Bureaucracy, citizenship, governmentality: Towards a re-evaluation of New Labour

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abstract

Drawing inspiration from the genre of studies of governmentality, this note explores developments in the organisation of the British Civil Service during the years of New Labour. Arguments and debates over the limits of bureaucratic knowledge and communitarian arguments borrowed from the American context served to encourage modes of citizen participation in respect of the work of the central bureaucracy. Bureaucrats during these years were encouraged to assume the role of agents of what we term here 'participatory citizenship', seeking to bring citizens into a new relationship with bureaucracy. Bureaucrats were enjoined to attend to the voice of the citizen in new ways. Arguments and prescriptions for change ultimately led to innovations in the technologies of rule to be effected by bureaucrats, designed to 'activate' citizens and to bring them into a new and more participatory relationship to the central State. Exploring these developments, we highlight their costs, risks as well as certain suppressed political possibilities. Conceived as a preliminary investigation and certainly making no claim to historical completeness, the aim here is to begin to re-evaluate the experience of New Labour.

Introduction

The history of New Labour's management of the Civil Service would appear to be a familiar one, suggesting significant continuities with an earlier era of Conservative rule. Changes in administrative practice in the British Civil Service in the years of the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s acquired a certain consistency of style, a manifestation of the loosely coupled regime of administration that came to be known as 'the new public management' (Hood, 1991; du Gay, 2000). From the early 1980s, with the aim of enhancing efficiency

and curtailing the expansionary tendencies of bureaucracy (Niskanen, 1973), British civil servants were made responsible for budgets and accountable for the achievement of performance objectives in new ways. An array of economy measures were pursued. The reforms of the later 1980s and 1990s introduced agency arrangements to the Civil Service, new customer charters and simulated market mechanisms. Expectations of the personal qualities of the bureaucrat altered during these years as politicians affirmed the virtues of enterprise, responsibility and initiative.

Far from contesting the reforms of the Conservatives, New Labour praised the Conservative leaderships of Thatcher and Major for their innovations in the deployment of management techniques (Cabinet Office, 1999). New Labour, seeking to 'modernise' government (Cabinet Office, 1999), turned increasingly to outside sources for policy advice and to politically appointed policy advisers, initiating policy but also integrating the policy processes of government. The offices of government were to become more 'strategic' in response to a tendency towards fragmentation that had developed under the Conservatives. Senior bureaucrats became key agents in the implementation of policy, improving the responsiveness of the bureaucracy to political goals – particularly in respect of the promotion of quality and choice in the delivery of public services. Performance management and other managerial innovations became important remedies. Public Service Agreements were applied to the departments of government enforcing outcomes and process requirements, with the related Best Value indicators imposed on local government. Above all, in the delivery of services it was a matter of 'what worked' from the customer point of view. Tony Blair argued that choice in the mode of delivery of public services 'put the levers of power' in the hands of citizen consumers (Blair, 2004).

Our interest here however will be in another, perhaps less familiar, mode of 'modernising bureaucracy' associated with the New Labour years. Seeking to encourage further consideration of this era, we evaluate the advanced liberalism of New Labour as a hybrid formation (Hall, 2003) containing a variety of ways of conceiving the government of the subjects of the State. Interest here turns to a particular conception of 'citizenship' that informed the New Labour project. Arguments and debates over the limits of bureaucratic knowledge and communitarian arguments borrowed from the American context served to encourage modes of citizen participation not only in relation to community development, health or local government but also – as we will see – in respect of the work of the central bureaucracy. Bureaucrats during these years were encouraged to assume the role of agents of a particular form of 'participatory citizenship', seeking to bring citizens into a new relationship with bureaucracy. Bureaucrats were enjoined to attend to the knowledge of the citizen in new ways.

Arguments and prescriptions for change ultimately led to innovations in the technologies of rule to be effected by bureaucrats that were designed to 'activate' citizens and bring them into a new and more participatory relationship to the central State. It was not the 'good consumer' that such interventions sought to activate, but the 'good citizen' more actively engaged in matters of policy. Numerous methods of citizen participation – from the 'People's Panel' to the 'Citizen's Jury' – were implemented guided by this aspiration. Here we explore these recent historical developments, beginning with a comment on the perspective that guides our investigation. We go on to consider the concepts and practices at stake and their historical emergence and development, highlighting the costs and risks as well as certain suppressed political possibilities.

'Governmentality' in perspective

This exploratory study draws inspiration from the genre of studies of governmentality (Dean, 1999; Miller and Rose, 1990; Miller and Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999). With the recent publication of Foucault's later lectures (2007; 2010), we now have a fuller sense of his interest in the rationality of modern government, and in particular liberal government. Although studies of governmentality were initially catalysed by the earlier publication of fragments of these lectures (Foucault, 1982; 1991), the relationship to Foucault was always a loose and attenuated one: key themes and concepts in the later Foucault were drawn upon and extended by the analysts of governmentality. At an abstract level, studies of governmentality are concerned with the more calculated forms of the exercise of power, highlighting the diversity of powers and governing authorities which seek to regulate the subject's space of freedom. Evoking an early modern usage, the word 'governing' relates to any attempt to shape or mould the conduct of others (Foucault, 1982; Rose, 1999). Interest turns to the discursive character of 'rule', the language that authorities and experts use to imagine and define the subjects they aspire to govern as well as the technical methods of influence and inscription that they put to work (Foucault, 1982). The problem of government breaks down into an analysis of the concepts, arguments and procedures by which 'rule' comes to be enacted. Activities of government and modes of knowledge are understood to interconnect in diverse ways. Governing always relies on a certain framing of objectives or a certain manner of reasoning. Practices which monitor, inscribe and record the activity of the governed facilitate the activity of those who rule. Experts are at the very centre of contemporary governmental regimes, purporting truths about what we are and what we should be.

Expositions of the genre (Rose, 1999; Dean, 1999) suggest a form of analysis that in principle embraces both the historical and systematizing dimensions of genealogical critique. Studies of governmentality seek to capture not only the overall logic of the games of truth or rationalities of a decentred political field, but also the process by which they took shape. The aim is to identify the emergence of a regime of government, the multiple sources of the elements that constitute it and the 'diverse relations and processes by which these elements came to be assembled' (Dean, 1999: 31). Attention turns to moments of 'problematisation' in the practice of government and the emergence of prescriptions and solutions to the problems identified (McKinlay, et al., 2012). Historically informed enquiry seeks to reveal the contingencies by which the present was formed. Games of truth are shown to have been different to those to which we are accustomed (Rose, 1999). Studies of governmentality therefore aim to enhance our awareness that what we are is not given or inevitable, thereby increasing the contestability of the present moment.

Studies of governmentality have been especially concerned to shed light on a contemporary 'advanced liberal' rationality of government (Rose, 1999). The 'neoliberal' aspiration to advance entrepreneurial and competitive norms of conduct represents but one strategy associated with this rationality (Miller and Rose, 1990; du Gay, 1996). More generally, advanced liberal rule seeks to promote the responsibility of individuals and collectivities for determining their own fate (Rose, 1999). In diverse fields of government – from, for example, the promotion of social welfare to that of the cultivation of human capital – the subjects of advanced liberal rule are guided and steered by an array of authorities and experts to exercise their freedom in an appropriate way. Social problems and issues that might once have been the responsibility of political authorities become the responsibility of individuals, the 'communities' to which they belong or other social agents independent of the State. Thus, the unemployed subject is increasingly responsible for his or her own self-government as an active jobseeker but such 'self-government' is regulated by an array of governmental forces, from the think tank intellectuals in policy-making circles that prescribe the norms of the jobseeker to the managers that monitor and scrutinise his or her conduct on a daily basis. Similarly, in matters of health, we are enjoined to take responsibility for our own well-being in accordance with the standards delineated by an array of scientific, medical and health professionals, media analysts and commentators.

Yet critics have raised a number of problems with the genre which seem to suggest that some re-thinking is required. There has been significant critical commentary with a strongly anti-Foucauldian flavour (e.g. Kerr, 1999). But those seeking to develop the genre also highlight an array of limitations (McKinlay,

2010; McKinlay, et al., 2010; O'Malley, et al., 1997). In part the challenge is a common reliance on – and consequent overestimation of the significance of – official textual sources and programmes. There is a need to move beyond the study of texts of rule and the tendency to read history through the programmatic statements of authorities, to an exploration of the practical dynamics of government at an organisational level. For the analysts of governmentality, it has been argued, the possibilities of exploring the manner in which broad concepts are translated into practices on the ground remain largely uncharted (McKinlay, et al., 2010). Instances of the genre incline, it has been claimed (O'Malley, et al., 1997), towards over-generalisation. Excessive attention is given to the characterisation of abstract and general rationalities of government. Much of the commentary on advanced liberalism (Miller and Rose, 1990; Rose, 1999) appears vulnerable in this respect to the extent that it implies a progressive enlargement of an all-pervasive rationality of rule (Fournier and Grey, 1999). Concepts, classifications, instruments and procedures of government have a complex history which historical analysis should seek to unravel at a level of detail untypical of the genre (O'Malley, et al., 1997; McKinlay, 2010; McKinlay, et al., 2010). Greater attention needs to be given to the struggles out of which ideas and practices were born and the complex and contingent process by which they took shape. Studies of governmentality not uncommonly discuss historical events without reference to individual or collective agents (McKinlay, et al., 2010; Walters, 2012), which suggests an implausible 'anonymity' in their analyses. Sympathetic critics (O'Malley, et al., 1997; Walters, 2012) point also to a tendency towards the avoidance of critique (Barry, et al., 1996). There is a diagnostic element, present in Foucault (O'Malley, et al., 1997), that is frequently absent from the genre.

In the style of the criticism we have been considering, our aim here is not so much to reject as to find ways to modify the governmental approach. But in no sense would we claim to address the arguments of the critics in their entirety. Rather, the more modest aim is to begin to restore attention to the specificity of practices of governing (Barratt, 2008). The identification of rationalities that span institutional fields remains vital, not least as a means of illuminating commonalities in different fields of political struggle. The intention here is to balance this by respecting the singular forms of government. We share the nominalist perspective of Dean and Hindess (1998): modes of government appear in definite institutional, social or professional settings and should be assigned a time and place. The focus here is on how particular categories of person are formed or 'made up'. But genealogical enquiry can serve also as a reminder of forgotten possibilities in the sense of historical experiences that have been suppressed in the course of time, which can nonetheless be of relevance to contemporary struggles (Barratt, 2003; Burchell, 1996). Accordingly, our interest

here is not only in the emergence of a particular mode of participatory governmentality, but also in certain episodes in the history of the British left and the women's movement.

A certain humility is nonetheless implied in the account that follows. The past is not a place we can return to; at best, it can offer resources – in the form of ideas or practices – that we can adapt in our own present circumstances. We would suggest that any attempt to expand the political imagination or to imagine alternative futures should as a minimum requirement take the form of an intimation, as anything more than this runs the risk of constraining the inventiveness of political actors or implying a definitive position. What is ultimately required is a labour of invention and imagination by those who struggle. Thus, we offer here analysis and argument that might be of relevance to those movements of the left debating the question of the organisation of the State (e.g. Shah and Goss, 2007) or the developing alliances of public sector trade unionists and activists now pursuing struggles in the context of Liberal Conservative austerity measures.

'Modernized' bureaucracy and the birth of participatory governmentality

New Labour was evidently not the first Labour Party faction to have attempted significant 'modernisation' of the central administration. Harold Wilson's neo-Fabian image of a 'regenerated' Britain in which expertise and science would arrest the decline of the nation (Theakston, 1992) encouraged the reformers associated with the Fulton Committee Report (1968) and their proposals to enhance management and specialisation in the Civil Service. Though limited in their practical effects, the management reforms of the 1960s prefigured the NPM. 'Modernisation' under Blair, however, followed a variety of paths. For the developments with which we are concerned, the decisive turn or historical break is perhaps the 'Third Way' (Blair, 1998). Many familiar positions associated with New Labour are developed in this text, including the redefinition of 'equality' to refer to 'equality of opportunity' and the idea of 'partnership' as the means to deliver efficient and customer-sensitive public services. But the Third Way also offered a critique of the administration of government premised on the 'maturity' of British society. Britain, it was argued, was now passing through a new era or modern age. The increased flow of information made possible by technological developments – an 'information revolution' – as well as educational developments in the post-WW2 period had changed the citizenry, encouraging a demand for more democracy. A 'deepening of democracy' should mean not only devolving power to Wales and Scotland, greater community influence in local government decision making or support for local community initiatives.

Crucially, a 'new openness and responsiveness' on the part of central government and the administrative machinery of the State was now also needed. A form of administration that gave greater attention to the voices of citizens in respect to decisions that affected them and encouraged public debate would lead to improved political decision making. Society, as Blair saw it, was a 'laboratory of ideas' concerning how social needs might be best met.

The arguments of the Third Way suggest the influence of an array of intellectual and political sources. Importantly, there was a certain epochal quality to the argument. In this respect, recent commentary has highlighted New Labour's debt (Andrews, 2004; Finlayson, 2003) to debates encouraged by elements of the British Communist party during its final years. As the party's magazine *Marxism Today* came under the control of a Gramscian faction in the Party (Hall and Jacques, 1983), and particularly with the ascendancy of Thatcherite neo-liberalism, a new and wide-ranging debate ensued over the future direction of the British left. What underpinned much of this debate was a sense of 'new times'. The favoured analysis of those who initiated the debate relied on the notion of a transformed post-Fordist economy and society (Hall and Jacques, 1983). Diverse phenomena, from working practices to social and political identities, were taking new varied and flexible forms to which the political left were compelled to respond. For Charles Leadbeater (1988), like Blair, a political topography shaped by the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher required not only a new sensitivity to customer choice and efficiency in the delivery of public services, a balancing of social rights and responsibilities, but a new era of democracy in the administration of the State.

Blair then, a contributor to the debate over 'new times' (Andrews, 2004), appears to have taken something from its characteristically epochal and sociological character. More obviously perhaps, the arguments of the Third Way suggest a debt to an American revival of ancient political ideals during the early 1990s (Putnam, 1993; 1995). According to Philip Gould (1998), an active participant in these events, in the later months of 1995 the advisory group around Blair began to borrow from the republican and communitarian thought of Robert Putnam, mirroring the American Democrats at this time, as they sought to extend and give substance to the ideal of a 'modernised' version of social democracy adjusted to new political conditions. As instanced by certain regions of northern Italy, Putnam argued that a citizenry active in the public domain and its civic associations acquired virtues with wider benefits for social and economic cooperation. America could be restored to a more organic condition by the enhancement of opportunities for association amongst citizens. Active engagement in 'horizontal' relationships fostered social capital – a concept adapted from the American sociologist James Coleman (1974). With the Third

Way, we see the revival of these same ancient notions of the dutiful and active citizen of the republic. Communitarian and civic republican ideals were thus to be adapted to contemporary conditions: the circumstances of a globalized society and economy.

Perhaps more surprisingly, in the allusions to the knowledge embedded in the citizenry and to a more democratic form of administration, the Third Way bears the mark of radical political sources. In particular there are traces of the ideas of social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps the most obvious debt is to a movement that centred around the inner cities of England, commonly referred to as the 'new urban left' (Gyford, 1985). The movement in question – of councillors, local activists and trade unionists – came to see the local state as an arena in which a new 'logic of the left' might be pursued. As Wainwright (1994) shows, the emergence of this movement needs to be understood in the context of the shifting political priorities of the diverse movements that emerged in the years after the student protests of 1968. Feminists, inspired by American example, explored the politics of everyday experience and, in so doing, came to a new appreciation of the subordination of women in relation to the welfare provision of the State. Socialist feminists highlighted the denial of voice and the narrow understanding of legitimate knowledge presupposed by the relevant agencies. Anarchist and romantic 'countercultural' influences in the women's movement encouraged an emphasis on separate provision of welfare. Women worked to provide their own support for battered women and rape crisis centres. Yet by the middle years of the 1970s, as government cuts in public services began to take effect, feminists came to a new appreciation of the State. Though denying the voices of women in the definition of need and in relation to the provision of services, the State was an essential mechanism for promoting the security and autonomy of women. The point was to attempt to address the ways in which the State worked to disqualify women's knowledge. In a similar way the community activists of this era, initially inspired by the anarchist movements in the inner cities in the middle years of the 1960s and by the student organisers of the poor in the American new left, came to a new appreciation of the benefits of the social State during these years. For both groups of political actors, the problem became how to secure the participation of marginal citizens in the provisions of the State.

Wainwright characterises the administration of the Greater London Council (GLC) in the period between 1981 and 1986 as the most ambitious and high profile achievement of this movement in the British context. But the local state was also intended to suggest an example of a wholly different way of governing from which national leaders might learn (Wainwright, 2003). Without imagining the Council – as the strategic local authority for London – could transform the political economy of the capital, a distinctive aim was to use the powers of the

authority to extend modes of self-government. Initiatives with the aim of enabling the autonomous action of excluded groups took many forms: the funding of cooperatives, support for workers campaigning to save their own jobs or developing their own plans for production, support for community resources and women's centres. But representatives of user groups and workers in the capital also came to be included in the policy making processes of the Council. Experiences and ideas could thus be fed back into the administrative apparatus. Blair evidently paid little regard to the detail of the experience of these movements. Yet, especially in its perspective on the marginalised knowledge of the citizen, we would argue – like others (Finlayson, 2003; Davies, et al., 2007) – that traces of these radical movements can be discerned in the discourse of New Labour.

Bureaucracy and the activation of the citizen

The early years of New Labour provide evidence of attempts to translate the more general and abstract analysis of the Third Way into more concrete and specific practices of rule. An array of experiments designed to bring citizens into a new and more direct relationship with the bureaucracy were attempted. Initially the expertise of the marketer – a technology of consumption – would play an important role. Indeed, the turn away from simple opinion polling to the application of more sophisticated marketing techniques had brought New Labour electoral success. Now, enlisted by bureaucrats in individual departments, such methods would become part of a consultative process, an element of a 'dialogue' between State and citizen (Gould, 1998).

With the People's Panel, launched in 1998, the aim was to establish a panel statistically representative of the population to which senior administrators and politicians in all departments could turn for opinion. Between 1998 and 2002, members of the panel were engaged in some 30 research studies – both qualitative and quantitative – conducted in various departments but particularly on matters related to social policy (Game and Vuong, 2003). On the qualitative side, the technology of the focus group became widely used during these years. In the practice of the political marketeer (Savigny, 2007), the focus group is conceived as a scientific instrument whereby the consistent application of question guidelines and research protocols by a facilitator is intended to incite participants to reveal their views and feelings. Now such technologies would provide what was understood to be direct and unmediated access to the thoughts of both citizens and electors (Gould, 1998).

The early programmatic statement *Modernising Government* (Cabinet Office, 1999), though much concerned with the enhancement of strategy and performance management in the offices of the State and the needs of the customers of public services, also anticipated a new era of attentiveness to the citizen in the shaping of policy. 'Modernisation' was not simply a matter of increasing effectiveness, deploying management techniques to oversee the work of local and central government, building partnerships or integrating policy-making in an increasingly fragmented bureaucracy. More importantly, bureaucrats were enjoined to become 'the agents of the changes' that citizens were demanding and encouraged to take 'full account of the experiences of individuals' who would be affected by policy. Again, social change was invoked to rationalise the need for new modes of engagement with citizens.

Many initiatives and experiments in citizen participation in the work of the central bureaucracy were attempted in the years that followed (Davies, et al., 2007). The establishment of a Youth Parliament in 2000 was intended as a complement to new attempts to educate youth in the ways of citizenship. Adapting its procedures from the legislature, the young were to enjoy the right to elect their peers as local area members, empowered to represent the opinion of their constituents to service providers and politicians. Meanwhile at the Department of Health, the aim was to move towards a new model where the voice of the patient was to be heard at every level including the policy-making processes of the bureaucracy (Department of Health, 2001). E-government would play its part as well: through the 'Big Conversation', launched in 2002, a website was established to bring the administration into an unmediated relationship with citizens, who would be able to comment on matters of policy in a way that would inform bureaucrats and politicians directly.

Yet by the early years of the millennium, criticism began to emerge of the fragmented and ill-coordinated nature of these innovations. Many of the initiatives had run into difficulty. The first assessment of the People's Panel by the Cabinet Office in March 2001 revealed a high attrition rate. The membership was now white, professional and activist in composition (Mair, 2007). Similar difficulties had arisen at the Youth Parliament (Davies, et al., 2007). There were calls from groups influential in the political process for more imaginative approaches to be adopted in engaging the citizen – in the light of the evidence of declining levels of political participation by the electorate. In the years that followed, New Labour looked increasingly to more sophisticated and deliberative ways of activating the citizenry.

Arguments for the advancement of citizen involvement in the activities of central government emerged from outside the formal political process during the middle

years of the 1990s. The think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) actively promoted a more deliberative model of democratic participation (Coote and Lenaghan, 1997), supported by influential academic voices (Stewart, 1996). The Institute drew heavily on American and German experience in prescribing a particular version of the technology of the Citizen's Jury. Working independently, but inspired by the same ideal of a dialogical mode of citizen engagement with the bureaucracy, the political scientist Ned Crosby in the United States and Peter Dienel – a member of the planning department of the German Chancellery – had fashioned comparable techniques for engaging the citizenry (Crosby, 2007). In Germany, in particular, Dienel's planning cells became widely used by both central and local governments (Vergne, 2005). Adapted to British conditions and with modifications after a series of pilots in the Health Service in 1996 (Coote and Lenaghan, 1997), for the IPPR the mechanism of the Citizen's Jury offered a powerful new way of reconfiguring the relationship between citizens, bureaucrats and politicians.

The particular version of the Citizen's Jury favoured by political and administrative authorities in Britain suggested juridical practice in the use of small groups – of no more than twelve in number – taking evidence and cross-questioning witnesses typically over a three or four day period on matters of public policy (Mair, 2007). But in this instance it was policy experts that would bear witness. There was the expectation of deliberative participation on the part of those involved with subjects reviewing and debating the evidence, making judgments with regard to the public good, fashioning recommendations, but without the expectation of a shared consensus. Deliberation was to proceed under the supervision of a facilitator, aiming to foster the exercise of appropriate norms of participation. Participants would enjoy equal rights to speak and would be expected to show respect for others in a reasoned debate. Statistical expertise was deployed to ensure a random sample of the public, remunerated for their contribution. After 2003, panels of this kind – or a somewhat larger variant known as the deliberative forum or deliberative assembly where larger policy questions were at issue – became widely used, particularly in relation to matters of social policy.

In a speech given to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in September 2007, the Labour leader Gordon Brown (2007), reflecting on the developments we have been reviewing, spoke of a new era of government now in progress. There were echoes in his words of the Third Way and other earlier statements of ideals – implying the returning of power to the people or the nurturing of full citizenship. The new 'Juries' would not be 'one-off events', but part of an 'on-going process of reaching out, of doing the business of government differently'. Accordingly, in the later years of 'New Labour', numerous

deliberative events of this kind were attempted (Mair, 2007). Indeed, the values of the nation were to be derived by such means: citizens had their say in the 'British Statement of Values' by the medium of a national conversation in which a larger variant of the system as well as electronic and media-based instruments would all play their part.

'Participatory citizenship' in critical perspective

For Norman Fairclough (2000: 124) the developments we have been considering suggest the merely 'managerial or promotional' aspirations of manipulative political actors. The deployment of the focus group exemplifies the problem. For Fairclough, there is a failure of genuine dialogue between citizen, administrator and politician in such 'non interactive practices'. Whether their talk is to make any difference to the senior bureaucrat or politician is out of participants' hands. These are not voluntary exercises, since participants must be induced to cooperate.

We would endorse Fairclough's scepticism. Yet we would wish to broaden and extend the critique. The various programmes and practices under discussion here, as we see it, suggest a distinct field of 'government' in its own right (Foucault, 2007; Rose, 1999) in which the empowered citizens of the State become a key target of political intervention. An array of practices are deployed in an attempt to mould and shape the legitimate forms of citizen participation, with the aim of encouraging more active engagement in the policy initiatives of central government. Participation acquires a normative dimension in the discourse: an expectation of the good citizen. Within this field of citizen participation, actors in the executive and the administration reserve important powers to themselves: powers to determine the scope of the public domain, the legitimate topics of participatory government and the processes by which participation will be enacted. Inspired by the later Foucault (2007), analysts of governmentality highlight the role that multiple agencies of government – an array of experts, an alliance of professionals, consultants, business academics, gurus and agencies loosely connected to the State – characteristically play in governing a liberal polity. In this particular case, we find administrative and executive powers deferring to other expert voices: that of the marketeer, the statistician and the think tank intellectual. There is a flow of power beyond the State, extending at the lowest most 'microphysical' level (Foucault, 1980) to the role of the facilitator of the Citizen's Jury seeking to promote appropriate deliberative norms. Matters that might be the focus of debate and decision among citizens, including, for example, the scope of the public domain, the possible forms of participatory freedom and the means of recruitment or

representation in such processes, or among the subjects of particular participatory processes – such as methods of working and management – are left to an array of experts and authorities to determine.

Genealogical enquiry, we have suggested, can serve as a reminder of forgotten possibilities. Historical experiences which have been suppressed in the course of time can sometimes be of relevance to contemporary struggles (Barratt, 2003; Burchell 1996). How in the events we have been reviewing might one discern the outline of a possible alternative, a different order of governmentality? Perhaps one might return to the experience of those movements of the left, to which we have seen there are highly selective allusions in the Third Way. In pursuit of 'modernisation', it could be argued that the political forces under examination here effectively detached themselves from important historical experiences. Nikolas Rose has written of the possibility of a genealogy of the diverse forms that the political imagination has taken in the recent past (Rose, 1999: 288), of the modes of struggle, of self-government and discipline, of the ends and orientations to truth of alternative movements. We would suggest the example of the 'new urban left' and, perhaps most especially, the brief experiment at the GLC might be a suitable place to begin such an investigation.

Such experiences merit serious critically informed genealogical examination, beyond the scope of the present discussion and, indeed, the largely anecdotal political commentary on this era. Here we can do no more than begin to map a future line of enquiry. It is in the field of the politics of gender in authorities such as the GLC that developments appear most suggestive and in need of reappraisal (Goss, 1985; Lansley, et al., 1989). Existing commentary highlights the use of open meetings across the capital bringing representatives of women into a direct dialogue with both politicians and senior administrators, shaping the direction of policy from the outset at the GLC. Key campaigning issues appear to have emerged from this dialogue, including health, the defence of women's health centres, advertising and images of women and women's unemployment. Moreover, open dialogue seemingly helped to encourage experimentation in the processes of participatory government, with the scope of activity and methods of working of a new Women's Committee emerging through dialogue between women's groups and Council officials. Those concerned with governing the city looked to the knowledge of the governed; they questioned the narrow forms and exclusive claims to legitimate knowledge of the administration; and there was a continuing element to the exchange between women and the authority. Participation did not, it would seem, have an 'end date' as it has done for the subjects of the focus group, the citizen's panel or jury.

But any serious examination would need to consider an array of critical perspectives on these experiences. Developments did not pass without criticism from those involved, and their experiences suggest an array of seemingly enduring problems for any exercise in participatory freedom (Wainwright, 2003; Landry, et al., 1985; Rowbotham, 1989), such as the arbitrary extension of participatory practices to a particular community of identity (Landry, et al., 1985). For all the efforts to promote cooperative and local forms of enterprise in the capital, the more affluent and articulate appear to have played a dominant part in shaping these processes from the outset. The availability of time, factors of class and race all shaped the ability to participate; lacking a democratic mandate, the groups could not claim to represent the women of London (Landry, et al., 1985). In addition, there were exclusions experienced by those unable to pursue appropriately participative lifestyles or to exercise appropriate participative skills, and concerns that participation in the affairs of the Council might compromise the strength and independence of the broader women's movement (Rowbotham, 1989).

Despised by the Thatcherite neo-liberals as the new face of the left, the GLC would prove to be a short lived experiment. The neo-liberals believed their democratic mandate legitimised the abolition of 'profligate' and 'extreme' political forces. But we would suggest that there might be much for contemporary critics of organisation to learn from the detailed examination of this experience as part of a more general appraisal of the practical organisational achievements of the left (Rose, 1999).

Conclusion

In this note, we have tried to highlight the role of bureaucrats and other expert voices in attempts to activate modes of citizenship during the years of New Labour. Our interest has been in a particular conception of citizenship that informed the New Labour project: arguments for promoting citizenly qualities and the tactics and technologies of power that sought to give such ideals practical expression. At issue here was not so much the lack of enterprise in the bureaucrat as his or her failure to engage adequately with the knowledge of the citizenry. In short, bureaucrats were enjoined to find ways to extend democracy into the bureaucracy of the State. At work here is a particular form of 'participatory citizenship', with senior policy-makers reserving the powers to determine the legitimate modes of citizen participation. It is not the 'good consumer' that such interventions seek to activate, but the 'good citizen' engaged in key political decisions. A preliminary attempt has been made therefore to

decompose the 'aerial' notion (Walters, 2012) of 'advanced liberalism' (Rose, 1999) into a more specific figure of participatory rule.

The ethos that has guided this study is informed by those who were active but critical participants in the radical movements of the second left (Senellart, 2007). Like Michel Foucault (2000), especially in some of his later work, we have not assumed the State to be a cold monster. Candidly welcoming the election of the French Socialist party in 1981, Foucault (2000) hoped for a new era of dialogue between those who govern and the governed: a new respect for the governed on the one hand and of active participation without subservience or compliance on the part of the French citizenry on the other. A related line of political reasoning can be found in the work of the noted activist intellectual Hilary Wainwright (1994; 2003). Framing her arguments as an alternative both to neo-liberal orthodoxy and the authoritarianism of bureaucratic traditions, Wainwright seeks to encourage a movement beyond the typically limited and passive involvement of electors in systems of parliamentary democracy. She does not deny the effects of contemporary liberal regimes in which citizens are predominantly encouraged to define themselves as 'consumers', not least in their relations with the State (Needham, 2003). But citizens could still have a part to play in shaping the detail of the policy measures that affect them, the State being a vital means to promote their autonomy and security. 'Representation', Wainwright suggests, could be re-imagined to refer to practices which would seek to make citizens present in the administrative processes of the State, a field of political practice from which they are customarily absent. Bureaucratic knowledge could be augmented by the customarily disqualified knowledge of the citizen and politicians made more accountable by experimentation along these lines. Representation, in this sense, could displace forms of influence commonly brought to bear on Governments and senior officials of the State, the clandestine work of think tanks or the organised interests of business and the professions. At stake here is the potential for relevant publics to determine the very terms of their relationship and association with the State.

We would endorse these aspirations. Yet we have also argued that genealogical enquiry could help to redefine the terms of the type of participation that Wainwright now recommends, intimating a future line of inquiry. 'Old Labour', as constructed by Blair and others, relied on a crude caricature of earlier times (Bevir, 2005) that rendered any serious historical learning impossible. Part of what was lost was much of the experience of the 'new urban left'. Revisiting practical experiences of the left of this variety remains an important challenge for those who now contest organizational orthodoxy.

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