

Narrating subversion, assembling citizenship

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In this chapter, we use two stories – one about citizens and one about non-citizens – to explore some of the issues that are brought into view by the phrase ‘subversive citizens’. These stories generate three such issues for us: first, what is it that is being subverted in the active engagement of people as workers in or users of public services or public institutions? Second, what does it mean to call these actors ‘citizens’ – in what ways is this identity significant (and how does it differ from other terms such as worker, user or resident)? Finally, how do we understand the field of relationships in which such actors act? That is, how is the practice of subversion located, framed and understood? The stories have been told to us by friends and colleagues – they are drawn from their work and experience, rather than our own. But each of the stories, when we heard them for the first time, provoked puzzled reflections on what was at stake when citizens (and non-citizens) acted in these particular settings.

We begin with some thoughts about the field of relationships in which these actions take place. Subversion, like related conceptions of transgression or resistance, tends to frame social fields in binary terms. Some of these are captured in topographical metaphors (the distinction between top down and bottom up approaches, or between centre and periphery for example). Some distinguish between policy and implementation, or policy and practice – in which the objectives of policy may be subverted or inflected in practice (by ‘street level bureaucrats’ or by innovative users). Some approaches argue that policy is co-produced – both in terms of outcomes, and in terms of the content of policy itself (refs). All of these point to important ways of moving beyond a transmission belt model of central policy which is devolved through chains of command, using implementation levers until it is turned into practice. It is important to escape such linear and mechanical conceptions of the policy process. However, there is a risk that ideas of co-production, of resistance and subversion still work with an overly coherent and centralised conception of policy – as something that may simply be resisted and/or subverted.

Rather than distinguishing policy and implementation, power and resistance, we want to understand these subversive citizens (and non-citizens) as multiply located with

fields of relationships. In such a view policies may be seen as **condensates** (combining possibly contradictory or incoherent imperatives, objectives and discourses, see, for example, Clarke et al., 2006 and Ball, 2007?). Policies also form part of the processes of governing the social, being one element in a series of unstable relationships and practices that produce contested outcomes. Contestation may be thought to be particularly evident where 'responsibilised' citizens as front line staff confront citizen service users/communities who are the target or focus of 'responsibilising' policies – on labour market activation, recycling, good parenting, the control of antisocial behaviour and other dimensions of 'social' governance. Yet contestation is inherent to other relationships – those between politicians and civil servants, between politicians and civil society actors, between central and local government, between different 'civil society' actors with different interests, between senior managers and 'business units', between public and private sector actors involved in 'contracting for outcomes', and between the array of 'stakeholders' assembled in the partnership bodies that litter the policy landscape. If policy is thought of as emergent, dynamic and negotiated, 'subversion' takes the form of a thousand small negotiations; contestation is inherent to the dynamic of governance rather than being fixed in particular actors who are seen as 'adapting' or 'modifying' a fixed policy text.

In trying to formulate alternative ways of understanding the field we have turned to rather different theoretical resources. These are drawn from current work on rethinking the dynamics of publics and publicness (Newman and Clarke, forthcoming). One set of resources focuses on reworking governance theory to provide more nuanced understandings of the relationship between governmental projects and the social formations and social actors that are the object of change. Ideas of *governing the social* provide one means of making connections between and across projects and actors. Recognising the importance of governance and governmentality as theoretical innovations that decentre the state, we have – elsewhere - explored how ideas of governing might both draw on such innovations and overcome some of their limitations. (REFS?)

This leads us to think about governing as combining apparatuses, processes, actors, relationships and practices, rather than merely institutions, discourses or strategies. In this context policy theories, instruments and technologies can be understood as part of **assemblages** rather than as temporally separated elements of a cycle of actions and effects. This focus on assemblage also highlights the importance of

particular kinds of agents: translators, mediators and transactors. This in turn opens up questions about 'practice' and 'practices'. 'Assemblage' is a concept usually associated with the actor-network theories of Latour, Callon and others (e.g. Latour 2005, Callon 1986); but it has also been developed within anthropology (Li, 2007, Ong, 2006, Sharma 2008). It is these latter that we have found helpful in conceptualising the ambiguous spaces in which diverse elements may be mobilised, combined and made effective - or not. The concept of assemblage points to the practices that bring together multiple sets of ideas, apparatuses, personnel and practices into apparently coherent entities that function as ways of governing. Sharma, writing about empowerment as a vital assemblage in the attempted reconfiguration of relations between government and people in India, defines assemblage as 'an evolving formation and flexible technology of government that potentially encompasses different meanings and methods, rather than a singularly coherent discourse and method' (2008 MS p 35). She argues that dominant ideas and hierarchies are contested; that maintaining them requires work, and that such work entails assembling features of hegemonic and counter hegemonic ideas and practices into new ensembles. Assemblage, then, offers some conceptual leverage for understanding 'resistance', pointing to both the work of assembling (the building of assemblages) and their vulnerability to coming apart (under the strain of maintaining their internal connectedness and under pressure from counter-movements).

In the context of work on the governance of anti-social behaviour in the UK, Painter argues that

it is impossible to draw a line between 'state' and '(civil) society'. A range of partnerships, community organisations and voluntary bodies are enrolled not only as the objects of policy, but as the agents of policy too. This is not a classic case of Foucauldian governmentality in which individual members of the population come to be implicated in their own subjectification. Rather, the picture is one of a diverse set of assemblages that effectuate (or sometimes fail to effectuate) particular kinds of state effects. These assemblages are necessarily hybrids of nominally state and nominally non-state institutions, practices and actors. Each assemblage comprises numerous prosaic relationships and activities....The production of the state effect – fighting anti-social behaviour – thus depends not only on myriad mundane and prosaic practices, but also on those practices successfully combining in the particular

time-space configuration that will enable the magistrate to make the order, that will allow the anti-ASB machine to *work*. And of course sometimes it doesn't. The approach advocated in this paper stresses that stateness is failure prone, partial and never completely fulfilled (Painter, 2006: 767-8).

This reminds us that new governing projects may be unstable. Such instabilities may result from contested views of the definition of the field of action; conflicting political, policy and business agendas; and ambiguities around the forms of power and professional/lay/business expertise that are to be viewed as legitimate.

NEXT raise the problem of agency and resistance as opposites- assemblages bring together, align and condense what might be thought of as hegemonic and counter hegemonic projects, discourses, acts and identities. Yes, but only with hegemonic as a question of power, alliances, articulating subordinate positions, voices etc— and not as submission to a singular principle.

Do Sharma here?

Stories

But assemblage offers a rather flat topography, while notions of subversion and realignment have an important temporal dynamic. What may make little sense at a given moment – the partnership board meeting, the encounter between 'officials' and 'civil society' actors, the participative planning initiative – comes to be reframed, given a narrative flow. Subversion may be a concept that is difficult to hold on to in the context of the reframing of policy we have engaged in above, but nevertheless offers a satisfactory narrative framing of some such events. We focus in what follows on 2/3/x accounts of the dynamics at stake in specific policy enactments. We have chosen in each case to focus on local struggles, emphasising the significance of the local as: the site in which many struggles take place; a condensate of wider struggles/patterns; and as the focus of claims making (who 'owns' the local). And in each case the story is constructed, individual stories translated and woven into a whole, by a researcher. This is significant. While Barnes (ch x) challenges the boundary between 'officials' and 'lay publics', arguing that officials bring their own identities as citizens to their role and encounters, we want to argue that researchers

too carry their citizenships into the research process – especially in anthropological or ethnographic studies. Now is not the place to engage with the methodological and ethical issues that this raises; rather we want to suggest that the reading of case studies produced by researchers ‘in the field’ has to take account of the position of researchers, and of the objects (reports, documents, interviews) they produce, as part of local assemblages of resources and power. They are not ‘outside’ assemblages but may be one of the ways in which disparate objects, discourses, actors, identities may be aligned and temporarily stabilized through the process of story writing for the presentation of a ‘case study’.

Story 1: broken promises

This story is told by a Norwegian researcher and is based on her ethnographic study of ‘senior centres’ in Norway. Her ethnographic work traces how plans to make cuts, reduce staff and close centres in one municipality were successfully resisted by citizens; but how citizens remained dissatisfied with the ‘broken promises’ that were made. The researcher is pleased to tell me the story since problems about anonymising key actors meant that publication of the report was delayed, even though it is what she termed a ‘good news’ story. Passing the story on to one of us was a small act of citizenship in its own right since it brings it into the public domain.

Senior centres in Norway developed from the 1950s as a preventative movement on the part of those who shaped the early welfare state in Norway, including physicians. Elderly people – a third of whom are frail and in need of help – attend for meals, activities, advice and other services. Some 25% of participants, most commonly women, also work at centres as volunteers. The research took place in an affluent municipality with a tradition of active community organisations and women’s groups. As such, in the 1960s and 1970s, senior centres were based on co-production arrangements between community organisations and the authorities. However in the 1990s changes in the financing of municipalities led to a search for cuts, and the 2004 budget proposed to concentrate provision in 2 out of the 14 existing centres, with the remainder offering reduced services from a reduced staffing base.

This led to what the researcher termed the ‘big happening’, with a big protest of elderly people to the town hall where the budget was being debated, with much booing of the speakers. The result was not only a partial (50%) restoration of the budget but also a proposal to set up a negotiation process in which 3 elected

representatives of the users of senior centres would take part in discussions with the Radman about the future of the centres. At the same time, however, the Radman established a separate project group charged with finding ways to reduce staff costs. This comprised the senior managers of the two largest centres, the head of the service and trade union representatives. The project group was also to produce a 'dossier' of facts about the senior centres to be used to support the Radman in negotiations with centre representatives. Politicians also set up a separate group which met with senior centre representatives and a wider group of managers.

The eventual agreement between the Radman and the service user representatives was that all centres would remain open and properly staffed, but that the costs of meals would be raised and users would be asked to 'voluntarily' pay for other activities. This agreement was confirmed by politicians, and was widely viewed as a success: the researcher showed a newspaper picture of a smiling group – 3 politicians, 3 user representatives and the Radman – with glasses in hand, smiling and toasting success.

But service users felt cheated when it was discovered that service managers were cutting back on staff in the smaller centres. They felt that they had been part of a genuine process of negotiation, but that all the time managers – and the project team acting in secret - were producing a plan in line with the 'real' intentions of the Radman. More protests and negotiations followed – in some, officials were aligned with service users, in others politicians attempted to distance themselves from plans that had been 'stitched up' between trade unionists and managers; at some points the Radman was a prominent actor, at others he decided to distance himself from the process. A letter of protest was written by the two senior managers of the largest centres, complaining about their treatment by the Radman's representative at a particular meeting, and referred to the undermining of existing policy and rules on staffing. Letters from service user representatives to the Radman carried both implicit and sometimes explicit threats to take complaints to politicians.

The negotiations produced financial concessions that enabled some staff to be restored and some recompense for users who could not afford the new fees. This was, then, an example of the success of public protest; and at the same time an example of the ways in which public protest may be channeled, accommodated and perhaps sidelined. The way in which the account was presented to us left little doubt but that the researcher aligned herself with the expressions of 'good citizenship' and

community activism on the part of service users and volunteers. But as a researcher this identification was subordinated to a sense of responsibility to recount the story fairly and without glossing its complexities and ambiguities – despite the apparent success, there was no sense of closure around a positive outcome.

There are several ways in which secondary analysis on our part might reinterpret this narrative. It could become a tale of micro-politics, with events hinging on the actions of key individuals. The story could be read in terms of the effectiveness – or not – of the general turn to participative governance; or in terms of the inevitable logic of neo-liberal rule, in which small gains on the part of citizens can only provide a temporary stay to the cost reduction imperative, and in which citizen power and agency are readily incorporated. But in the context of this paper we want to suggest the viewing the senior centre service, in this place and this time, as a complex assemblage in which different forces, forms of power, technologies, resources and actors are temporarily and conditionally aligned. We can see the ways in which different alignments of professional, managerial, trade union, political and service user power are produced; but also how such alignments can become unstuck. For example resistance on the part of politicians to the proposals of the ‘project group’ comprising managers and trade unions was possible because right wing politicians resisted the idea of ‘being dictated to’ by the trade unions; but the consensus between left and right was highly fragile. And the fragility of the alignment between the interests of service managers and service users was made evident when it became clear that managers were intending to implement cuts despite the negotiated agreement. ‘Dossiers’ and letters, project groups and consultative forums, were each deployed to try to stabilize events and align actors around a common view of the ‘facts’ of the matter or a consensus about future plans. But these failed, in the end, to resolve the contradictions produced by the clash between different forms of governance; representative, hierarchical, participative, managerial and so on. Neither was there an apparent resolution between conflicting views of active citizenship: that of protest and dissent on the one hand, and that involved in the day to day voluntary work on which the centres depended on the other. We might wonder about how the dynamics between these different versions will be played out, not only in terms of individual citizen identities and the performance of citizenly acts, but also in terms of their contribution to the future of this particular service.

Commentary:

Our question: how to understand/read stories of subversion and recuperation of the taken for granted order. Involves different forms and levels of power: political, professional etc

Our focus on the local:

Problem of how far discourses of citizenship are or are not used

Researcher as part of the assemblage, brings her own citizenship into the process of research

/disparate discourses events made sense of by researchers gathering, ordering and presenting their accounts back to their research subjects and to the wider academic community.

Story 2: Voters in the making or subversive non-citizens

Between 1999 and 2005, Kathleen Coll, an American anthropologist, studied the Immigrant Voting Rights campaign in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This campaign was an attempt gain the right to vote in local elections for non-nationalised residents of Cambridge. Citizenship and nationality are entangled in complex ways – and in the USA, the voting rights of citizens had been more closely tied to the condition of American nationality during the 1920s and 1930s. As a result, residents who have not been nationalised have no right to vote in either local or national elections. The campaign observed by Coll contested the exclusion from the right to vote locally – arguing that as residents who paid local taxes, contributed to the local community in many ways and used public services, they should be allowed to vote in local elections (for the city council and school board, for example).

The campaigners were involved in a programme of simultaneously trying to subvert the legal-national structuring of voting rights in the USA, while borrowing from archetypal features and images of US political culture. Thus, the campaign laid great

emphasis on the character and contribution of these ‘non-citizens’ who nevertheless behaved in citizenly ways: being law abiding, hard working, tax paying residents. More dramatically, they borrowed the core concept that led to the War of Independence: ‘no taxation without representation’. Although attempting to subvert and transform a specific legal and political condition, the campaign deliberately represented its cause as hyper-American – representing the best of Americanism, rather than a threat to the legal and political order. In a forthcoming article. Coll has described one of the key scenes in which the campaign was publicly dramatised:

On May 5, 2003, the dark-oak-trimmed and heavy-curtained chambers of the Cambridge City Council were filled with dozens of city residents including immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. School district employees, small business owners, taxi-drivers, stay-home mothers, immigrant advocates, tenant leaders, community lawyers, perpetual progressive activists, and one anthropologist had shown up on a Monday evening to testify on behalf of a proposal to grant all local residents the right to vote in local elections. Individual speakers represented the major immigrant groups in the city and their economic and racial diversity. Even city councilors who disagreed with the measure listened attentively as speaker after speaker testified to the number of years they had been waiting to naturalize, what it felt like to be unable to vote for School Committee when their children were attending local public schools, and how they identified with Boston Tea Party activists in 1773 who first uttered the slogan of “no taxation without representation.” In these testimonies, immigrant and non-immigrant city residents invoked the history of the practice of non-citizen voting. They also pointed to examples of the practice in other cities in the U.S. and overseas, arguing that universal local suffrage forms a new international norm of advanced democratic practice.

It was an elaborate, ritualized, and well-coordinated performance that discursively placed non-citizen community members at the heart of city life and politics. It also claimed the place for this locality in global debates over the boundaries of the state, the meaning of sovereignty and the reconfiguring of citizenship. At the end of the public testimony, there was discussion amongst the city councilors that mainly included declarations of admiration and personal identification with the contemporary immigrant community as virtuous contributors to the city, just like previous generations before them. While

individual city councilors expressed concern that the measure was “purely symbolic” or inappropriate for a local government, since immigration is the purview of the federal, they all voiced their “deepest respect” for the immigrant Cantabridgians who presented the petition, and assured them that they always had their interests in mind, even though they were not formally part of the electorate. At the same time, opposing councilmen voiced various versions of the position that voting was a sacred right and obligation reserved for legal citizens. (Coll: forthcoming: MS p. 6-7)

The resistance to this campaign both defended the status quo, and suggested that the campaign concealed a greater subversion than it claimed. The status quo explicitly aligned nationality status, citizenship and voting rights. This was the intention of earlier political decisions – at national level – and could not be put aside by local political choices. Moreover, despite the campaign’s insistence that their interest lay in connecting residence and local participation, their opponents saw any concession here as opening the door to a larger subversion. Once the non-naturalised resident could vote locally, what would prevent this being enlarged to the national level – thus dismembering the ties between nationality, citizenship and political rights. In the process, opponents argued, citizenship would itself be ‘cheapened’ and the contributions, struggles and even waiting times of those who had been born to or achieved full citizenship would be undermined.

Coll talks about how the campaign mobilised very different sorts of resources in building the campaign, trying to win support and constructing alliances. They both drew on – and were emboldened by – a variety of transnational connections (material and symbolic). These ranged from activist experiences that some members of the campaign brought with them from their places of departure to the imagery of Dublin as a capital city that had established resident/non-citizen voting. The symbolic value of such Irish examples is strong in the Cambridge/Boston area, given the long history of Irish migration and the power of the real and imagined connections (leading one City Councillor to announce that ‘If it’s good enough for Dublin, it’s good enough for Cambridge’). The campaigners also assembled historical resources (pointing to 18th and 19th century practices of resident/non-citizen voting throughout the USA) and legal research and argumentation to support their case.

In her reflections on these processes, Coll draws out a series of puzzles: what the campaign reveals about the construction of citizens and citizenship; how resources and alliances are mobilised for a specific project of subversion; and how ‘subversive’ struggles are delicately and unstably balanced. She points out how the campaign carefully limited its demands and appeals – always working within a profoundly juridical and ethical discourse about residents as ‘good citizens’ – even when they were aware of the wider field of possibilities that might be at stake in disrupting the relationships between residency, citizenship and political rights. Equally, the opponents of the campaign feared subversion – seeing it as a movement that (intentionally or not) threatened a series of cherished distinctions (legal/illegal residents; residents/citizens) and the status of voters as members of a *political* community.

Here were people evidently acting as good citizens, employing appropriately liberal democratic strategies and discourses, dedicating time and tremendous effort over many years to obtain (an as-yet unattained) supremely modest electoral reform. Yet despite the messiness of their engagement with the state, they also deepened and developed their own critique of citizenship into a more critical political stance. They recognized state power and sought to make their way through it, while battling the dominant notions of citizenship that limit its future political possibilities. This is one example of the kind of dissidence and insurgency that I think has deep roots in American citizenship traditions, but is also rearticulated and remade as new citizen-subjects seek to change the rules of belonging and entitlement in their particular locations.

The trouble immigrant voting rights advocates faced was that in order to wage this particular struggle, they had to engage in a very state-centered legislative process. They spent hours working with local elected officials on language and meeting with state legislators from other districts. Activists who wanted to disrupt citizenship-as-usual found themselves intimately engaged with social groups and institutions that rooted their own legitimacy in either ties to the 17th century Massachusetts Bay Colony or to late 19th and early 20th century waves of European immigration. A vision of disentangling citizenship from the confines of the nation-state in the context of transnational migration from the postcolonial world was not going to move either the local elected officials or the state legislators empowered to allow such a measure to take effect. (Coll, MS 18-19)

Subversion – in this example – becomes not just a characteristic of an act or a movement. Rather, it is an idea that actors in the situation deploy, negotiate and try to manage. For the campaign’s opponents, identifying the subversive possibilities ‘behind the limited and legalistic claims-making of the campaign was itself a tactic to undermine the claim. This should not surprise us, of course. Defenders of the status quo often raise the stakes around particular issues by pointing to how demands may put cherished values, institutions, practices or even ways of life ‘at risk’. Equally, campaigners worked to manage the relationship between the specific claim (residents’ voting) and the other de-stabilising possibilities that it brought into view (the supposed distinction between legal and illegal people; the relation between nation, nationality and citizenship; and even the promises of ‘representation’ itself).

Comment:

We want to draw out three points here, concerning the reach of subversion, the question of assemblages and the problematic politics of citizenship as seen by the researcher herself. First, then, demanding residents’ voting rights for local elections may appear a small and not very subversive step in the long drawn out saga of voting rights in the USA (and elsewhere). Often such processes appear as legal or even technical matters. However, the Cambridge campaign – and others like it – indicate that subversion may not be a process of changing or challenging specific policies, regulations or statutory positions. Rather it might be the process of bringing into view – rendering visible and uncomfortable – the network of assumptions that sustains and supports the existing field of distinctions, regulations and practices.

Secondly, we can see how the idea of assemblage that we introduced earlier might illuminate dynamics of the situation Coll presents. We can see the campaign for immigrant voting rights as centred on tactics of disassembling an existing arrangement. It carefully and delicately attempts to unlock the ties, connections and articulations of the system of voting rights in the USA and in Cambridge. In doing so, it enrolls a variety of resources into a project of change – legal knowledge, history, local and national popular cultural references, and not least, images of the resident (as hard working, familial, tax-paying etc). This is a struggle not to transform the whole assemblage of voting rights, citizenship and nationality – but to rearrange its elements in a new configuration, to create new spaces, identities, points of access and possibility.

Thirdly, both the example and the issue matter to the researcher in particular ways. The example is intrinsically important – and Coll has committed time and energy to tracking and reflecting on the processes, conflicts and negotiations that it involves. She is reluctant to treat it as ‘merely’ an example of larger structural forces or processes – instead trying to make visible to complex and contradictory dynamics of the campaign and what is/may be at stake within it. But it also links to a larger intellectual and political orientation towards question of citizenship – and especially its relationship to nationality and migration. In that sense, this study connects with other work on migrants and citizenship in the USA (refs) – in which she foregrounds the ways in which people both make and make sense of citizenship in hard times. Anti-immigrant politics have been a powerful strand in US politics during the past two decades – and questions of citizenship and nationality mark a critical meeting point for Coll.

Assembling Power, Subverting Power

Our insistence that acts of subversion take place in a field of relationships points to difficult questions about the place of power in this sorts of analysis. The first concerns the impossibility of treating subversion as part of a dynamic of power and resistance, given the multiple forms of power and authority that will be in play in any one situation. Both the stories presented above demonstrate some of this multiplicity. Both involve actions taken by subordinate social groups, who occupy relatively powerless positions in the national and local social fields of which they are part (as retired older people; as non-national non-citizens). They engage with relatively powerful institutions of public authority and bureaucracy. But in their collective action, they mobilise a variety of resources, including considerable symbolic power (the dignity and deservingness of elders, their rights as respected citizens on the one hand; US iconography and the ‘good standing’ of law abiding, hard-working, family men and women on the other). In the public settings, these symbolic resources disrupt the dominant assemblages – reworking their apparent coherence and solidity. More generally, we think this implies being attentive to the diverse forms of power and authority that are in play in particular situations – rather than assuming that such situations are merely examples of pre-given binary distinctions (whether of class or gender, or even state/citizens).

Our view is, then, closer to what Allen and Cochrane describe as power being 'negotiated in a tangle of interactions and capabilities' rather than the binary of resistance and domination (2007: 1171) But we also think it is important to explore how such negotiations produce situations that are tendentially 'structured in dominance'. How do certain sorts of actors become dominant, how do certain sorts of knowledges become privileged, how do certain sorts of outcomes come to be desired? In the stories, it is possible to see the traces of how these situations are structured in dominance – in Norway, the dominance of managerial calculation and authority forms a central point around which much of the story revolves (managerialism occupying a particular place in the processes of retrenchment and remaking of welfare states in Europe: Clarke and Newman, 1997; Newman and Clarke, 2009). But managerialism is assembled (not always comfortably) with other forms of authority - electoral and public politics; trade union negotiating rights; expectations of citizen entitlement and so on. Equally, the story of Immigrant Voting Rights is structured in dominance around national legal-political authority (the capacity to define the terms of membership). But it too is uncomfortably assembled with other sorts of authority (legal authority may itself be multiple and contested rather than singular; popular discourses of entitlement and desert co-exist alongside the juridical specification of the citizen; and the iconography of a national political culture – 'no taxation without representation' – may be enrolled into new projects).

There is a danger that the concept of assemblage invokes images of horizontal fields of practices from which questions of power differentials and inequalities are bracketed away. However we have tried to indicate how the different elements, actors, texts and resources may be structured in dominance such that some are privileged. In the context of public service partnerships and other governmental projects the work of translating policy and creating and sustaining assemblages tends to be managerial work, or at least work that draws on managerial logics and rationalities as coordinating and framing devices. Such an approach may help explain why those involved in public service work, translating multiple theories and conflicting policy prescriptions in specific sites, or doing the work of maintaining fragile assemblages, find themselves constantly faced with contradictions, dilemmas and paradoxes. Analysing governance does not only produce interesting academic puzzles about the relationship between theory, policy and practice; it suggests ways of making visible some of the material consequences for those implicated in the

processes of governing. And user/citizens/residents refusing the places/roles they are allocated – or at least refusing to play them according to dominant scripts.?

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter we identified three questions to be explored through the stories: What is being subverted? Who gets to act as 'citizens'? And what is the field of relationships in which 'subversion' is located? Turning to the first of these, the two stories suggest that the object being subverted is existing official policy – a specific decision (in the Norwegian case) or a set of legal-political definitions (in the US case). Neither of these stories are about subversion in any larger sense (subverting the social order), though both of them bring into question forms of established authority. Both have potentials – the possibility of movements beyond the immediate situation (as identified by the opponents of the Immigrant Voting Rights campaign, for example). But our interest in these local situations does not mean that they are 'merely local'. These situations are configured by forces, authorities and processes that condense in such localities that are also national and transnational. The managerialism at the centre of welfare service planning decisions in Norway is itself a transnational phenomenon (as are the fiscalising logics of welfare planning, see Prince, 2003, for example). The Immigrant Voting story operates on deeply entangled local (Cambridge, the Boston area, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts), national (US citizenship rules, federalism, and political-cultural iconography), and transnational relationships (the processes of migration, the experience of politicization and political action elsewhere, and the USA's anxiety of about migrants). Answering the 'what is being subverted' question is difficult, not least because so many processes, relations and logics are condensed in particular situations.

Secondly, the two stories (intentionally) demonstrate important issues about who gets to act as 'citizens'. At first glance, it is simple – Norwegian citizens act as citizens of good standing to contest official policy in the name of their entitlements as citizens. By contrast, non-citizen residents carefully avoid the status of citizenship by trying to link local residency and local voting rights. But questions of residence, nationality and citizenship are themselves so deeply entangled in both juridical and popular conceptions of citizenship that the campaigners had to struggle to not 'talk

citizenship' (Clarke, forthcoming). What both stories indicate is how bound up with other categories citizenship is. The Norwegian citizens are also residents, voters, and service users – and they mobilise those different identities and affiliations in the conflict (they are not just abstract citizens – but embodied as older people, residents of a particular place and people who use these particular services). In the US story, the subjects of the Voting Rights campaign position themselves as workers, taxpayers, parents and active members of a local community who wish to become (local) voters (as responsible people). They have to manoeuvre around the question of citizenship given its tightly drawn ties with nationality. But in writing about the case, Coll suggests that they are performing 'citizenly acts', even if they are not citizens. This points to the capacious character of the concept of citizenship which cannot be reduced to questions of formal legal-political status but also includes acts, relationships and (contested) identifications.

Finally, we have tried to indicate the importance of being attentive to the field of relationships in which subversive acts are located and seeing how subversion works within and on particular assemblages. We have tried to show how policy theories, instruments, actors and technologies can be understood as being enrolled within and activated by assemblages rather than as temporally separated elements of a cycle of actions and effects. A focus on assemblage highlights the importance of particular kinds of agents: translators, mediators and transactors. This in turn changes the way in which 'practices' may be understood.

End?

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