’s articulation is taken up later again, when dealing with the political economy of Commons-based peer production.

A viable alternative to NPM, which has entered the field of debate concerning the future of PA, is the concept of the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) that was first introduced by Pollitt and Bouckaert in their book *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis* (2004) and later advanced by Drechsler (2005a and 2005b), Drechsler and Kattel (2008), Pollitt (2008), Potucek (2008), Randma-Liiv (2008) and others. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004), the NWS can be considered a model of public-management reform or even, if we follow Drechsler and Kattel (2008), a political orientation. This encompasses the ideas of political power and modernisation:

First, the state remains a strong steering and regulating presence within society. Thus the objective is not the minimal state ... The state is ... the guarantor and partner of both a strong economy and a civilized, socially cohesive society. It is the initiator or facilitator of a whole range of additional democratic mechanisms, central and local, both representative and direct ... Second, the state is steadily modernizing, professionalizing and seeking improved efficiency. But there is no assumption that aping the private sector ... is the *only way* [author’s italicization] to achieve efficiency and professionalism. Private sector methods *may* [author’s italicization] be chosen on some occasions and for some policies, but they have no automatic priority or superiority. (Pollitt 2008, 14)

This makes the NWS a genuine post-post-NPM, Weberian-based system, as emphasised by Drechsler (2005a), with lessons learned from the NPM experience. As Pol-

litt (2008, 14) underlines, the NWS is not just a mix of traditional Weberian bureaucracy with some NPM efficiency tools; rather, it seeks to modernise the state and includes, as will be discussed in more detail later, both “Weberian” and “Neo” elements. The latter “preserve the main part of the traditional Weberian model and modernize it (which ... can take various context- and country-specific forms)”. (Drechsler and Kattel 2008, 96) This comes in accordance with Larbi’s (1999) claim that a careful and selective adaptation of some NPM elements to certain sectors may be beneficial for societies.

However, although the NWS takes into consideration the genuine lessons learned from the NPM experience, it may tend to go back to top-down forms of governance, which are too rigid and inflexible to meet citizens’ increased demands as generally postulated. (Dunn and Miller 2007) One could also claim that the NWS is, after all and in spite of any updates, a historical concept, and as societies and individuals substantially change over time and have indeed experienced great changes under the influence of technology, most recently and still currently Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (see only Castells 2000, 2003, 2009; Bauwens 2005; Benkler 2006), new claims and expectations should be counted in the formulation of PA reforms, because they do address human living-together today and thus must adapt to it. (Drechsler 2011) These new claims and expectations can be found in a particularly strong and pronounced way in one of the recently emerging and most intriguing modes of political economy, namely Commons-based peer production. Building on Drechsler (2005a and 2005b) and putting the “human person into the center of administrative decision-making” (Drechsler 2005a), this essay argues that the optimal solution for “a responsive and responsible state” (Drechsler 2005a) should contain elements not only from NPM but also from the alternative modes of production and governance as exemplified by Commons-based projects, such as the Free/Open-Source Software¹ and Wikipedia². As the next sections will try to demonstrate, the latter does not conflict with the NWS, but actually can help, synergise and enrich it in spheres where it proves to be more productive and effective than the classical, hierarchical state.

2. The emergence of Commons-based peer production

Within information production (“information” stands for culture, knowledge and data), one of the most important movements over the last two decades has been the emergence of the Commons-based Peer Production (CBPP), a term coined by Yochai Benkler (2006). During that period of time, two parallel shifts could be observed: Not only did the most advanced states move towards an information-based economy, but the declining costs of ICT made them also available to a much wider fraction of the population. (Benkler 2006; Castells 2000, 2003, 2009; Bell 1976) According to Benkler (2006), this has led to the creation of a new communi-

¹ There are a myriad of FOSS projects. Some prominent ones can be found at <http://www.linux.org/>, <http://www.gnu.org/>, <http://www.ubuntu.com/>, <http://www.mozilla.org/>. All the URLs in the footnotes were retrieved on 25 December 2010.

² <http://www.wikipedia.org/>.

cational, interconnected, virtual environment that has given birth to a new social productive and exchange model radically different from the industrial one. CBPP, exemplified by projects such as Free/Open-Source Software, the free encyclopaedia Wikipedia or LibriVox, the digital repository of books narrated by volunteers³, reduces the value of proprietary strategies, making public, shared information more important, and allows for large-scale, co-operative information production efforts. (Benkler 2006) Bruns (see Bruns 2008; Kostakis 2010, 2011) calls this “produsage”, where produsers (producers + users) simultaneously innovate, produce, distribute and consume, impregnated with an ethos of participation, sharing, communication and collaboration. Thus, CBPP, in this context, is a third mode of production that has been enabled through Internet-based co-ordination, where decisions arise from the free engagement and co-operation of the people who coalesce to create common value. (Kostakis 2010, 2011) It is a mode arguably more productive concerning the creation, production, and distribution of information value, in which the creative energy of multitudes is co-ordinated into meaningful projects without the traditional hierarchical or market-based organisation. (Bauwens 2005; Benkler 2006)

Benkler, in the book *Wealth of Networks* (2006), makes, amongst others, two intriguing economic observations which challenge the mainstream understanding of Standard Textbooks Economics (STE). CBPP projects serve as examples where STE’s assumption that in the economic production, the human being solely seeks profit maximisation, is turned almost upside-down. In CBPP, multitudes of volunteers contribute to information-production projects, gaining knowledge, experience, reputation and communicating with each other, i.e. they are motivated by intrinsic positive incentives. This does not mean that the monetary motive is totally absent; however, it is relegated to being a peripheral concept only. (Kostakis 2009) Many aspects of human expression, according to Benkler (2006, 461), “are replete with voluntarism and actions oriented primarily toward social-psychological motivations rather than market appropriation.” The second challenge comes against the conventional wisdom that, to put it in Benkler’s words (2006, 463), “we have only two basic free transactional forms – property-based markets and hierarchically organized firms.” CBPP can be considered the third one, and it should not be treated as an exception but rather as a widespread phenomenon, which, however, for the moment, is not counted in the economic census: “Worse”, as Benkler highlights (2006, 463), “we do not count them [CBPP processes] in our institutional design”. In STE terms, CBPP can be considered, as Bauwens (2005) maintains, “only in the sense that individuals are free to contribute, or take what they need, following their individual inclinations, with an invisible hand bringing it all together, but without any monetary mechanism.” Hence, in contrast to markets, i.e. the holy grail of STE, in CBPP, the allocation of resources is not done through a market-pricing mechanism, but hybrid modes of governance are exercised, and what is generated is not profit, but use value, i.e. an Information Commons. (Bauwens 2005)

It can be argued that CBPP projects flourish in states of information abundance, giving rise to new modes of governance as a result of the new productive forces of

³ <http://librivox.org/>.

production, i.e. the combination of means of labour (ICT and abundant information) and human labour power (person's ability to work; in the case of CBPP mostly brain-power), while new relations of productions are developed. The near-zero marginal cost for reproducing information goods, which are non-rival (the use of one unit does not diminish the use value of the next one; on the contrary, it may increase its value), leads to states of abundance for resources, tools and goods. If CBPP "describes the processes of information production within on-line, collaborative, voluntary communities which produce common value using mechanisms of self-governance, then peer governance [Commons-based peer governance, CBPG] is the way that peer production is organised." (Kostakis 2010) It is a bottom-up mode of participative decision-making where decisions are taken through the unconstrained engagement and free co-operation of producers. (Bauwens 2005; Kostakis 2010) Kostakis' study (2010) on the characteristics of CBPG, using Wikipedia and the internal battle between inclusionists and deletionists as a case study, supports that CBPG is actually an unfinished artefact that follows the constant reform and refinement of social forms within the online communities. It is a suitable mode to govern large sources, working more effectively in abundance (Kostakis 2010); whereas in the scarcity realm, democratic – in the form of representation – or market-based modes tend to prevail.

Especially when abundance is replaced with scarcity (as happened in Wikipedia when deletionists demanded a strict content control), power structures emerge as CBPG mechanisms cannot function well. (Kostakis 2010) In order to have a better understanding of abundance, it is important to realise how scarcity, i.e. "the condition when available goods do not meet demands" (Hoeschele 2010, 19), is created. Hoeschele (2010, 19-20) suggests that there are three ways that scarcity can be generated:

First, the total amount of a good or service can be reduced. For example, the expansion of market activities may reduce the amount of goods provided by nature (such as clean air) ... Second, barriers can be placed between people and a good. Of potentially many ways to obtain that good, only one or a few may be left available, leading to the creation of a bottleneck ... Third, new wants or needs can be created, or existing ones modified, so that demand for a commodity exceeds supply ... All three basic mechanisms not only increase scarcity, but also curtail freedom by forcing increased expenditures on people and reducing available options of how to satisfy their needs.

"Throughout history", Hoeschele maintains, "we can conceive of social power as having been based in part on the construction of scarcity." That is why abundance is a key to CBPP projects' sustainability.

The reintroduction of certain elements of traditional organisation (hierarchy or market) contributes to their sustainability as well (Loubser and den Basten 2008; Benkler 2006), whenever there is a need to manage scarcity. A benevolent dictatorship can be the result of spontaneous hierarchy, in which the leader of the project – for instance, in the Linux project, Linus Torvalds is the benevolent dictator (Malcolm 2008) or in Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales holds that role (Kostakis 2010) –, whose sole

role is to serve the community, has authority which comes from responsibility and not from the power to coerce. (Weber 2004) These elements are, after all, part of what it is understood as CBPG – an heterarchical (heterarchies, following Stephenson (2009), bring together elements of networks and hierarchies and are the most relevant organisational structure, as they provide horizontal links, which allow for various elements of an organisation to collaborate, while optimising individually several success criteria), hybrid mode of organisation which combines traditional modes of organisation with network-based ones; or, to quote Weber, “an imperfect mix leadership, informal coordination mechanisms, implicit and explicit norms, along with some formal governance structures that are evolving and doing so at a rate that has been sufficient to hold surprisingly complex systems together.” (2004, 189)

Before discussing CBPP and CBPG in relation to the NWS, it would be important to show how the former differ from or complement the seemingly relevant concept of the Digital-Era Governance (DEG). Dunleavy et al. (2006, 468) stress the central significance of ICT-based changes “in management systems and in methods of interacting with citizens and other service-users in civil society in the underpinning and integrating of current bureaucratic adaptations.” They (2006, 468) view this influence “as having effects not in any direct technologically determined way but via a wide range of cognitive, behavioral, organizational, political and cultural changes that are linked to information systems broadly construed”. As mentioned above, DEG summarises this constellation of ideas and reform changes. In a nutshell, it has three key elements: Reintegration (e.g. reversing fragmentation, network simplification, re-governmentalisation, procurement concentration and specialisation); needs-based holism (e.g. client-focused structures, agile government processes, one-stop provision); and digitalisation (e.g. automation, Web 2.0 governance, electronic service delivery, moving toward open-book government). (Dunleavy et al. 2006)

CBPP has been emerging in the so-called digital era, and it represents some of those cognitive, behavioural, organisational, political and cultural changes linked to ICT. However, in the context in which Dunleavy et al. (2006) describe DEG, it seems that they draw ideas from transactional services and from the business sector – one can argue that DEG is still prone to frame citizens as consumers bringing in mind the general vein of NPM – but not from CBPP initiatives: In their analysis, CBPP is not explicitly touched at all. In addition, it has been contended (Bauwens 2005; Benkler 2006) that CBPP reflects a change of consciousness towards participation, creating a new public domain, an Information Commons, as exemplified by certain initiatives which inaugurate a more co-operative social order. The political economy of CBPP, according to Bauwens (2005), incarnates the egalitarian side of this new digital culture, connected to the older traditions of co-operation of the workers and peasants – to the search for a meaningful life which becomes an expression of individual and collective creativity. Hence, it becomes obvious that the CBPP is a *mode* of production, complemented by certain processes of property and governance, that all together create and manage a Commons.

It is also important that CBPP is not confused with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) – although Commons-based projects may be run and/or supported by NGO – because the former, as was just emphasised, is a mode of social production, whereas the latter is a model of a legally constituted organisation. CBPP

may work independently from government for the moment, transcending fixed organisational formats which allow power to consolidate, but this does not mean that governments and states cannot benefit from taking certain lessons from the phenomena of CBPP and CBPG, as will be explained next.

3. CBPP and the NWS

It is now argued here – as a suggestion more along the lines of a research programme, rather than as a fully-developed claim – that CBPP and CBPG can be of particular interest within the discipline of PA as well, because they largely rest on a new ideology and epistemology substantially different from those of the STE that gave rise to NPM. (Drechsler 2005a) In a nutshell, following Drechsler (2005a), from an ideological perspective, STE and NPM interpret all human behaviour under a self-interest, profit-maximisation spectrum, while from an epistemological one, they share the quantification myth, i.e. qualitative judgements are of no value as “everything relevant can be quantified”.

It is especially interesting to look at synergies with the Neo-Weberian concept of state that can learn certain lessons from CBPP and CBPG, especially with the final goal, to put it in Aristotle’s terms (see Drechsler 2003), of the Good Life in the Good State. The “Weberian Elements” of the NWS model describe the strong Weberian basis on which reforms should take place in order to ensure that they will work well. (Drechsler and Kattel 2008) But precisely this means that in the debates about the Neo-Weberian possibility, the danger is that one might go back to dirigistic modes of governance in which citizens and government are each other’s “Other”.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004, 99-100) summarise their description of the Weberian basis of the model in the following four points:

- Reaffirmation of the role of the state as the main facilitator of solutions to the new problems of globalization, technological change, shifting demographics and environmental threat;
- Reaffirmation of the role of representative democracy (central, regional and local) as the legitimating element within the state apparatus;
- Reaffirmation of the role of administrative law – suitably modernized – in preserving the basic principles pertaining to the citizen-state relationship, including equality before the law, legal security and the availability of specialized legal scrutiny of state actions;
- Preservation of the idea of a public service with a distinctive status, culture and terms and conditions.

Drechsler and Kattel (2008) stress the necessity of a solid, stable, neutral bureaucracy and suggest that states should avoid change for the sake of change: “The idea of modernization itself should be clarified, what does ‘modern’ really mean?”, they wonder. (2008, 97) The current essay thus tries to contribute to the political orientation for the NWS understanding ‘modern’ not in the sense of ‘new’ or ‘fashionable’, but using it to add elements in line with times and situation.

Apart from the ‘Weberian Elements’, the NWS includes also some ‘Neo Elements’ that are summarised in the following four points:

- Shift from an internal orientation towards bureaucratic rules towards an external orientation towards meeting citizens’ needs and wishes. The primary route to achieving this is not the employment of market mechanisms (although they may occasionally come in handy) but the creation of a professional culture of quality and service.
- Supplementation (not replacement) of the role of representative democracy by a range of devices for consultation with and the direct representation of citizens’ views (this aspect being more visible in the northern European states and Germany at the local level than in Belgium, France or Italy).
- In the management of resources within government, a modernization of the relevant laws to encourage a greater orientation on the achievement of results rather than merely the correct following of procedure. This is expressed partly in a shift in the balance from ex-ante to ex-post controls, but not a complete abandonment of the former.
- A professionalization of the public service, so that the ‘bureaucrat’ becomes not simply an expert in the law relevant to his or her sphere of activity, but also a professional manager, oriented to meeting the needs of his/her citizen/users. (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004, 99-100)

The narrative of CBPP and CBPG, especially concerning the first two points, could offer interesting insights and introduce novel venues for the set goals. To begin with, it would be interesting to address the possibilities of open-source democracy and wikipolitics, as explained in Kostakis (2011), for experimenting in small-scale projects with participatory platforms where citizens can articulate, evaluate or even suggest solutions to their problems and needs. Of course, there is no leap-frog path that can instantly transform democracy (Kostakis 2011): Online communities face many organisational problems – such as minority prevalence, protection of privacy, information overload, platform manipulation, group polarisation, etc. (Kostakis 2010, 2011) – and participatory platforms lack a user-friendly architecture with natural narrative conversational modes of human interaction. (Kostakis 2011) However, the investigation of projects like Future Melbourne, which tried to transform the traditional, hierarchical city-planning exercise run by a few, to a global, wiki-based collaboration concerning the future of Melbourne, shows that their empirical results so far are positive and capable of amending the traditional, hierarchical paradigm. (Kostakis 2011)

Furthermore, CBPP reintroduces the importance of abundance. Opening (non-confidential) public information and freely offering, thus, a significant means of production can have positive externalities and induce the creation of novel projects. For instance, the digital archive of a public television broadcaster can serve as a great repository for further cultural creation. Or the free distribution of public raw data, say, concerning burnt forests can lead to the creation of a digital record with

reforestation regions, as the Tilaphos⁴ project has done in Greece; which, however, was not supported by the state, but citizens, using their GPS machines, recorded the burnt forests near them, and this created a large database of the burnt areas categorised per regional department. CBPP makes evident that social imagination and creativity become unpredictable since an abundant intellect (i.e. the surplus creativity of people) can have access to resources (information), tools (ICT) and goods (information as final product). Thus, in the management of resources, concerning at least information, it would be important to take into consideration the way that resources are organised within CBPP, which produces more immaterial value than the industrial sector. (Benkler 2006; Bauwens 2005) Moreover, legal regimes, such as the Creative Commons⁵ or the General Public Licenses⁶ that define the distribution of resources and tools within CBPP, can offer interesting insights while modernising laws, especially, regarding immaterial goods.

In fact, the NWS should – in a normative sense – realise the potential of CBPP, and if Benkler (2006) and Bauwens (2005) are correct in their observations (for instance that CBPP is based on the highest intrinsic motivation; it is more productive in the immaterial field of production; and it creates collaborative relations of production based on synergies), a fundamental mission of a responsive NWS should be the empowerment of direct social-value creation by user communities, because that is the task of the time in which we live, the task of the era of the Social Web (Benkler 2006; Bauwens 2005; Bruns 2008) and of the time in which the second phase of the ICT TEP has to create, hopefully, a Golden Age. In that way, the NWS becomes an arbiter, retreating from the binary state/privatisation dilemma to the triarchical choice of an optimal mix amongst government regulation, private-market freedom and autonomous civil-society projects. (Bauwens 2010)

In addition, as mentioned above and as supported by Bauwens (2005) and Kostakis (2010 with further discussion and references), in states of abundance, at least in the information production of the Internet, CBPG allocates resources and results more effectively than representative democracy or markets. If this claim is correct, then what could that mean for the NWS and PA? CBPG offers people autonomy and the possibility to pursue their interests and passions through their engagement in the social process of co-operation. CBPG processes can arguably be implemented in other aspects of human expression where resources and tools are abundant and are freely distributed, creating fields of unconstrained co-operation, which can produce certain results and goods. In that way, people satisfy some of their higher needs while simultaneously contributing to creative projects whose result may have several positive effects for societies. It becomes obvious that CBPG and CBPP, which represent civil society's efforts to directly produce use value, share a common feature here with the NWS: Context does matter, and higher human needs and incentives are not neglected, as happens in the worldview of STE and NPM. This change in the context, complementarily proposed by the rhetoric of the NWS and the empirical examination of CBPP, should not be neglected even in the current wave of

⁴ <http://tilaphos-reforest.blogspot.com/>.

⁵ <http://creativecommons.org/>.

⁶ <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>.

austerity (after the financial meltdown beginning to unfold in 2008) which, if following Dunleavy and Margetts' (2010) warning – although they (2010) notice that for the moment “NPM ... has not revived despite the pressure on public spending” –, could bring about a return to privatisation, contracting and outsourcing as a way to cut down public-sector budgets. Pollitt reported in May 2011 that “the widespread misery of deteriorating services, mass redundancies and a disgruntled citizenry” is imminent, concluding that “the pain of the cuts must not tempt us to turn inwards. One lesson from the innovation literature is that new ideas and synergies can come from anywhere.”

It would be interesting to deal with Carlota Perez' great-surges theory and her model of Techno-Economic Paradigm Shifts, both developed in her 2002 book *Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital: The Dynamics of Bubbles and Golden Ages*, which can provide thought-provoking insights into the institutional shifts, in which the NWS, along with the concepts of CBPP and CBPG, could arguably play key roles. The Perezian model (2002), which at first looks at long-term development like the relentless advance of technology, has a techno-economic focus, and thus its introduction into the discussion can offer an “over the horizon” projection. According to it, progress takes place by overlapping surges, with each surge lasting approximately 40-60 years:

A great surge of development is ... the process by which a technological revolution and its paradigm propagate across the economy, leading to structural changes in production, distribution, communication and consumption as well as to profound and qualitative changes in society. (Perez 2002, 15)

Following her analysis, during the last two centuries, societies have experienced five technological revolutions with each evolving “from small beginnings in restricted sectors and geographic regions”, ending up “encompassing the bulk of activities in the core country or countries and diffusing out towards further and further peripheries, depending on the capacity of the transport and communications infrastructures.” (Perez 2002, 15) A great surge of development consists of five phases, which, although not strictly separated, can be identified as sharing common characteristics throughout history. To be more concrete, firstly we have “irruption” (technological explosion) that is the initial development of the new technologies in a world where the bulk of the economy is made of old, maturing and declining industries; then “frenzy” follows, which is a very fast development of technology that needs a lot of finance (this is when the financial bubbles are created). These two first phases constitute the installation period, when finance and greed prevail in a free market atmosphere. Next, turbulent times come (i.e. collapse, recession and instability) in what she calls “the turning point”, when the institutional changes are made for the deployment period to begin. A lot of institutional innovation (hopefully) takes place, and economies are enabled to take full advantage of the new technology in all sectors of the economy and to spread the benefits of the new wealth-creating potential more widely across society. These synergies occur in the early stage of “deployment” (synergy phase) until they approach a ceiling (maturity phase) in productivity, new products and markets.

When that ceiling is hit, there is social unrest and confrontations while the conditions are being set for the installation of the next revolution.

It could be argued that the current crisis is in fact “what Perez calls a turning point in the middle of the diffusion of a techno-economic paradigm.” (Kattel, Drechsler and Reinert 2009, 1) And although post-collapse/recession is the current situation, what lies ahead may be a “Golden Age”. If the NWS model incarnates what Perez considers institutional changes, which create the necessary infrastructure to overcome the crisis and span the benefits of the new wealth on society, (Drechsler and Kattel, 2008) then the timely concepts and time orientation of CBPP and CBPG can serve precisely as the inroads of those organisational, precisely paradigm- and phase-oriented changes for the formulation of models for public-administration reform. Of course, it is important to emphasise that like any other “over the horizon” projection and speculation, these predictions may partly or totally misfire. As CBPP is a timely and quite recent concept, which is rapidly evolving, it may change its character in ways that are not anticipated here.

4. Conclusion

The aim of this essay was to shed light on the dynamics of the relatively recent concepts of CBPP and CBPG in relation to the NWS. “With attention to the specific local reality”, (Drechsler 2005a) CBPP and CBPG can offer interesting chances for successful PA reform stressing the essence and the importance of abundance, distribution and intrinsic positive motivation for the Aristotelian concept of the Good Life and in the Good State. (see Drechsler 2003) These observations are not only of technological nature, but more of a political one contributing to the political orientation of the NWS. Moreover, CBPP projects can redefine the ways that citizen involvement in the democratic mechanisms can be exercised; however, we should keep in mind that the democratic deficits are not merely a technical problem in search of technological solution. (Varoufakis 2007)

Therefore, the main goal of this essay was to tentatively argue that a Neo-Weberian system with both Weberian and Neo- elements could very well, and probably should, adopt and adapt elements, ideas and processes (re)introduced by the timely concepts of CBPP and CBPG. The arguments developed here do not call for a modernisation of traditional Weberianism for the sake of modernisation, but they try to contribute to the political orientation for the NWS, understanding “modern” not in the sense of “new” or “fashionable”, but using it to add elements in line with times and situation.

It is important to take into consideration, though, that, echoing Drechsler and Kattel’s (2008) articulation regarding NPM reforms, if the Commons-oriented reforms are to work well at all, they will only do so on a strong Weberian basis. And of course, in order to prevent dysfunctional imitation, we have to remember Bouckaert and Mikeladze’s (2008, 7) advice that “a more sophisticated diagnosis, as a function of culture, context, and systems features” allows for “selective transfers, for inspiration by other good practices, for adjustments of solutions, for facilitated learning by doing, for trajectories which are fit for purpose”.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research for this paper was supported by ETF grant no 8571. The author would like to thank the two reviewers of this paper for their helpful and constructive comments.

REFERENCES

- Barzelay, Michael. 2001. *The New Public Management: Improving Research and Policy Dialogue*. Berkeley, CA: University of California.
- Batley, Richard. 1996. "Public and Private Relationships and Performance in Service Provision." *Urban Studies* 33(4-5), 723-751.
- Bauwens, Michel. 2010. "Summary Theses on the Emergence of the Peer to Peer Civilization and a New Political Economy." *P2P Foundation blog*. Available at <http://blog.p2pfoundation.net/summary-theses-on-the-emergence-of-the-peer-to-peer-civilization-and-a-new-politicaconomy/2010/02/28> (last accessed 25 December 2010).
- Bauwens, Michel. 2005. "The Political Economy of Peer Production." *Ctheory Journal*. Available at <http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=499> (last accessed 25 December 2010).
- Bell, Daniel. 1976. *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. New York: Basic Books.
- Benkler, Yochai. 2006. *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Bouckaert, Geert and Mzia Mikeladze. 2008. "Introduction." *NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 1 (2), 7-8.
- Bruns, Axel. 2008. *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Prodsusage*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Castells, Manuel. 2009. *Communication Power*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Castells, Manuel. 2003. *The Power of Identity*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Castells, Manuel. 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Chakraverti, Sauvik. 2004. "Management Mantras: Make Way for New Public Administration." *Times of India*. Available at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2004-07-14/edit-page/27161580_1_bureaucracy-npm-budget-deficit (last accessed 30 April 2011).
- Clarke, John and Janet Newman. 1997. *The Managerial State: Power, Politics and Ideology in the Remaking of Social Welfare*. London: Sage.
- Drechsler, Wolfgang. 2011. "Public Administration in Times of Crisis." In B. Guy Peters and Rainer Kattel (eds). *Public Administration in Times of Crisis, Selected Papers from the 18th NISPAcee Annual Conference, Warsaw, Poland, 2010*. Bratislava: NISPAcee Press, in press.
- Drechsler, Wolfgang. 2005a. "The Rise and Demise of the New Public Management."

- Post-autistic Economic Review* 33: 17-28. Available at <http://www.paecon.net/PAEReview/issue33/Drechsler33.htm> (last accessed 25 December 2010).
- Drechsler, Wolfgang. 2005b. "The Re-Emergence of 'Weberian' Public Administration after the Fall of New Public Management: The Central and Eastern European Perspective" *Halduskultuur* 6, 94-108.
- Drechsler, Wolfgang. 2003. Lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean in Managing Public Sector Restructuring: Public Sector Downsizing and Redeployment Programs in Central and Eastern Europe. Washington, DC: International Development Bank, Regional Policy Dialogue, Public Management and Transparency Network.
- Drechsler, Wolfgang and Rainer Kattel. 2008. "Towards the Neo-Weberian State? Perhaps, but Certainly Adieu, NPM!" *NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 1 (2), 95-99.
- Dunleavy, Patrick and Helen Margetts. 2010. "The Second Wave of Digital Era Governance." *APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper*. Available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1643850> (last accessed 30 April 2011).
- Dunleavy, Patrick, Helen Margetts, Simon Bastow and Jane Tinkler. 2006. "New Public Management is Dead – Long Live Digital-Era Governance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16 (3), 467-494.
- Dunn, William and David Miller. 2007. "A Critique of the New Public Management and the Neo-Weberian State: Advancing a Critical Theory of Administrative Reform." *Public Organization Review* 7, 345-358.
- Greer, Patricia. 1994. *Transforming Central Government: The Next Steps Initiative*. Philadelphia: Buckingham and Open University Press.
- Greve, Carsten and Peter Kragh Jespersen. 1999. "New Public Management and its Critics: Alternative Roads to Flexible Service Delivery to Citizens?" In Luc Rouban (ed.). *Citizens and the New Governance: Beyond New Public Management*. Amsterdam: IOS Press, 143-156.
- Hoeschele, Wolfgang. 2010. *The Economics of Abundance: A Political Economy of Freedom, Equity, and Sustainability*. Surrey, UK: Gower Publishing.
- Kattel, Rainer, Wolfgang Drechsler and Erik Reinert. 2009. "Introduction: Carlota Perez and Evolutionary Economics." in Rainer Kattel, Wolfgang Drechsler and Erik Reinert (eds). *Techno-Economic Paradigms: Essays in Honour of Carlota Perez*. London: Anthem Press, 1-18.
- Kostakis, Vasilis. 2011. "The Advent of Open Source Democracy and Wikipolitics." *Human Technology: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Humans in ICT Environments* 7, in press.
- Kostakis, Vasilis. 2010. "Identifying and Understanding the problems of Wikipedia's Peer Governance." *First Monday* 15 (3). Available at <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2613/2479> (last accessed 1 May 2011).
- Kostakis, Vasilis. 2009. "The Amateur Class, or, The Reserve Army of the Web." *Rethinking Marxism* 21 (3), 457-461.
- Larbi, George. 1999. "The New Public Management Approach and Crisis States." Part of the project "Public Sector Reform and Crisis-Ridden States". *UNRISD Discussion Paper* 112. Switzerland: Geneva, 1-50.

- Levy, Roger. 2010. "New Public Management. End of an Era?" *Public Policy and Administration* 25 (2), 234-240.
- Loubser, Max and Matthijs den Basten. 2008. "Wikipedia Admins and Templates: The Organizational Capabilities of a Peer Production Effort." Available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1116171 (last accessed 25 December 2010).
- Lynn, Laurence. 2008. "What is a Neo-Weberian State? Reflections on a Concept and its Implications." *NISPACEE Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 1 (2), 17-30.
- Malcolm, Jeremy. 2008. *Multi-Stakeholder Governance and the Internet Governance Forum*. Perth: Terminus Press.
- Manning, Nick. 2001. "The Legacy of the New Public Management in Developing Countries." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 67, 297-312.
- Mascarenhas, Reg. 1993. "Building an Enterprise Culture in the Public Sector: Reforms in Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain." *Public Administration Review* 53 (4), 319-328.
- Perez, Carlota. 2002. *Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital: The Dynamics of Bubbles and Golden Ages*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Pub.
- Pollitt, Christopher. 2011. "Session 1: Cutbacks and Public Management Reform." *Public Management Research Sessions*. Available at <http://publicmanagement.wordpress.com/2011/05/02/session-1-cutbacks-and-public-management-reform-christopher-pollitt/> (last accessed 2 May 2011).
- Pollitt, Christopher. 2008. "An Overview of the Papers and Propositions of the First Trans-European Dialogue (TED1)." *NISPACEE Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 1 (2), 9-16.
- Pollitt, Christopher and Geert Bouckaert. 2004. *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Potucek, Martin. 2008. "The Concept of the Neo-Weberian State Confronted by the Multi-Dimensional Concept of Governance." *NISPACEE Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 1 (2), 83-94.
- Randma-Liiv, Tina. 2008. "New Public Management Versus the Neo-Weberian State in Central and Eastern Europe." *NISPACEE Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 1 (2), 69-81.
- Shah, Parth and Makarand Bakore. 2006. *Handbook on New Public Governance*. New Delhi: Center for Civil Society.
- Stephenson, Karen. 2009. "Neither Hierarchy nor Network: An Argument for Heterarchy." *People & Strategy* 32 (1), 4-13.
- Turner, Marl. 2002. "Choosing Items from the Menu: New Public Management in South East Asia." *International Journal of Public Administration* 25, 1493-1512.
- van Mierlo, Hans. 1998. "Lessons from the Experience of OECD Countries." In Tony Verheijen and David Coombes (eds). *Innovations in Public Management. Perspectives from East and West Europe*. Cheltenham/Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar: 388-403.
- Varoufakis, Yanis. 2007. "What Does it Take to Transform an E'mob into an Empowered Demos? Toward a Democratic Critique of the Politics of Wiki." *Re-public*. Available at <http://www.re-public.gr/en/?p=134> (last accessed 1 May 2011).

- Walsh, Kiernon. 1995. *Public Services and Market Mechanisms: Competition, Contracting and the New Public Management*. London: Macmillan.
- Weber, Steve. 2004. *The Success of Open Source*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yamamoto, Hiromi. 2003. *New Public Management: Japan's Practice*. Tokyo: Institute for International Policy Studies. IIPS Policy Paper 293a.
- Zifcak, Spencer. 1994. *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

VASILIS KOSTAKIS, PhD, is a collaborator of P2P Foundation, a business consultant, and has served as an external advisor to the office of the Greek Prime Minister on e-governance. Correspondence: Vasilis Kostakis, Molosson 14, 45221, Ioannina, Greece; E-mail: kostakis.b@gmail.com.