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Restating a politics of ‘the public’

Janet Newman

Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University

j.e.newman@open.ac.uk

Nearly a decade ago Maureen Mackintosh, introducing a special issue of *Soundings* on ‘The Public Good’, commented that “we seem to have lost confidence in our ability to construct a public sphere which promotes the public good”. While people continued to pursue efforts to sustain and nurture public services, public speech and public action they did so “against a tide of malevolent divisiveness which has its roots in public policy”¹. The debates on how notions of the public and publicness are being remade in contemporary politics and culture have continued in *Soundings* and elsewhere. Yet I remain deeply concerned about the difficulty of speaking the language of public and publicness in contemporary discourse. Despite the focus by all of the main political parties on public services – this is one of the areas in which any notion of ‘clear blue water’ between Labour and Conservative appears elusive – the publicness of those services is viewed as somehow outdated, part of the old world of the universal welfare state rather than the new world of flexibility, modernity and consumerism.

But this is not just a matter of looking back regretfully (and nostalgically) at a vanishing social democratic public sphere. The simple equations of publicness and state can no longer hold, especially if we take account of the critiques of the social democratic state that emerged from a succession of social movements over the last three decades. Given the new forms of politics these produced, how can we now understand the shifting configurations of ‘the public’ while at the same time attempting to defend it from the onslaughts of neo-liberalism? In this paper I want to

¹ *Soundings*, 4, winter 1996

address a key dilemma - a dilemma that comes out of my own experience of crossing and re-crossing the boundary between academic work and what those outside the academy like to call 'the real world'. As an academic I am aware of a range of writings from cultural theorists - Raymond Williams, Michael Warner, Clive Barnett that have problematised the idea of a simple duality between public and private; and of the work of feminist scholars - Ruth Lister, Ann Phillips, Iris Marian Young - who have pointed to the structural exclusions from the public domain of citizenship and the limitations of its democratic institutions. Indeed the language of public domain, public sphere, public realm all imply a rather spatial metaphor that fails to capture the mobile, elusive and shifting character of publicness. However I also remain someone who is closely engaged with the fortunes of the public sector, of those who work in it and those who benefit from it (or not) - and as such I want to argue that the publicness of public institutions and public discourse is something to be struggled over.

In what follows I begin by delineating some of the terrains in which the contemporary politics of the public is being struggled over. Rather than a single dynamic - based around a state/market binary - I argue that a number of different dynamics are at stake. I go on to trace how these dynamics inform contemporary struggles around the remaking of public policy, public services and public institutions under New Labour. Finally I suggest ways in which it might be possible to work towards restating a politics of publicness. To do so, I argue, it is important to go beyond social democratic conceptions of the public sphere.

The politics of the public

This is a moment at which struggles over what is and what is not a public matter are intensifying. They encompass struggles over security with the dismantling of protections of privacy following 9/11 and the emergence of a new politics of fear; struggles over the environment, and the private abuse of global resources; struggles around sexuality, including how far the state may regulate or intervene into the private, what sexualities are publicly recognised and what practices may occupy public space; struggles over issues of reproduction following challenges to the personal integrity of the body through advances in genetic engineering (and indeed

the ownership of those technologies); and even struggles over that most personal moment, death, with more and more conflicts about the right to die hitting the headlines and with debates about who can decide to terminate life support systems intensifying. In the UK the question of whether financial provision for income in old age is a matter for the state, for employers or personal prudence is moving to the centre of the political agenda, while the extent of the role of the market in the provision of higher education, healthcare and social care will continue to be contested.

Now across those struggles we can trace a lot of confusions in the definitions used. Privacy may be viewed as a negative freedom from incursions of the state, a private domain of domestic and personal life, or the privacy of the consumer making individualised choices in the marketplace rather than subscribing to collective provision of public services. Publicness may denote the Habermasian public sphere of communicative rationality and democratic engagement; can mean the public sector, publicly owned resources, public space, public values and so on. However the shifting boundary between public, private and personal is not just a matter of definitional nicety – it is the focus new governmental processes through which the boundaries are reordered, and of active contestation, border skirmishes and infringements. I want to offer four quick examples of this reworking of public and private, each involving different forms of slippage between political, economic and moral inflections.

The first concerns the 2005 legislation on civil partnerships, enabling gay and lesbian couples a measure of public legitimacy. This has been the result of a long struggle, and the struggle is by no means over. The example shows how public legitimacy for private relationships is informed by changing cultural norms and how such norms may be inscribed and institutionalised in legislation. But it also opens out questions about the boundary between public and private space, and what kinds of sexualities may – and may not - be performed publicly. For gay and lesbian couples the public performance of sexual identity is still heavily circumscribed, especially outside ‘metropolitan’ public space. And the apparent liberalisation in one area is offset by deepening concerns about the loss of earlier gains in others. Domestic violence, abortion, and reproduction are issues that women struggled to get on the public agenda in the 19th and 20th centuries, but which in the 21st are the focus of efforts by the moral right in a new politics of the personal that seeks to reassert patriarchal

authority and a conservative moral agenda. Such issues highlight not only the contested boundary of the personal and the public, but also that between moral and political inflections of gender and sexuality. And, as the impact of the infamous Section 28 [that banned the ‘promotion’ of homosexuality in schools, youth organisations and other public institutions] shows, morality and politics form an unhappy conjunction in the framing of public policy.

My second example also relates to the personal/public boundary, eliding the distinction between personal belief and public culture. This is a site of historical tensions between church and state, tensions taking new forms in the context of the importance of ‘faith’ issues in defining and delimiting – and often essentialising – notions of multiculturalism. In 2004 the Birmingham Repertory Theatre launched a series of plays designed to reach out to black and other minority ethnic publics. Despite attempts by the Theatre to engage in extensive consultation, one play – *Bhezti* - drew vocal protests from what the press termed the local Sikh community. Now the notion of an integrated, univocal Sikh community is of course deeply problematic. It masks differences of gender and generation, differences that were very significant here since the play depicted incidents of domestic violence against women in a holy Sikh place. Not only does this raise issues of how the boundary between public and personal is culturally contested, but also highlights the question of who can speak about – and for – communities; who has a public voice and whose voices are silenced. This is enormously important in the context of current policies designed to extend and enhance public participation in both the shaping of policy and in the delivery of services. The example also suggests ways in which public space – inside the theatre as well as the square outside in which the demonstrations took place - is differently inhabited and experienced, and what happens when the borders of such spaces are contested.

Notions of public and personal are also implicated new strategies for governing the social by rendering more of the personal available for public scrutiny and public intervention. Rather than the demise of the authoritarian paternalism of the welfare state, we can see its extension in a range of policies that address how we should live our lives. These include policies on anti-social behaviour that attempt to make parents responsible for the behaviour of their children; the ‘welfare to work’ policies that

include the need for unemployed people to work to a personal development plan to re-equip them for the workplace; policies linked to the new ‘personal prudentialism’ that is, in part, supposed to solve the problem of the looming pensions crisis, and many others. Two examples from the health service are particularly noteworthy. The first is that some health authorities and trusts are now willing to explicitly – rather than implicitly – prioritise treatment for patients who conform to particular norms. For example the East Anglia NHS Trust announced in December 2005 that patients who were seriously obese may be denied hip or knee replacements in an attempt to stave off the Trust’s debts. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence picked up this issue in a report emphasising the importance of cost effectiveness in judgements how far ‘self inflicted’ medical conditions such as smoking might have an impact on the type of treatments given. This ‘publicises’ a debate about medical judgements that previously were the province of informal rationing by individual clinicians. The second example is the ‘expert patient’ scheme through which patients with long standing illnesses are given training in how to manage their own treatment more effectively. This is an interesting conjuncture of two different imperatives: the professional drive towards patient involvement and empowerment in order to secure better health outcomes, and a more resource driven imperative to reduce pressure on GP surgeries and to shift the burden of costs from expensive interventions (especially hospital admissions) towards lower cost preventative work. Both of these examples suggest the significance of ‘responsibilisation’ as a way of redrawing the boundary between public services and private responsibility, a particularly significant dimension of the retreat from the social democratic welfare state. But both also suggest ways in which the publicness of public services is a site of ongoing strain.

My final example concerns what is probably the dominant strategy for remaking the public – that is, its abandonment in the face of marketisation and privatisation. However we can trace moments that apparently challenge that dominant strategy. In the last 12 months we have seen the retreat by the Secretary of State for Health to a proposed policy to introduce markets into community health services, and significant back bench parliamentary resistance to the Education Bill in 2005. The example I have chosen is the pressure put on the Blair government by Jamie Oliver’s campaign to improve school dinners. Jamie Oliver condenses both the impact of heroic images from the worlds of commerce and celebrity on the public sector, and the importance

of the media in shaping and reshaping ideas of what is and is not a public matter. Despite the early promise of more funds from government to improve school meals it emerged that new schools built under the private finance initiative could do little because they were locked into 25year contracts, while other schools would have to pay significant financial penalties to opt out of long running contracts with private catering companies. The Turkey Twizzler lives on.

Across these examples – the legalisation of civil partnerships, the Sikh protest, ‘responsible’ or ‘expert patients’ and Jamie Oliver - I have sketched a number of different dynamics at stake in the politics of remaking the public. These can be summarised as:

- *going to market* - the increasing use of the market for the provision of public goods and the potential displacement of collective identifications and allegiances that this produces
- *obscuring the public* - the turn to public/private partnerships, contracting and network forms of coordination that obscure the boundaries between state, market and civil society
- *publicising the personal* - new governmental strategies of responsabilisation and more direct forms of intervention into how we live our personal lives
- *contesting publicness* – struggles over spaces and around acts of publicness in the context of multi-cultural and differentiated societies.

In what follows I want to trace ways in which these contradictions are played out in the reform and modernisation of public services, beginning with the strategy of ‘going to market’.

Going to market

The contracting out of public services is a process that challenged the clarity of the boundary between public and private: that is, it not only externalised some services but also brought the logic of the market deep inside those that remained public. This is a process that has continued with later initiatives – best value, purchaser/provider splits, public/private partnerships, and so on. Each is predicated on a search for economy and efficiency, balanced – in theory – by the requirement for accountability to be inscribed in the new mechanisms of contract and the proliferation of audit and

other regulatory measures². However concepts such as economy and efficiency – and indeed accountability – have to be understood as social constructs whose meaning is struggled over in the process of tendering and contracting. The process of social construction and meaning making have very significant consequences, not only for the distribution of resources between public and private sector but also for the identities of those engaged in the transformation of the public sector – whether inside (the transformation of bureaucrats and professionals into managers) or outside (bringing commercial, third sector and community organisations into new forms of governmental power through the contracting process).

The dynamics of remaking the public takes place across a field of structured inequalities. The school meals example included a call for better pay for dinner ladies so that they could have time to cook freshly prepared food, as opposed to composing pre-packaged meals from suppliers. Now dinner ladies are an example of the kinds of worker that moved from public to private sector in the marketising reforms of the 1980s and 1990s and whose wages, conditions and quality of work suffered, alongside their capacity to deliver public value – whether this is defined in terms of healthy children, clean hospitals or the quality of life for those in need of long term care. This opens out a different kind of politics of the public, raising issues about who is employed in what conditions as well as what kinds of work are deemed to be a public or collective responsibility. And it is a very gendered politics. The welfare state can be viewed as making public – and institutionalising - women’s domestic and emotional labour. Its modernisation involves a number of gender dynamics. The shifting of responsibility from the public to the personal sphere, where it still tends to be women who pick up responsibility for forms of welfare that have been privatised onto individuals and families, takes place at the same time that women are being encouraged to be full worker citizens through various welfare to work schemes, as well as being active citizens in the new policies on community and service user participation. The gaps opened up in these contradictory imperatives are filled in part by the further stretching of the elasticity of women’s labour, and in part through the development of a new service economy of domestic and personal services – an economy peopled by migrant labour. It is workers in this marginal economy of low

² Rustin 2004: Soundings 26.

paid, flexible and vulnerable employment that experience most acutely the stresses created by the withdrawal of the state, picking up responsibility for forms of welfare that have been privatised onto individuals and families as well as experiencing successive waves of intensification of their own paid work.

Obscuring the public

The dynamics of going to market serves to residualise the public in its instantiation in a public sector, but also has the effect of obscuring the public/private boundary so that it becomes more difficult to debate and contest what is and is not a public matter. Geoff Andrews³ argues that “a key component of the Third Way of managing public services is the idea that forms of ownership are no longer important: that it is how things are delivered that counts”. This assumption is clearly one that opens up the state to more and more extensive processes of marketisation. However I want to argue that in New Labour’s struggle for legitimacy - in what Johnson and Steinberg term its ‘war of persuasion’ - the *appearance* of publicness is crucial⁴. This takes different forms in different services and has contradictory effects. In health the idea of the NHS as a public institution is critical to Labour’s political platform; however it is in health that the ethos of consumerism has perhaps been most extensively applied, with commercial treatment centres enabling Health Authorities to offer their ‘customers’ shorter waiting times and some (albeit highly constrained) ‘choice’ of provider. In education the use of PFI to build new schools has gone relatively unmarked, while the issue of commercial sponsorship of books, computers and other resources has been hotly contested. At the same time the rise in MRSA infection rates in hospitals, and the quality of school meals, have been deemed public matters that require government intervention. However the privatisation of cleaning and catering services under the Tories that, arguably, lies at the root of such problems failed to be put on the public or political agenda. What we can see is the residualisation of the public in its institutional embodiment in the state taking place at the same time as its augmentation in political discourse.

³ Soundings 22, 2003

⁴ Johnson, R and Steinberg, D, eds (2004) *Blairism and the War of Persuasion: Labour’s Passive Revolution*. Lawrence and Wishart.

To understand these contradictions we need to distinguish between different kinds of relationship between the public and the state, private business and the market. “If they are all lumped together and the term ‘privatisation’ used to inspire loathing, rather than understanding, the effect will be to close debate that needs to be stimulated”⁵ Rather than a single logic – privatisation – the residualisation of the public rests on multiple logics in complex remaking of forms and relationships of power. However their very multiplicity and complexity – contracts interwoven inside contracts, multiple forms of partnership, the explosion of regulatory and audit bodies, and more recently the turn to new collaborative relationships with citizens themselves – serves to mask where the publicness of public services or the public interest is now to be found.

This tendency is exacerbated by the rise of managerialism as the dominant logic of coordination. In *The Managerial State*⁶ John Clarke and I traced how the dispersal of state power under Thatcherism was only possible because of the significance of managerialism as a coordinating rationality, one that inscribed new logics of decisionmaking and reshaping regimes of power across the public sector. These logics and rationalities came to the centre of government with New Labour, permeating its programme of modernisation and introducing a strongly managerial style of politics itself. It is not my intention here to try and retrace the extensive analyses of New Labour that have taken place in *Soundings* and elsewhere over the last decade; but I do want to highlight the importance of looking at how the tensions at the core of the Third Way were played out in public policy and in Labour’s modernisation agenda (see Newman 2001)⁷.

Publicising the Personal: making up managers

There are of course many ways in which contemporary governance strategies involve an attempt to manage the person: encouraging citizens to take greater responsibility for their own health, to be active citizens in self governed communities, to manage their own disruptive or truanting children more effectively, and so on. One that has

⁵ Brendan Martin *Soundings* 28.

⁶ Clarke, J and Newman, J (1997) *The Managerial State: power, politics and ideology in the remaking of social welfare*, Sage.

⁷ Newman, J (2001) *Modernising Governance: New Labour, Policy and Society*, Sage,

received rather less attention is the opening up of public service actors to new strategies of self management and self regulation. The tensions in New Labour's programme of modernisation - between the centralisation of power and increasingly managerial style of governance on the one hand, and the increasing emphasis on local involvement and empowerment on the other - create spaces that allow the possibility of agency on the part of state and non state actors. This raises the question of who public service managers think they are. Managerial roles and identities are discursively constituted. This is one of the ways in which the boundary between personal and public is remade through governmental strategies, opening up the personal commitments, allegiances and linguistic resources of professionals and administrators to new governmental strategies. Workers in and beyond the state have to undertake extensive performative work when taking on a managerial persona and adopting managerialism as a legitimating discourse⁸.

This mention of performativity conveys, I hope, the sense that new discourses – however powerful – are not necessarily successful in constituting new subjectivities: we have to go beyond the 'discovery' of discourse and analysis of its logics in order to explore ways in which new discourses are articulated with others in complex re-workings of identity and social practice. My work with senior civil servants, local government workers, professionals in health, probation, social care and those working in the voluntary sector over the last two decades has taught me the importance of identifying what happens in the spaces created when traditional commitments and affiliations - to local communities, to service users, to staff – encounter new managerial ideologies of delegation and empowerment. Public service professionals and managers are well able to inflect older forms of politics - drawn from feminism, community activism, trades unionism - with new political rationalities, or to articulate professional values - based on vocabularies of need or of user empowerment - with new discourses of consumerism and choice⁹.

I don't want to romanticise public service professionals and managers as defenders of publicness – it is, after all, through their agency that governmental power is enacted

⁸ Clarke, J, 'Performing for the public: doubt, desire and the evaluation of public services', in P.du Gay, ed, *The Values of Bureaucracy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁹ Newman, J 2005 'Network governance, transformational leadership and the micro politics of public service change'. *Sociology*, October.

and managerial power embedded. But I do want to highlight their role in managing the contradictory logics of reform – and the importance of studying how they negotiate the tension between business accountability and a wider sense of cultural or ethical responsibility¹⁰. And I want to suggest that such questions are becoming more important as the generation who grew up and began working in the Thatcher years come through into senior management and policy roles.

Contesting publics

One of the features of contemporary developments in public policy is the turn to consumerism. In a recent research project at the Open University¹¹ - ‘Creating citizen-consumers: changing relationships and identifications’ – we studied the ways in which policy documents attempted to resolve a number of contradictions facing New Labour, in particular ways in which they sought to reconcile a social democratic language of equality with the discourse of flexibility, responsiveness and choice. In the process the idea of a solidaristic public, and its instantiation in national institutions such as the NHS, is dismantled in favour of a shallow and individualised conception of personal choice. This, as one of Blair’s speeches indicated, was intended to bind the middle class into continued support for public services, rather than to produce an assault on the idea of a publicly provided and publicly funded NHS. However the effects are rather different when combined with the idea of ‘money following patients’ in an increasingly competitive field in which the private sector is invited to play a more and more significant role. We can, then, see a double process of transformation in which the idea of a solidaristic public is being dismantled at the same time as the national institution that in part sustained it is being fragmented (through decentralisation to quasi independent foundation hospitals as well as through increasing reliance on market mechanisms and competition).

However alongside this erosion of national solidarities we can see an increasing governmental concern with ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ as a new locus for strategies of social inclusion. An array of policies- especially from the Home Office-

¹⁰ Newman, J 2004 ‘Constructing accountability: network governance and managerial agency’. *Public Policy and Administration*, 19, 4: 18-35.

¹¹ www.open-university/socialsciences/citizenconsumers

have focused on the importance of ‘active communities’ and indeed ‘faith communities’ as both the foundation of and expression of ‘modern’ citizenship. These developments have been well covered elsewhere (REF TO A SOUNDINGS PIECE?). My interest here is in how these two developments intersect with each other. They imply a remaking of the imagined spaces and places of citizenship from something held in common to something that is localised or specific. Contestation, then, is to be on local matters, and is to take place through managed processes of deliberation and participation, ultimately producing, it is hoped, the holy grail of the self managed community. This is unlikely to be successful as a strategy; however the double dynamic has important and troubling implications for the terrain on which publicness is contested.

And public services are deeply implicated in this double dynamic. They embody the turn to the local in an array of community endeavours, from the renaming of public libraries as community libraries or community hubs to the devolution of (some) functions from local authorities to area or ward committees or the establishment of community health centres. But this means having to reconcile competing views of community and of ownership in the management of these new governance spaces. At the same time public services are also required to manage the interface between ‘top down’ government targets and their own wider visions and strategies against the demands, views or choices emanating from the ‘communities’ they engage with or the ‘customers’ they are encouraged to serve on an individualised, personalised basis. The policies and strategies of New Labour have been directed towards the involvement of the public in the process of governance, either as participants in decisionmaking on local services or as consumers charged with driving up the performance of those services by their demands and choices. One of the things I want to emphasise here is the increasing focus on service specific, community or project based patterns of public engagement. Deliberative forms – citizens juries, area committees, liaison panels, senior citizens forums, user groups constituted by specific services for the purposes of consultation - all form encounters in which notions of publicness, the public interest, public value are being negotiated around *local* or *service specific* issues in a multitude of dispersed sites. Such forums introduce the idea of the recasting the public sphere around a politics of user empowerment or community participation. This is different from the turn to consumerism and choice in the current

reforms of public services, but intersects with it in important ways. Both suggest ways in which individuals and communities are being constituted as partners and collaborators in the process of governing. However both also demonstrate the possibilities of new forms of claims making – by individuals, by user movements, and by agencies speaking in the name of the consumer. And they raise questions about the kinds of social and political imaginary being opened up and closed down in the remaking of publics. The social democratic state embodied hierarchical relationships between government and people based on liberal notions of citizenship. The remaking of publics in participative, consumerist and community locales serves to recast the public sphere as a series of horizontal spaces. Such a process is one that pervades New Labour policy documents, including a Demos pamphlet by Tessa Jowell on rebuilding the public sphere¹². It is one that serves to displace the possibility of wider justice or equality claims.

Now responsive services or community engagement have to be viewed as positive rather than negative developments – but I want to highlight what happens when these strategies intersect with a different set of processes at stake in the remaking of publics. This is the displacement of the ‘public’ with the language of the ‘social’: social investment, social capital, social inclusion, social cohesion and so on. In each the social is collapsed into the economic in a way that marginalises and residualises the public. This is a process whereby public investment - in infrastructure, transport, and public facilities such as libraries – has become increasingly subordinated to a focus on social investment: that is, investment in the capacity of future citizens to flourish in globalised economy. Indeed the public tends to be associated with old fashioned imagery of welfare state, and with a number of public institutions – the BBC, public libraries and museums, and even the Open University - all associated in the Jowell paper with an historical – and now somewhat outdated - notion of a collective public sphere.

Restating the politics of the public

¹² Jowell, T (2005) *Tackling the ‘poverty of aspiration’ through rebuilding the public realm*. Demos.

What I have been trying to argue is that the remaking of the public is played out around a number of different struggles. It is not one logic (privatisation) but a plurality of competing logics that create multiple spaces that social actors can engage with. However beyond Soundings – and sometimes even within it – debates about the politics of the public tend to be framed in terms of state/market binary. That is, the focus tends to be on the marketisation of goods or services previously provided by the state and /or ways in which the state can regulate or manage the market in the wider public interest. This is, of course, crucial; however other ways in which the boundaries between notions of the public and various forms of private and personal are being remade have received rather less attention. As the title of a 2004 book suggests, the dominant response is one that emphasises the importance of *Restating the State*¹³. This form of social democratic response tends to be based on a single narrative of decline (of the public sphere) and a single logic that drives it (marketisation). It is a conception that views the public sphere as spatially and temporally fixed; that locks us into a traditional notion of the public as clearly distinguished from the private; and that offers a view of the public sphere as a domain of rational deliberation that can be clearly marked from the passions and pleasures of the personal or the commercialised relationships of the market. Crucially, it also misses the gender subtext of the duality between public and private. One of the most prolific commentators on the decline of the public, David Marquand, has argued that “if the personal is politicised, or the political personalised, the public and private domains are both likely to be twisted out of shape”¹⁴. This looks back – nostalgically – to the golden days of the clarity and simplicity of class based politics, sidelining the incursions of the social movements that brought new issues and agendas into the public domain. It is organised around a state/market binary that collapses the complexity of the ways in which lives are lived, and that returns us to essentialist conceptions of individual identity and subjectivity. As such it offers a relatively narrow politics of the public sphere – one that fails to adequately acknowledge new claims for voice and justice. And it locks us into a conception of the public sphere delimited by the nation state. This sidelines questions about the global impact of national policies – how, for example, the growth based assumptions underpinning the

¹³ Gamble, A and Wright, T (2004) *Restating the State*.

¹⁴ Marquand, D (2004) *Decline of the Public: the hollowing out of citizenship*. Polity Press.

UK policy agenda produces inequalities for ‘other’ publics, or how dominant UK/EU policy paradigms impact on the governance capacities of nations outside ‘old’ Europe.

The contradiction I set out at the beginning of this paper – how to hold on to the complexity of public and publicness while also being committed to its importance - defines the space of being able to restate a politics of the public. Rather than retelling the social democratic story of decline I have argued for an approach that focuses on how notions of the public are being *problematized, obscured, remade and contested* through New Labour’s strategies of modernisation. These are not a single project that can be collapsed in the grand narrative of neo-liberalism, nor indeed in the Giddensian story of the individuation and differentiation of ‘the social’ in a plural societies. Rather, they oscillate around the contradictions at the heart of the political project of New Labour – and perhaps will also be at the core of the ‘neo-conservatism’ of David Cameron’s bright and shiny new Tory party.

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