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Generative equality, work and the Third Way: a managerial perspective

Introduction

Equality has been ‘the polestar of the Left’,¹ and the redefinition of this concept by Giddens and New Labour marks a significant departure from post-war social democratic goals. Giddens’s Third Way rests on his social theory of modernisation and globalisation, and employs the notion of ‘generative equality’ to propose a new model for social policy. This chapter explores Giddens’s idea of ‘generative equality’ in the form of a critique from a managerial perspective. It is shown that Giddens’s prescriptions for the creation of generative welfare policies and generative equality have much in common with the management literature of the last two decades, which emphasises the importance of individual responsibility and ‘empowerment’ over Taylorist command and control approaches. However, it is argued that Giddens’s use of Maslow’s needs’ hierarchy as a model for the creation of ‘happiness’ and ‘self-actualisation’² is open to the accusation of misrepresentation.

From ‘productivism’ to ‘productivity’

Political traditions can be analysed in terms of their explanatory framework,³ their values and their institutional plans. Giddens’s explanatory framework is both social and political. In Beyond Left and Right he draws on the social theory which he developed in a series of books published in the early 1990s; including: The Consequences of Modernity (1990); Modernity and Self-Identity (1991); The Transformation of Intimacy (1992); and Reflexive Modernisation (1994).⁴ Giddens’s social theory employs a historical periodisation which distinguishes the current era of ‘reflexive modernisation’ from the ‘simple modernisation’ which preceded it. Modernisation involves the application of scientific knowledge to production and warfare, and the diffusion of new forms of transportation and communications technology. The period of simple modernisation extended from the Enlightenment to sometime after the Second World War, the
year of the first satellite TV broadcast being sometimes identified as a watershed. Aspects of simple modernisation include the control of nature, administrative power, industry, the mechanisation of war, the growth of the nation state, liberal democracy, state monopolisation of the means of violence, and capitalist economic relations.5

Despite the far-reaching consequences of simple modernisation, many aspects of traditional society remained unscathed. Traditional societies are mediated by ritual and reproduce themselves in a relatively unquestioning way because they are, in some senses, isolated by the ‘situatedness of place’.6 The locale is minimally affected by external media, and individual members of traditional societies rarely interact with people from other settings because transportation is, compared to the current epoch, both expensive and slow. The traditional locale therefore acts as a sort of ‘cultural container’. Members of traditional societies are rarely exposed to other, different, societies, and have little cause to question either their role or identity. Consequently religious beliefs, eating habits, gender roles, kinship relations and class identities pass from one generation to the next without much modification.

The period of simple modernisation profoundly changed peoples’ lives through industrialisation, mechanised warfare, bureaucratisation, democracy and capitalism but, according to Giddens, left relatively unchanged fundamental aspects of peoples’ lives. He argues that the religious practices, patriarchy, gender roles and kinship ties of traditional society were remarkably persistent in the face of these modernising forces. It is the persistence of tradition in the period of simple modernisation that distinguishes it from the subsequent period of reflexive modernisation. A negative characteristic, which he identifies with simple modernisation, is ‘productivism’, by which he means a psychological tendency towards compulsive and uncritical behaviour in areas of work and consumption.7 In the economic sphere ‘productivism’ is connected with Taylorist mass production8 and therefore, by association, with Keynesian demand management.

Giddens’s account of the process of modernisation includes an analysis of the effect of transport and communications technology on social relations, and this is the essence of his theory of globalisation. The twentieth-century development of rapid transportation, instantaneous broadband communications and global media has facilitated numerous interconnections between geographically distant individuals and societies. These extensive linkages have profoundly affected the relatively impervious locale of the traditional society. Globalisation means that social relations are ‘lifted out’ of their local setting and re-articulated across ‘indefinite tracts of time-space’.9 The linear relationship between space and time, say the distance travelled by the Pony Express in one day, is completely transformed in the twentieth century.10 Accessible jet travel, telephone, internet, email and satellite communications have the effect of ‘annihilat[ing] space through time’.11 The process of globalisation means that the locale is now thoroughly permeated by interconnections to other, distant, places. The extensiveness of these linkages also has the effect of ‘emptying out’ the locale. These profound changes alter the ‘weft
and weave’ of social relations and are most corrosive to the social patterns which sustained traditional society. Giddens argues that the accelerated process of globalisation and associated ‘distanciation’ of social relations in the twentieth century is leading to the development of a post-traditional society: a society in which tradition no longer has a hold. The ‘detraditionalisation’ wrought by the communications revolution is augmented by the generalised application of scientific method (or the Enlightenment principle of radical doubt) to almost all areas of life. Individuals are now invited to question most of what passes as received wisdom, even to the extent of rewriting their own lives’ narratives through counselling, psychotherapy or self-therapy. Taken together, the exposure to other cultures and value systems, and the extension of scientific method to almost all areas of life, lead to a thoroughgoing reflexivity. And it is reflexivity that Giddens identifies as the defining characteristic of the current epoch.

Given the extreme reflexivity of late modernity, the future does not just consist of events yet to come. ‘Futures’ are organised reflexively in the present in terms of the chronic flow of knowledge into the environments about which such knowledge was developed.

It may be helpful here to illustrate Giddens’s use of ‘reflexivity’ with an example. In a traditional society peoples’ understanding of marital difficulties might be informed by a recollection of marriage vows and by the married lives of forebears, relations and friends. In the current epoch a couple experiencing such difficulties would have access to research-based information about the marriage relationship (perhaps via a large survey), and this information would be likely to influence the conduct of the relationship, the possible future scenarios and the steps taken to improve or dissolve the relationship.

According to Giddens detraditionalisation means that everything is now open to question in the discursive space of the global media. Individuals are faced with an unprecedented degree of choice in areas like food, clothing, sexuality, religion, physical appearance and gender, lifestyle and, for the more privileged, work. Intimate relationships are open to question in a way that would have been unthinkable for our grandparents’ generation. Indeed, programmes like Ricky Lake and Tricia involve trials by television of peoples’ intimate relationships in a manner which is indeed consonant with Giddens’s ‘democracy of the emotions’. In the society wrought by globalisation the cultural containers of the old order are placed under the spotlight and, unless defensively cordoned off, are thoroughly permeated by external influences and critically appraised by global media. It is no longer sufficient to refer to the ritual practices and traditions of our forebears, for every choice must now be defended and justified. A defining characteristic of this detraditionalised society is a thoroughgoing reflexivity through which individuals are constantly faced with choices in an era of self-construction, not situation.

Giddens regards increased social reflexivity as a thoroughly positive development which he associates with the self-actualisation of Maslow and Murray. He believes that most people live their lives in a much more active way than, say,
in the 1950s. Detraditionalisation means that people can make active choices in the ‘reflexive project of the self’, forming, and sometimes reforming, their own identities in the light of aspirations and changed circumstances. Social relations must also be actively forged in an era where the social interactions of the locale are less reliable and, where individuals routinely communicate and travel over long distances. In the globalised setting of the current epoch trust must be actively fostered in a way which was previously unnecessary. Thus, in most areas of life people are actively involved in managing their own destinies. In contrast to the compulsive work and consumption orientation of the previous epoch, which Giddens calls ‘productivism’, many peoples’ lives are now characterised by ‘productivity’ in a new ‘post-scarcity’ order:

Productivity stands opposed to compulsiveness and to dependency, not only in work but in other areas, including personal life. There is a close tie between autonomy and productivity. A productive life is one well lived, but it is also one where an individual is able to relate to others as an independent being, having developed a sense of self-esteem.

By extension, ‘productivity’ may be taken to mean the displacement of compulsion by active choices made in the areas of work, diet, body, clothing, identity, sexuality, relationships, lifestyle and politics.

A further distinction which might be drawn between the periods of simple and reflexive modernisation is the move, in almost all areas of life, from a merely reactive to a positively proactive modus operandi.

Social reflexivity and the generative welfare state

In Beyond Left and Right Giddens identifies an inversion of Left–Right politics and an exhaustion of post-war political traditions in which the Conservatives have appropriated the radical agenda through their adoption of neo-liberalism. Social democrats in the Labour Party, on the other hand, have retreated into a backward defence of the welfare state. Giddens’s response to neo-liberalism, particularly in later books like The Third Way and its Critics (2000), is to accept economic arguments concerning supply-side economics over Keynesian demand management, and the tacit knowledge and democracy of the market over central planning. He also appears persuaded by neo-liberal criticism of the welfare state and the dependence it fosters. However, he is opposed to the aggressive individualism of neo-liberalism and wishes to repair damaged solidarities, to find new bases for solidarity, and to reconcile autonomy and independence. He argues that the ‘external’ problems of the current epoch are essentially man-made. Environmental crises and war constitute ‘manufactured uncertainty’ and are reflexively managed, in the sense that every action is undertaken in the light of some knowledge concerning its consequences.

While Giddens embraces socialist values of solidarity, community and social
responsibility, he believes that the changes wrought by globalisation render the centralised socialist state redundant. He characterises post-war social democracy as ‘cybernetic’ and inappropriate to the new conditions described by his social theory. Welfare institutions are in crisis precisely because they are designed to address the conditions of simple modernisation. For example, they assume their recipients will be drawn from relatively homogeneous working-class families where patriarchy is the norm.

Giddens employs his analysis of post-industrial society to propose the notion of positive/generative welfare to create ‘generative equality’. Generative equality emphasises self-development. This is where the welfare state moves away from control of individuals towards the development of individuals. According to Giddens, the original purpose of the welfare state was to bring about desired outcomes as determined ‘from the top’; as Kaspersen notes, the state acts as the provider of a ‘repair mechanism’ which is utilised when things go wrong. In line with the ‘New Right’ movement of the 1980s, Giddens implies that traditional welfare has created coercion, dependence and diminished levels of individual liberty, and has thus placed constraints upon individual action. However, his solution is not ‘less state’ but a challenge to the existing role of the state. Generative policies seek to create conditions that free individuals from constraints and enhance individual happiness and, crucially, allow the autotelic self to develop and to flourish, where

the autotelic self is one with an inner confidence which comes from self respect, and one where a sense of ontological security, originating in basic trust, allows for the appreciation of social difference. It refers to a person able to translate potential threats into rewarding challenges . . . does not seek to neutralise risk or suppose that someone else will take care of the problem; risk is confronted as the active challenge which generates self-actualisation.

Generative policies aim, therefore, to facilitate change that transforms an alienating welfare system, which dictates outcomes from above, into an enabling welfare system that allows individual growth to occur. According to Giddens there are four basic prerequisites for achieving this. First, government must set into motion programmes designed to shift power towards those most in need of the help the welfare system offers. This requires a wholesale recognition that the welfare system exists not to decide on and attempt to create ends; rather, it is there to provide means. Second, in order that effective individual development can take place, conditions must be brought into existence where recipients of welfare can freely exchange information with the providers of welfare about their needs, desires, ideas, and so on. According to Giddens this requires the decentralisation of political power as a ‘condition of political effectiveness because of the requirement for “bottom up” information flow (as well as the recognition of autonomy)’. Third, the prerequisite for this effective information flow must be the creation of an active and sustainable trust between the recipients of welfare and the providing agencies. And, last, recipients of welfare must, in
order for them to effectively function and successfully interact with expert systems, be given extended individual autonomy – a prerequisite of effective personal development.

It can be seen that Giddens is proposing wholesale reform here. The implication is that for generative policies to be successful a ‘mental revolution’ must take place. A mental revolution is required of those ‘at the top’ as well as those ‘at the bottom’. The point is that if existing mindsets prevail – according to which providers of welfare seek control of outcomes and the beneficiaries of welfare are required to satisfy the outcomes set them – then generative policies are ‘dead in the water’. It is therefore pertinent to examine how Giddens sees this mental revolution being achieved. On this specific issue, the parallels between the managerial literature on human resources management (HRM) and Giddens’s prescriptions for generative equality become apparent. The remainder of this chapter explores these parallels.

A managerial interpretation of Giddens’s ‘generative welfare policies’

From a managerial perspective, Giddens’s prescriptions for generative welfare in a post-scarcity society engender a strange sense of déjà vu. That is not to deny its utility in its context; but, from the perspective of the manageralist literature of the last two decades on issues such as the management of change, it strikes some familiar tones. What Giddens argues for, in the context of generative welfare policy, bears a striking resemblance to the fairly prescriptive management literature from the early 1980s onwards. This is usually viewed as a response to the globalisation of capitalism typified by competition from Japan and, more currently, from China and in the Pacific Rim. One of the recurring issues within the HRM literature concerns organisational culture change. The literature addresses management–employee relationships and adopts the premiss that, hitherto, relations were dysfunctional and/or antagonistic.

Legge has noted that ‘in the last ten years, in both the UK and USA, the vocabulary for managing the employment relationship has undergone a change. ‘Personnel management’ has increasingly given way to “human resources management”. In common with the ‘cycle of control’ thesis, embryonic HRM strategies were exclusively management-led – what Salamon refers to as descending participation ‘in so far as management invariably initiates the development for its own purposes’. However, as HRM strategies have developed, more emphasis has been placed upon employee participation. In line with this, management objectives have shifted from attaining control and compliance of the workforce – as suggested by the cycle of control arguments and, more generally, by Taylorist approaches – towards securing the further commitment and co-operation of employees. This has been described as a shift from ‘control’ models to ‘commitment’ models of HRM. The commitment model seeks to attain a ‘mental shift’ in employees’ attitude to work. It aims to foster an intellectual understanding of the needs of the
organisation, the needs of management, and how these link with employees’ performance at work itself. Colloquially, management tends to refer to this as ‘employee buy-in’; in the literature it is generally referred to as the ‘mutuality model’ which creates ‘an organisational climate in which employees feel a sense of positive identification with and commitment to goals of the organisation’.

However, HRM strategies have attempted to push the firm–management–employee relationship one step further. This can be illustrated by looking at one of the more significant HRM developments in organisations in recent years – the adoption of ‘total quality management’ (TQM) programmes. These programmes, as well as being contingent upon ‘mutuality’ in the employment relationship, by their nature imply a management dependence on labour. TQM practices based on the work of Juran, Crosby and Deming dictate that companies have a strategic commitment to constantly improve the quality of their products or services. For instance, in a manufacturing context TQM concentrates on driving down the number of defects; or, in the context of a service industry, it focuses on driving down the number of complaints. From the prescriptive management perspective it can be seen that TQM practices require a shift in an employee’s approach in one key area – his or her orientation to the work task itself. For TQM practices to succeed, employees’ autonomy in the work process must be increased, and responsibility be given for channelling information through team structures and broader interrelating expert systems. This is illustrated by Brown:

> When I went to Japan I saw they actually owned every problem belonging to their job. If a machine broke down, the operators, the members of that team owned that problem . . . if a major problem did arise during production, the entire team would stop, tackle the problem and solve it.

Commonly called ‘empowerment’, this practice purportedly gives employees ownership of the work process (direct participation) and is clearly linked to the development of the Hawthorne experiments in the 1930s and the development into the neo-human relations school. O’Reilly argues that participatory systems, like empowerment in TQM, through offering choices in the work process, develop a sense of responsibility in individual workers. This is because ‘when we choose of our own volition to do something we often feel responsible’. Hence, he makes an important point about control of a process leading to ownership of that process, and he therefore proposes as the likely outcome that the responsibility thus engendered acts to encourage responsible behaviour. So, in the case of TQM, empowerment of the employee at the level of the work process directly translates into ownership of the process of work.

TQM represents the development of a literature which offers largely prescriptive ‘management solutions’ on how to create ‘win–win’ situations, or ‘mutuality’ or ‘unitarism’ or ‘role convergence’, within organisations. Put simply, the literature purports to represent the key to the wholesale creation of employee relations where management and those managed have, in the domain of work,
shared goals and objectives. This has also been described as Japanisation – the most developed version of which would be the creation of the ‘empowered’ employee in a TQM setting.

In broad terms, this genre of the management literature has exhorted a shift away from Taylorist management principles to the more humanistic employee-centred approaches typical of the human relations school. It is this broad shift in emphasis in the management literature that is uncannily mirrored in Giddens’s discourse on generative welfare policy: this is where he proposes a shift away from simple modernisation to reflexive modernisation. From the perspective of the managerialist literature, it would not be unfair to argue that Giddens is selling old wine in new bottles, albeit to a new market keen to find solutions. In managerial terms, Giddens has espoused a Japanisation of state welfare provision, as productivism (Taylorism) moves to productivity (self-actualisation and empowerment).

**Taylorism, welfare and dependence**

Taylorism, the application of ‘scientific management’ to the workplace has, as Giddens rightly points out, proved to be historically limited. However, there is a clear parallel to be drawn in his analysis of the outcomes of state welfare and what would now be described in the management literature as ‘conventional wisdom’ regarding the outcomes of the application of ‘scientific management’. For example, in his work on ‘strategic management’ Brown echoes Peters in his criticisms of scientific management methods. He argues that the application of these methods in an effort to enhance productivity results in the opposite effect. Taylorist methods, he stresses, preclude any chance of management utilising employees’ potential. This is because in the use of such methods employees’ actions are determined by management decisions about how employees should perform various functions – Taylorist techniques are inextricably linked to management control of processes. This creates employees who depend upon management for direction. Management appropriation of control in the productive process thus stifles employee initiative and takes away employees’ responsibility for their actions. In the productive process employees act as they are told to act rather than how they might see fit to act if allowed autonomy. Employees are therefore disempowered by work itself because they disassociate themselves from the outcome of their actions. The upshot is that the products of the productive process are likely to be defective and need a course of corrective action which costs the organisation both time and money. This would be far less likely to happen, Brown argues, if employee initiative and autonomy were fostered rather than stifled by management. Thus, the core of this argument is that attempts to control action occasion undesirable outcomes which need correction at some later stage.

Giddens offers a parallel analysis in his assessment of the outcomes of state
welfare provision. He argues that state welfare systems tend towards control, the setting out of values and the creation of dependence. Furthermore, he stresses that state welfare systems, like the application of Taylorist management techniques, may also yield undesirable outcomes requiring subsequent remedy. Giddens calls this ‘precautionary aftercare’, and it ‘not only means dealing with situations and events after they have happened, but it is closely involved with an actuarial outlook which supposes that the future is in principle predictable’. From a managerial perspective Giddens can be seen to draw from a critique of Taylorism and scientific management in his analysis of the welfare state. Both create dependence, while both are left to pick up the tab for undesirable outcomes. Both create mindsets that may not be conducive to attaining the desired outcomes.

Empowerment, self-actualisation and generative welfare

Thus far, we have attempted to draw a parallel between the managerialist critique of Taylorism and Giddens’s appraisal of welfare provision. We would also argue that there is a parallel between Giddens’s prescriptions for the creation of welfare provision in a post-scarcity society and the managerial prescriptions for a post-Taylorist order. To alleviate the problem of undesirable outcomes, the post-Taylorist management literature emphasises a move towards more humanistic approaches. As we have seen, this involves breaking the traditional relationship between management and employees based on management control and worker dependence, in favour of a relationship typified by interdependence and mutuality. Similarly, Giddens argues that the state must break from its traditional role where it creates dependence and move towards generative policies which break the traditional intrinsic relationship between welfare and state. Both of these perspectives see the empowering of the individual as a prerequisite for the releasing of human potential and thus a fundamental step towards the creation of a ‘new order’. In the management context, the notion of ‘empowerment’ is manifest in participatory systems such as TQM, in which employees are said to develop a sense of responsibility in the workplace as they are given more autonomy and the opportunity to use their initiative in work tasks. The future prosperity of companies lies in the success of tapping this human potential. Similarly, in his analysis of state welfare, Giddens argues that ‘[r]esponsibility in fact accords closely with self-reliance’ and it is the informal economy, and not through state welfare provision, in which human action becomes autonomous and responsible, thereby showing the way for generative welfare.

Giddens uses ‘lean production’ in an attempt to link principles underpinning new managerial production techniques to generative welfare. He stresses that lean production techniques are performed in a ‘rich social context’ and that they can be learned from in a post-scarcity society the aim of which might be to promote the pursuit of happiness. Clearly, Giddens believes that these
forms of production technique tap into more intrinsically human qualities. To illustrate this, he draws from management literature via Murray. He employs Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’, with its emphasis on ‘self-actualisation’, to illustrate the ‘rich social context’ of lean production techniques. It is the attainment of ‘self-actualisation’, inextricably linked to the pursuit of happiness, that Giddens sees as a template for defining the goals of social ‘welfare’ in a post-scarcity society:

Suppose we take seriously the proposition that the aim of good government should be to promote the pursuit of happiness, and that both individual and social ‘welfare’ should be defined in such a way. Let us also accept that happiness is promoted by security (of mind and body) self-respect and the opportunity for self-actualisation.

We have little problem with the proposition that good government should promote the pursuit of happiness and provide the platform for self-actualisation. Our problem is with the use of Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’ as a framework, and the lack of clarity on how, within that framework, self-actualisation is to be achieved. Maslow identified five levels in a hierarchy of needs. Briefly, these are:

1. **physiological needs**: the most basic level of ‘natural’ primary needs; for example, thirst, hunger, sleep. Once these needs are satisfied they no longer motivate, and it is the next level of needs that will then motivate the person;
2. **safety needs**: these are concerned with emotional and physical safety. When safety needs have been satisfied, they no longer motivate and the person is motivated by the next in the hierarchy;
3. **love needs**: these are the intermediate needs, and are best described as social needs, or the need to belong;
4. **esteem needs**: these represent higher order needs of humans – the need for power, status and achievement. Esteem is in this sense self-esteem and the esteem granted one by others; and
5. **self-actualisation**: this is the level at which individuals are self-fulfilled and have realised, or are realising through personal growth, their full potential. It is the culmination of the lower, intermediate and higher needs described above.

Maslow’s model stresses that once a particular level of needs is satisfied, it no longer motivates – the next level of needs then motivates the individual. So, for example, when housing, clothing, nutrition and security needs have been achieved, they no longer motivate because the lower order physiological and safety needs have been met. Individuals will now be motivated to achieve intermediate love needs. In Giddens’s use of this model to illustrate self-actualisation through generative welfare policies, the hierarchical nature of the model is ignored. It appears that needs from the lower order (security) through to the higher order are treated as non-hierarchical, as if all could be fulfilled simultaneously; so, for Giddens,
[s]ecurity, self-respect, self-actualisation, these are scarce goods for the affluent as well as the poor, and they are compromised by the ethos of productivism, not just by distributive inequalities … overcoming welfare dependency means overcoming the dependencies of productivism.\textsuperscript{58}

This is problematical. It is clear from Maslow’s model that if self-actualisation is to be achieved, or at least serve as a motivator, then the lower order needs \textit{must} first be satisfied. It is also axiomatic that the lower order needs require adequate financial means to be fulfilled. Therefore to argue that the possession of wealth does not necessarily allow individuals to achieve ‘security, self-respect and self-actualisation’ is, in the Maslovian sense, incorrect. If an individual does not have the means to achieve security needs then, according to Maslow, they will continue to be motivated to achieve these needs. Until they do they will not turn their attention to achieving self-actualisation. However, according to Giddens, it is overcoming the \textit{ethos} of productivism in favour of productivity that will allow happiness and self-actualisation to be achieved. Thus, for him, it is the reorganisation of a belief-system that causes this to occur. Our argument is not with this sentiment, but with the model being used to illustrate this desired end-state. Maslow’s hierarchical model requires material means – however provided – to enable higher order motivation to be attained. Giddens’s use of self-actualisation is, therefore, open to the accusation of misrepresentation.

In his calls for good government, Giddens stresses that conditions for self-actualisation and the pursuit of happiness should be created. Therefore, government policy should be directed towards creating the conditions that allow individual productivity and the autotelic self to flourish\textsuperscript{59}. We have argued, however, that the model used for this dictates that certain criteria need to be fulfilled if the desired outcomes are to be attained. Maslow’s model tells us that attention needs to be given to the means by which individuals can work up the needs’ hierarchy towards the goal of self-actualisation. Thus, if Maslow’s is a viable model it is inevitable that policy will need to be directed at successfully addressing inequalities in wealth.

There is one more important issue that will require careful consideration when formulating generative policies. In the preceding discussion we have argued that generative politics requires a form of mental revolution to take place. Both the providers and the receivers of welfare need to substantially alter their mindset to allow generative equality to flourish. Giddens’s work, like much of the management literature, focuses to a greater degree on the ‘bottom end’, namely, the recipients of welfare and ‘employees’. Generally, there is less focus on those who were previously responsible for the outcomes of policy. On this issue, the critical management literature\textsuperscript{60} tells us that it is precisely those people who have the greatest difficulty with policy change. It informs us that resistance to change comes not from those who are likely to be developed by it, but from those who, as a result of policy change that espouses mutuality and interdependence, stand to lose power. If we can learn from the management literature here, then policy should also take into account the barriers that might be erected at the ‘top’.
Conclusions

Within Marx’s idea of a communist society it is possible to see the hope of greater happiness through freedom and self-actualisation, ‘to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner’. These themes are reflected by Hattersley, who identifies happiness as a goal and inequality as an impediment to its achievement. Giddens articulates a broadly consonant view of the good life as self-actualisation, but does not see inequality as necessarily presenting an obstacle to its achievement: ‘We should want a society that is more egalitarian than it is today, but which is meritocratic and pluralistic...’. Giddens wishes to promote equality of opportunity by ‘developing people’s capacity to pursue their well-being’, but he acknowledges that this is bound to lead to unequal outcomes, and that redistribution across generations is then necessary to counter the inequalities of inheritance. Poverty is seen largely as an impediment to autonomy, and for that reason Giddens supports redistribution: ‘Modernising social democrats should accept the core importance of progressive taxation as a means of economic redistribution.’

The values of social cohesion and productivity expressed by Giddens certainly stand in the socialist tradition, but his explanatory framework marks a significant departure from those employed by democratic socialism.

In his critical reading of ‘the new communitarianism’, Prideaux accuses Etzioni of coaxing the reader to accept a congenial view of American society in the 1950s, and then attempting to restore social cohesiveness through the application of social controls, and, in a manner consistent with his own organisational theory. ‘In reality the favourable bias assigned to past social configuration tends to sway the suggested solutions to perceived social ills back toward the reassertion of the mores and morals so predominant in the 1950s.’

The same accusation could not be levelled at Giddens, whose explanatory frameworks explicitly embrace social and political change. His social theory describes a type of society very different from that inhabited by the democratic socialists of the post-war period. Globalisation and increased social reflexivity, he argues, make for a more active and potentially more autonomous citizenry. His political and economic analyses concede the neo-liberal tenets of market democracy and supply-side economics, although he is critical of the aggressive individualism and social fragmentation wrought under Thatcherism.

We also identify a Japanisation of welfare that is consonant with the themes of HRM. Just as Taylorist work organisation can inhibit human potential and create dependence through its orientation to control, so can the centralised welfare state. Giddens’s notion of generative equality is congruent with the practices of TQM and empowerment, which aim to foster a responsibly proactive approach to business problems rather than a reactive one.

In the new type of society which Giddens describes it is possible to envisage liberty and fraternity in terms of autonomy, ‘productivity’ and ‘active trust’, and it is clear that he equates self-actualisation or the means to self-actualise with...
‘happiness’. The socialist preoccupation with equality as a means of achieving those ends is also present in the Third Way, and Giddens’s notion of ‘generative equality’ is an appealing one. However, we believe that he underestimates the obstacle which inequality presents to self-actualisation, and that this is due to his misreading of Maslow, who articulates a hierarchy of needs. Self-actualisation is possible only where the lower order needs have been met, and there are many members of society devoid of land or capital who are as dependent on work as Marx’s alienated and commodified labour. It will therefore be important for New Labour to address those security needs if they wish to foster the active and productive citizenry of Giddens’s most hopeful account. We have also highlighted the need for policy to account for resistance to change from those who are required to ‘give away’ or ‘share’ their power in order to create a greater good. Giddens’s generative politics requires, we have argued, a mental revolution to take place. Its success may well depend upon the depth of that revolution.

Notes

1 Greg Elliott speaking at a Social and Political Thought Graduate Seminar, University of Sussex, 28 January 1999.
3 Benton 1995.
5 Giddens 1990.
6 See Giddens 1993.
8 Ibid., p. 178.
10 Prior to the telegraph, letters were the main form of communication between absent others, but these communications could be transferred only as quickly as someone could travel the same distance. Written communication therefore involved time delays which were as long as the journey that would be necessary to facilitate a face-to-face meeting. The movement through space necessary to conduct social relations therefore involved a corresponding movement through time. The advent of electronic communications changed this relationship because it became possible to conduct a relationship across space without a corresponding movement through time.
14 Ibid., p. 29.
15 The ‘new age’ is sometimes described as a supermarket of religious experience.
16 The physical appearance of individuals is regularly altered through diet, ‘working-out’, cosmetic surgery and, in some cases, through sex-change operations.
Equality, work and the Third Way

23 Here the use of ‘politics’ is associated with life political issues relating, say, to animal rights, food, health and the environment.
26 Ibid., p. 66.
27 Ibid., pp. 92–3.
29 See e.g. Green 1987: 167–74.
31 Ibid., p. 93.
32 Ibid.
33 Particularly changing work cultures.
37 See for example Blyton and Turnbull 1998; Oliver and Lowe 1991; and O’Reilly 1991.
40 Blyton and Turnbull 1998: 220; see also see Hill 1991.
41 See Juran 1974; Crosby 1979; and Demming 1982.
45 This school is usually associated with the human relations school of Harvard and Chicago and Elton Mayo. The human relations approach to management can be viewed as a response to Taylorist approaches to elicit effective worker behaviour. Whereas Taylorist approaches appeal to rational, calculating, human instinct, the human relations theorists stress the appeal to individual desires for challenge, sociability and variety as more likely to result in positive worker behaviour. Worker behaviour is, therefore, best manipulated by subtle management techniques that seek to secure loyalty through team-working and schemes to encourage workers to participate in behaviour that is beneficial for them and for the well-being of the firm.
48 Brown 1996.
51 Ibid., p. 162.
52 ‘Lean production’ is a phrase coined by Womack et al. (1990) to describe the Toyota Production System and its derivatives. This highly influential book and its successor, Lean Thinking, have led to a widespread diffusion of ‘the lean approach’, first through automotive and subsequently through other manufacturing and service sectors. The lean approach involves the workforce and suppliers in team-based improvement activities that are oriented towards improving customer satisfaction,
improving quality, reducing defects and reducing cost etc. According to Womack and Jones (1996: 15): ‘Lean thinking is lean because it provides a way to do more with less and less – less human effort, less equipment, less time, and less space – while coming closer and closer to providing customers with exactly what they want.’

54 Ibid., p. 179.
57 Maslow 1987.
59 Ibid., p. 192.
60 See e.g. Legge 1995.
61 Marx and Engles 1976.
63 Giddens 2002: 38.
64 Ibid., p. 39.
66 See his chapter in this volume.
68 See chapter 7, this volume, by Prideaux.
69 Post-war society is encompassed by Giddens’s period of ‘simple modernisation’; see Giddens 1994: 80–7.

References

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