



**BLAVATNIK**  
SCHOOL *of* GOVERNMENT

*Challenges of  
Government  
Conference 2013*

# PEOPLE POWER POLITICS

*9–10 December 2013, St Catherine’s College, Oxford*

**CONFERENCE REPORT**  
**INSIGHTS FROM THE EVENT**



Conference partner

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## BACKGROUND

Worldwide, there is a new and rising phenomenon of people power, and it is calling for a radical change in the way governments respond to the needs of their citizens. That is why, on 9–10 December 2013, the Blavatnik School convened an international conference to explore the challenges and opportunities of ‘People Power Politics’.

New technologies – and the speed and scale at which they operate – have changed the landscape of power in the 21st century. National governments and international regulators face more active challenges and accountability. There is potential to make government more effective. Equally, there are risks.

The conference explored what people power politics means for citizens, communities and governments. We are living in an era in which grave and complex challenges at times seem to overwhelm the prospects for humanity’s survival. How will we ever garner the collective will to tackle climate change? Will we be able to control the risks of rapidly converging new technologies? Who can we trust to effectively steward our global natural resources so that there is something left for future generations?



## ABOUT THE EVENT

The 2013 Challenges of Government Conference brought to Oxford over 240 people from academia, business, government and civil society. The event was made possible with the help of our conference partner, McKinsey & Company, and supporters, the African Development Bank, the Ford Foundation and the Louis Dreyfus Foundation.

The conference aimed to better understand the rising phenomenon of people power and the new explosion of democratic accountability that can be seen all around the world – with popular protests seen on Wall Street and Tahrir Square, in Moscow, Rome, Tunis, Beijing, Delhi, Istanbul and elsewhere.

The conference sessions consisted of a series of plenary panel discussions to explore some big, cross-cutting issues, and parallel ‘deep-dive’ sessions that allowed participants to probe particular challenges with both practitioners and academics.

Both speakers and delegates engaged passionately in discussions that inspired a dynamic combination of debate, consensus and intellectual inquiry. What does it mean to live in an era of global interconnectivity and engaged citizenship? How do we harness opportunities around mobilizing people power for positive change? How do we avoid the pitfalls?

This report, combined with the videos and blogs that it links to, provides a summary of the conference discussions and raises important issues for further exploration.



 **Read a summary of conference insights on the BSG Blog, by Bronwyn Lo:**

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2013/12/12/reflections-on-people-power-politics/](https://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2013/12/12/reflections-on-people-power-politics/)



**MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

**PEOPLE, POWER, POLITICS**

Chair: **Ngairé Woods**, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government

**Luiz Felipe d'Avila**, President of Centro de Liderança Pública, Brazil

**Jeremy Heimans**, CEO and Co-Founder of Purpose

**Karuna Nundy**, advocate in the Supreme Court of India

**Monica Duffy Toft**, Professor of Government and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

The opening session of the conference focused on trying to discover how change happens, especially in the context of large social movements, online activism and popular protests on the streets. How is people power emerging and how can we translate 'people power' into more effective and legitimate political institutions or governance mechanisms?



While Jeremy Heimans talked about creating an infrastructure to enable the smart deployment of international pressure online, Karuna Nundy told how important it is to find a voice to articulate a set of common demands and then take that forward into more concrete law and policy. Monica Toft raised the challenges arising through the politicization of religion, which conflicts with a growing impulse towards democratization. How do you privilege faith, which acts as a group identity, while promoting and defending the rights of humans as individuals? Luiz Felipe d'Avila saw the whole issue of people power as a question about values – which values we would like to change and how transformational leadership can tap into that kind of understanding.



 **Read a summary of the session on the BSG Blog, by Louis Chambers:**

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/07/people-power-politics-how-change-happens](https://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/07/people-power-politics-how-change-happens)

**SEVEN 'TAKE-AWAYS' FROM THE SESSION, BY LOUIS CHAMBERS**

- 1** Governments remain important: Successful 'people power' movements try to mobilise popular opinion to pressure the government to change the law or policy. For example, Nundy's work on sexual violence involved creating a manifesto for political parties based upon certain principles. The goal was to give them an election mandate to implement better laws protecting women from sexual violence.
- 2** Values matter: Debates on issues are debates about values. Movements have to mediate these values within themselves – for example managing calls for the death penalty from within the Indian movement – and they have to shift the societal debate so that their values are more prominent.
- 3** Technology is changing the game: When Indian activist Anna Hazare set up a campaign to fight corruption, he invited people to leave him a 'missed call'. He received 35 million calls. This is a community of 35 million people who are now connected and available to be mobilised for future campaign efforts. Purpose's organising principles rely heavily on mass mobilisation made possible by the low cost of communication and two-way dialogue that the internet creates.
- 4** The political solutions are not clear. For d'Avila, the government paying for advertising would put media at risk of corruption. For example, when a newspaper ran a piece against Petrobras, the government cut funding for advertisements. For Heimans, the private sector is a source of corruption. The challenges may depend upon which country you are in.
- 5** Public opinion matters. A lot. D'Avila pointed out how a campaign to get guns off the street failed to win support in a referendum because people did not trust that the police could protect them and so they did not want to give up their guns. The long-term struggle is to shift public opinion, and this requires smart solutions and targeted electoral mobilisation.
- 6** There is a lack of leadership capacity in governments. Monica Toft highlighted how after World War Two lots of new states formed. Those states need the next generation of leadership to enact good responses to public opinion. It may not be enough for everyone to be on the outside looking in and demanding more change if the leadership does not exist.
- 7** Leadership means building social infrastructure. Leadership requires multiple people. The great man theory of history is not a good way to describe movements – they are often decentralised, and leadership means creating spaces for effective participation. Hence, Purpose's role is to create the infrastructure to allow people to mobilise.



MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: 'DEEP DIVE' SESSION

# CAN PEOPLE POWER DEVELOPMENT?

Chair: **Thomas Hale**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Blavatnik School of Government

**Varun Gauri**, Senior Economist with the Development Research Group of the World Bank; Co-Director of the World Development Report 2015

**Dan Hymowitz**, Insight and Learning Manager, Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative

**Lauge Poulsen**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Nuffield College, University of Oxford

The key question discussed in this session was how policymakers and governments can be more effective by treating people as people – i.e. not as rational economic actors but as complex human beings.



## THREE 'TAKE-AWAYS' FROM THE SESSION, BY THOMAS HALE

- 1 Policies are now being inspired by breakthroughs in behavioural sciences. Policies that account for the fact that people are irrational in predictable ways, and 'nudge' them accordingly have significant potential to drive development. While the field is quite young, small and inexpensive changes in policy that account for this trend towards treating people as people (complex social beings) can yield significant results.
- 2 New techniques are no substitute for accountability, i.e. the rule of law, institutional capacity, or the other resources governments need to develop. Just like any tool, these new techniques are only as good as the government that employs them.
- 3 Some of the most effective behavioural policies are those that empower people in some way. For example, asking job seekers to reflect on their search processes increases their likelihood of finding a job; showing poor people an inspirational video about what they can achieve with their microloan increases the chances they will use it to invest in their future.

Watch a video summary of key insights from the deep-dive sessions:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-1](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-1)

Read a summary of the session on the BSG Blog, by Adauo Anyiam-Osigwe:

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/16/can-people-power-development](http://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/16/can-people-power-development)

MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: 'DEEP DIVE' SESSION

# DRIVING DEMANDS: STABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

Chair: **Monica Duffy Toft**, Professor of Government and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Jack Goldstone**, Professor of Public Policy, George Mason University

**Jonathan Woetzel**, Director of McKinsey & Co; Co-Chair of the Urban China Initiative

This session explored major global trends that have large-scale impacts on the way humanity operates and nations are governed. It took a focus on urbanization, as a major trend, and looked at China, as an example of a country that is managing its rapid urbanization very well.



## THREE 'TAKE-AWAYS' FROM THE SESSION, BY MONICA TOFT

- 1 Urbanization is generally irreversible – once it happens, people generally don't 'de-urbanize' (unless something like a plague wipes out swathes of the population and quarantines prevent movements of people).
- 2 There are lessons to be learned about responsible governance. For example, China has managed its massive urbanization trend very well but can governors of other cities, for example Nairobi or Cairo, do the same?
- 3 What values are going to underpin major global trends, and which ones do we prioritize? The trend towards larger ageing populations among industrialized societies, in particular, raises challenging issues of equity and equity distribution across generations.

Watch the full video of the session:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-driving-demands-stability-sustainability-and-growth](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-driving-demands-stability-sustainability-and-growth)



MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: 'DEEP DIVE' SESSION

# YOUTH ACTIVISM AND CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

Chair: **Maya Tudor**, University Lecturer in Government and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Al-Hassan Adam**, Campaign Manager for Essential Services, Oxfam GB

**Valentina Quiroga**, Executive Director, Espacio Público, Chile

Panelists in this session brought their expertise to understand better two key questions: First, what is distinctive about youth activism at a time when nearly half the world's population is under the age of 18? And second, what are the ways in which youth activism can successfully translate its obvious potential into enduring institutional change?

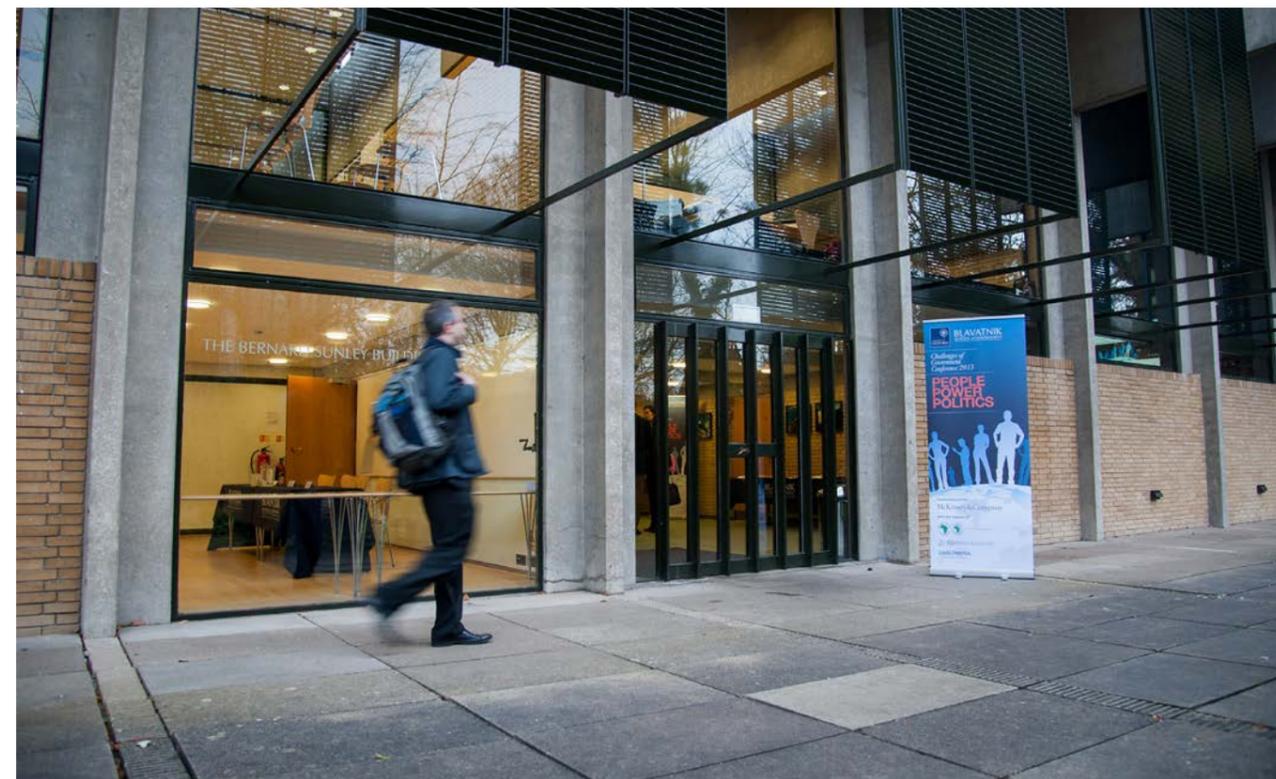


## FIVE STEPS TO CREATING ENDURING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, SUMMARIZED BY MAYA TUDOR

- 1 Learn to create a single, coherent message and/or set of demands. Repeat.
- 2 Be professional in media outreach. Presentation really matters, as does cultivating longer-term relationships.
- 3 Relatedly, do your homework. Knowledge is power – knowing how these problems have been addressed in other contexts and how political obstacles have been overcome boosts success probabilities.
- 4 Engage all stakeholders. All stakeholders have the potential to be supporters or detractors. Engaging all stakeholders helps to neutralise detractors and amplify support.
- 5 Patiently build institutions for the long term. Valentina in particular talked about how education reformers in Chile had organised after protests in 2006 and were thus well-placed to exploit when opportunities arose in 2011.

Watch a video summary of key insights from the deep-dive sessions:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-1](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-1)





**MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

**BETTER DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

Chair: **Paul Collier**, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Soledad Arellano Schmidt**, Vice Minister for Social Development, Chile

**Kate Jackson**, Chief of Staff, McKinsey Center for Government

**Michelle Harrison**, Head of WPP Government Practice, CEO and Chair of the Institute for Insight in the Public Services (IIPS)

Soledad Arellano Schmidt explained how her government has been responding to people's demands for transparency, efficiency and accountability in their services. For example, several years ago, a new transparency law was passed, which requires the government to make available to its people all the information that is used for decision-making. And, in an effort to improve efficiency in spending, the government installed a year ago a system of monitoring and evaluation of all of the social programs delivered or supported by the government.

Michelle Harrison shared some of her findings about how an emphasis on citizen or consumer insight has been supporting better delivery of public services. Kate Jackson talked about the value creation potential of open data, drawing on evidence from a recent McKinsey Center for Government report. The report looked across seven sectors of the world globally and showed that \$3trillion dollars of economic value can be created every year through the effective, efficient and smart use of open data.

How can governments tailor and better deliver public services? How are governments using consumer data to tailor solutions to needs; or crowd sourcing solutions? What are the shifting platforms of delivery and do they result in greater efficiencies in public service? These are the kinds of questions that were addressed in the session on rethinking public service delivery.



Watch the full conference session:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-better-delivery-public-services](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-better-delivery-public-services)

**FIVE KEY POINTS RAISED IN THE SESSION, BY MANJIT NATH**

- 1 Citizens' perceptions for public services has changed with time, and today's governments have to deliver on par with the demanding standard.
- 2 Communication is a crucial area; government's strategies should reach out to people via different modes and with the right narrative.
- 3 Public servants should be motivated for providing better service rather than depending on market principles, such as incentivise and 'citizen as customer' approach.
- 4 Big data and open data are big drivers for effective and transparent public service delivery system.
- 5 Big data and open data are not revolutionary by themselves and hence can't lead the governance, rather they act as catalysts.





**MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: 'DEEP DIVE' SESSION**

**INNOVATIONS IN SOCIAL POLICY**

Chair: **Ngairé Woods**, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government

**Rushanara Ali**, Member of Parliament for Bethnal Green and Bow and Shadow Minister for Education

**Denis Mizne**, Executive Director of the Lemann Foundation, Brazil



Panelists shared numerous experiences from their work, with a focus on elected government, by Rushanara Ali, and civil society, from Denis Mizne. Participants challenged the panelists on such issues as: Active citizenship – are we seeing a change in the way citizens and their governments interact and what should a new social contract look like? Multiculturalism – how should we think about competing values within and amongst communities as we move forward in designing better social policies? Implementation – how do you bridge the gap between the relatively easy task of designing policy to the much more risky and challenging act of implementing policy?



Watch the full conference session:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-better-delivery-public-services](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-better-delivery-public-services)

**SIX KEY INSIGHTS ARISING ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING SOCIAL POLICY PRACTITIONERS, BY LEONARDO QUATTRUCCI AND AARON MANIAM**

- 1 Incentives aren't everything. National visions often need to be implemented at local levels, allowing for localized differentiation according to on-the-ground circumstances, and making sure the right outcomes reach the right people.
- 2 Effective delivery often involves engagement of relevant stakeholders. Rushanara shared the example of community galvanization in Bethnal Green to improve educational outcomes for underperforming schools, while Denis outlined Brazil's work in enhancing performance in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests. Both speakers noted the 'co-productive' nature of social policy: citizens are not just consumers but also creators of certain services.
- 3 An increasingly data-rich environment is helpful in building up citizen awareness of issues, and the evidence base on which governments can make rigorous policy. Data allows citizens to be involved in both the co-design and co-delivery of policy, and for more effective organisation of campaigns.
- 4 Data needs time to emerge. For instance, Rushanara noted that lasting educational transformation in the Canary Wharf area will 'take a generation'. Policymakers need to persist and 'stay the course' in such situations, and not abandon projects simply because conclusions about their efficacy take time.
- 5 Some 'data' cannot be empirically measured, and will come in more qualitative forms like narratives or anecdotes. Such data is no less valid and important than more traditional, quantitative forms that can be generated by Randomised Control Trials. Effective evaluation of social policy will therefore require 'mixed methods'.
- 6 Governments need to plan for scale. Some projects are better left at local levels, given the specific needs they attempt to satisfy. If scale is part of a government's long-term goal, then this should be planned at the initial stages of a project, rather than left till later phases. Otherwise, projects may not be modular enough to achieve the desired scale in the future. For example, one challenge faced by Brazil's attempt to implement 'gun control and disarmament' was the omission of such a long-term element from its plan.



**MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: 'DEEP DIVE' SESSION**

# INNOVATIONS IN HEALTHCARE

Chair: **Adam Ritchie**, Departmental Lecturer in Science and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Gwyn Bevan**, Professor of Policy Analysis, London School of Economics

**Lionel Tarassenko**, Professor of Electrical Engineering, Oxford University

New technologies enabling m-health (healthcare supported by mobile devices) and personalization of healthcare were also discussed as providing innovative and practical solutions to delivering healthcare, but which have not yet provided substantially better savings for providers.



Discussions focused on the twin questions of why are healthcare costs escalating and how should resources be distributed to meet growing needs for healthcare and services? The second question, in particular, incited lively debate on whether and how a cost-benefit analysis should be used when distributing healthcare resources. Should we be spending on someone who is near the end of their life and who has dementia to keep them alive for a short period longer? Or should we hold back those resources back to spend on someone else?



▶ Watch a summary of key issues raised in the discussions:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-2](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-2)

▶ Read the blog by Sven Jungmann:

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/14/innovations-in-healthcare](http://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/14/innovations-in-healthcare)

**MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: 'DEEP DIVE' SESSION**

# INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION

Chair: **Clare Leaver**, University Lecturer in Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Matías Reeves**, Co-Founder and Director of Projects and Fundraising, Educación 2020, Chile

**Pieter Serneels**, Reader in Economics, University of East Anglia

Matías shared his experience of leading an NGO committed to providing quality and equity in education by 2020. The organization has so far been very successful in delivering on its three priorities: providing a roadmap for better design and implementation of education policies, giving support to principles of schools, and mobilizing citizens to engage with and participate in efforts to improve education.

With a practitioner, Matías Reeves, and academic, Pieter Serneels, kicking off the discussions, there was very quickly an interesting debate ignited about the pros and cons of citizen involvement in education.



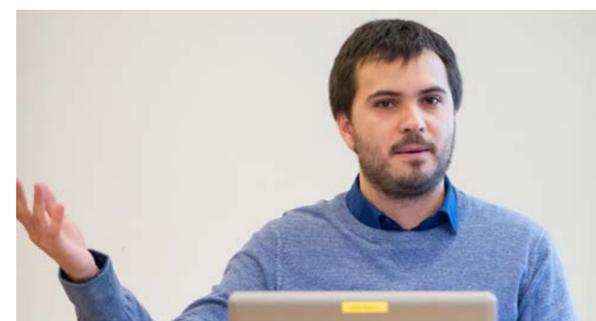
However, Pieter Serneels, with his research conducted with parents involved in schools in rural Africa, is more skeptical of the potential for citizen involvement to bring about effective policy change. Successful people power is contingent upon particular local circumstances and the competing obligations on different citizen groups, which can inhibit their abilities to engage effectively.

▶ Read a summary of the speakers' points, by Teresa Phiri:

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/17/innovations-in-education/](http://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/17/innovations-in-education/)

▶ Watch a summary of key issues raised in the discussions:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-2](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-insights-parallel-sessions-2)





**MONDAY 9 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

**GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PEOPLE POWER**

**Geoff Mulgan**, Chief Executive Officer, Nesta

Geoff Mulgan talked about the need for a new kind of 'relational politics' to get beyond the polarization that we are seeing in nearly every country now, where citizens feel disconnected from their governments and governments feel dispassionate about their publics. He explained that he wanted to present an alternative to the standard trope in which there are rising expectations among citizens, which governments can't keep up with.



He emphasized that the language of expectations only comes when the parties are without a relationship; and part of the key to coming out of the expectations trap is thinking about government in relational terms. He explained that he has been seeing governments ask more about how can they not only achieve their desired outcomes (meet their targets) but also cultivate a strong relationship with their citizens.

 Watch Geoff Mulgan's session in full:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-government-strategies-and-people-power](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-government-strategies-and-people-power)

 Read the summary blog, by Max Harris:

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/17/government-with-the-people/](http://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/17/government-with-the-people/)

**TOP TAKE-AWAY INSIGHTS FROM THE SESSION, BY MAX HARRIS**

- 1 We need to focus on not just 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' – but also government with the people.
- 2 For too long we have thought of the government-citizen interaction only in terms of expectations. But this is a cold model of interaction, which we would not apply to our parents, children, or friends.
- 3 We should think of the government-citizen interaction in 'relational' terms, as a shared project that we are engaged in. This is more akin to how we see relationships with parents, children, or friends.
- 4 This 'relational' model of governing is especially appropriate given the failure of public service targeting to create any warmth between citizens and government, the fact that businesses are focusing increasingly on relationships, and the opportunities and threats provided by technology.
- 5 There are examples already of relational governing in fields such as open data, innovation, healthcare, and political participation.
- 6 This framework of relational government must be tailored to different stages of the policy process – but, if applied well, it has the capacity to rejuvenate government and people power in the twenty-first century.





**TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

**POLICING FOR THE PEOPLE**

Chair: **Ngairé Woods**, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government

**Atifete Jahjaga**, President of the Republic of Kosovo

President Jahjaga launched the discussions with a recognition of the real impact that technology has made in the way we think about democracy, security and inclusion.



She shared insights from Kosovo – Europe’s youngest state that has gone through a difficult period in its history that includes the ethnic cleansing of half its population in a civil war, and which only declared its independent sovereignty five years ago. She talked about how Kosovo’s citizens underwent many changes, from war to peace, from dictatorship towards a democracy, from a socially controlled economy to capitalism and a free market. It meant repairing the physical destruction caused by the conflict, the drafting of a new political framework, and the building of a new constitution to match the new reality and the need to stave off a security vacuum.

Amid all the competing priorities for Kosovo’s new government it was imperative to build institutions with an open door policy, she stressed.

Watch President Atifete Jahjaga’s speech in full:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-policing-people](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-policing-people)

Read a summary of insights from her presentation, by Sven Jungmann:

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/16/policing-for-the-people/](http://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/16/policing-for-the-people/)

**TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

**RISING EXPECTATIONS AND THE STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Chair: **Mthuli Ncube**, Chief Economist and Vice President of the African Development Bank

**Paul Collier**, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Fraser Thompson**, Senior Fellow, McKinsey Global Institute

**Sheila Khama**, Director, Extractive Resources Services, African Center for Economic Transformation

**Richard Konteh**, Sierra Leone State House Chief of Staff

In many parts of the world the discovery of new natural resources has led to a dramatic rise in public expectations of prosperity and delivery from government. How can governments and regional and global organizations best respond?



Paul Collier’s opening remarks warned that governments who deplete one asset had better build up another. He stressed that governments need to look beyond the value of the natural resource itself and focus on turning the natural asset into platforms for productive assets that might be completely unrelated, e.g. into well-functioning cities. Sheila Khama stressed that governments of countries where natural resources are discovered need to identify a vision for the policies around stewarding those resources. How, she said governments should be asking, do you turn a natural, geological windfall into something that economically can then be used to better the lot of your people?

In thinking about translating subsoil wealth into long-term prosperity, Fraser Thompson (who had just released a report called *Reverse the curse*), said that from his research, the question that policymakers kept asking was how they can move away from a ‘cookie-cutter’ approach, where assumptions are made about how what worked in one context can be translated to another. Richard Konteh spoke from his role as adviser to the President of Sierra Leone, a country where the benefits of being natural resource rich have not been well translated into the lives of its people. He outlined three core strategies of his government: 1) Invest now for the future, maintaining reserves wisely; 2) ensure the legal and policy making environment is sound; and 3) take the public along with the decision-making process by keeping them well informed.

Watch the full panel discussion:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-rising-expectations-and-stewardship-natural-resources](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-rising-expectations-and-stewardship-natural-resources)



**TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

# THE TRANSPARENCY/PRIVACY CONUNDRUM

Chair: **Tom Simpson**, University Lecturer in Philosophy and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Ken Macdonald QC**, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford; former UK Director of Public Prosecutions

**John Naughton**, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), University of Cambridge, and Emeritus Professor of the Public Understanding of Technology, the Open University

With new technologies providing instant access to information and blurring the boundaries of privacy, what are the rights of citizens to challenge governments and companies about uses of information? Who has the responsibility/ authority to hold governments to account? What are the questions of trust, transparency and security that governments really need to address?



John Naughton kicked off the discussions with an explanation of the difference between a scandal and a crisis. In democracies, scandals happen all the time – they are intense for a while and then they go away. Crises are different; they are explosions of controversy that lead to structural change. He then said that, despite the furore over the revelations of comprehensive surveillance, he believes that it was just a scandal; in the long run, he does not think there will be any fundamental change. Democratic societies, he said, need to make a choice: do we sacrifice accountability or do we sacrifice some of the secret things we do?

Lord Macdonald raised many questions about the governance of security issues, and highlighted a situation that is crying out for greater scrutiny. In many democracies, he explained, the security apparatus is able to exercise a measure of power over the other limbs of state that approaches autonomy – procuring legislation, dominating executive decision-making, and seeking to lock its antagonists out of judicial processes. We need the law to be the master of the technology, not the other way around, he argued.

 Watch the session in full:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-transparencyprivacy-conundrum](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-transparencyprivacy-conundrum)

**TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER: PLENARY**

# LEADERSHIP AND LEGITIMACY

Chair: **Ngairé Woods**, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government

**Stephen Green**, Minister of State for Trade and Investment

Broadly, this session aimed to return to the big theme of the conference: Can ‘people power’ help to make government more responsive, effective, or legitimate, and if so, how?



As chair, Ngairé Woods, helped kick off discussions by asking Lord Green three very different but highly relevant questions. What gives politicians legitimacy, when so often elected politicians don't have the skills needed for the jobs they are given? Has the public clamouring for better regulated banking following the 2008 financial crisis helped produce the right kind of regulation for the industry? What makes effective leadership, especially in a world being transformed by ‘people power’?

Lord Green reflected on the challenges of filling the skills gap in government, which he saw more as adding to the skills range, when people like himself – a substantially experienced international businessman – are brought into government roles. He acknowledged the ‘sheer frightening nature’ of the early days of the financial crisis when ‘one banker after another was getting into financial difficulties’, and explained that there are quite a complex series of lessons to learn that go way beyond ‘bad banking behaviour’.



 Watch the full video of the session with Lord Green:

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-leadership-and-legitimacy](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/multimedia/video/cogc2013-leadership-and-legitimacy)

 Read a blog about the session, by Levent Tuzun and Leonardo Quattrucci:

[blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/20/leadership-legitimacy-and-accountability/](http://blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk/2014/01/20/leadership-legitimacy-and-accountability/)

# WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR THANKS TO OUR CONFERENCE PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THIS EVENT

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Report edited by Alison Stibbe, Head of Communications at the Blavatnik School of Government, with comments and contributions from:

- Adaudo Anyiam-Osigwe, MPP student
- Louis Chambers, MPP student
- Thomas Hale, Postdoctoral Research Fellow
- Max Harris, MPP student
- Sven Jungmann, MPP student
- Bronwyn Lo, MPP student
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