

“Dangerous Government”: Info-Liberalism, Active Citizenship, and the Open Government Directive

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Abstract

There has been much debate about the change Barack Obama represents. This article considers this question by using Michel Foucault’s concept of *governmentality* to explore the underlying governmental rationality of his administration’s policies and management practices. Obama’s governmentality is examined via the Open Government Directive, arguably the central initiative of the administration. The article concludes that this governmentality may be viewed as a mutation within neoliberalism, which the authors call *info-liberalism*—one that deploys a novel, integrative conception of social government. Info-liberalism is examined in conjunction with the contemporary usage of the term *governance* to analyze more broadly the dynamics of government and citizen participation today.

Keywords

open government, Obama, governmentality, neoliberalism, governance, information, social government, entrepreneurialism, active citizenship

Introduction

No sooner had the last echoes of campaign declarations of “change we can believe” faded than many political observers and citizens began to wonder

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about precisely what kind of change Barack Obama represented and, more pointedly, whether any “real” change was on its way. Immediate criticisms were made of many of Obama’s cabinet appointments, especially his economic team, whose ranks included prominent members of the shadowy cast (e.g., Lawrence Summers and Timothy Geitner) who had overseen and endorsed now-discredited financial policies. Criticisms continue both from the political Left and the Right, though they are driven by widely differing assessments of what constitutes “change.” Regarding Obama’s broad economic agenda, Robert Reich (2009), for example, notes, “If you look only at the small print, Obamanomics looks conservative. If you look at the big picture, it’s revolutionary.” Concerning antiterrorism policies, though Obama had committed to closing the detention and torture facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in his first days in office, in charting the course of the development of Obama’s antiterrorism policies, the *New York Times* (Baker, 2010) observed far more continuity with his predecessor than change. Indeed, in an ad urging the administration not to abandon its commitment to trying the 9/11 suspects in civilian courts, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2010) portrayed Obama’s face slowly morphing into that of George W. Bush. To take a third example, many on the political Left view health care reform—to which Obama remained committed and had invested significant political capital—have been gutted of its original promise and as, in the words of former presidential candidate and chair of the Democratic National Committee, a “bailout for the insurance industry” (Khan & Karl, 2009). For Republicans (at least rhetorically), health care reform was rhetorically cast as being tantamount to socialism or worse.

How can we take inventory of the “change” the Obama administration’s policies and government represent? On one hand, it is tempting to take Obama’s own self-characterizations of pragmatic, centrist incrementalism at face value—a view endorsed by conservative columnist David Brooks (2010)—and, in doing so, partly legitimize progressives’ criticism of Obama’s conservatism and the claim that he is, at least in part, a “prisoner of neoliberalism” (Lind, 2009). On the other hand, perhaps as Robert Reich and many Obama supporters hope—and conservative critics fear—there *is* something revolutionary and fundamentally new about Obama’s policies and approach to governing.

Rather than examine Obama’s specific policy initiatives, this article attempts to clarify this question by exploring whether the Obama administration’s conception of “who can govern¹ . . . what governing is . . . what or who is governed . . .” (Gordon, 1991, p. 3) is distinctive from the current way of thinking about the nature of government. More specifically, we explore whether the Obama administration is asserting a “governing rationality” or,

in the terms of philosopher and historian Michel Foucault, *governmentality*, which diverges from the current dominant governmentality of neoliberalism and its single-minded emphasis on governing according to the logic and values of the market. To this end, we examine the administration's Open Government Directive (OGD) or Initiative, which declares a commitment to a Government that is "transparent, participatory, and collaborative."

The OGD is significant and central to the question of change for at least two reasons. First, as among the first acts of the new president, it is of obvious import to the administration and is in many ways a signature element both in Obama's approach to governing and also in marking his distance from the Bush presidency. Second, the Directive aspires to a far-reaching and profound reconstitution of the relationships not only between Government, the citizenry, and knowledge but also among Government agencies and programs themselves. In this, it is more fundamental than specific policy initiatives because it aspires to call into question a prior conception of government, neoliberalism (not merely the prior *administration*—a distinction we will clarify below), and to reopen and propose a new answer to the question of how both *the governed* and *the governing* shall conduct themselves and constitute their relationships with one another. That is, the OGD declares itself as a distinct break from previous ways in which we have thought about governing ourselves and others and, in doing so, seeks to open a new space for the invention and deployment of a new regime of government² and concomitant "techniques, languages, grids of analysis and evaluation, forms of knowledge and expertise" (Dean, 2010, p. 38). The continuities and discontinuities from a *neoliberal* governmentality are what we seek to explore in this article.

We first provide a broad overview of how Michel Foucault understands government and governmentality and call particular attention to what Barbara Cruikshank (1999) calls "technologies of citizenship," or the ways in which particular governmentalities and regimes of government seek to create and mobilize forms of active citizenship and make use of individual agency in its governing strategy. For reasons discussed below, we are particularly interested in the kind of *active democratic citizen* required for Obama's form of government to succeed and whether it marks a break from the *prudential, entrepreneurial citizen* of neoliberalism (O'Malley, 1996). The second section of the article outlines our "analytics of government" methodology, and the third section describes the OGD and our discourse analysis/governmentality approach. The fourth section analyzes the Directive in light of the key elements of neoliberalism. We conclude that this emerging governmentality is a form of or mutation within neoliberalism—what we will call *info-liberalism*—insofar as it accepts much of neoliberalism's postwelfarist conception of society and

government, but, at the same time, moves away from the primacy of the market as the dominant mode of political and social relationship and attempts to reestablish an interface between Government and society. We suggest this marks a distinct and significant shift toward reconceptualizing the notion of social government, though it carries certain “danger” with it.

We offer two caveats. First, although throughout the article we will use language such as “Obama’s Initiative” or “Obama’s Directive,” we do not mean to unduly invest importance in Barack Obama individually. Such an investment would run counter the governmentality approach that emphasizes anonymous rationalities and forces that coalesce to lend form and intelligibility to governing regimes and political identities. Thus, “Obama” here serves more as shorthand for these matters. As such, our analysis inquires not into the appearance of a new political persona, but rather into the possible rearticulation of existing political rationalities within a wider set of scholarly theories and new forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which allow for new forms and methods of political communication and possibly new ways of thinking about social welfare and freedom (P. Triantafillou, personal communication, May 3, 2010). Second, our purpose is not to *evaluate* the initiatives we specify here, viz., its empirical implementation or to gauge the distance from an ideal to its execution. This is an important undertaking that has been ably explored by others (e.g., Bryer, in press; Chun, Shulman, Sandoval, & Hovy, 2010; Citron, 2010; Coglianese, 2009; Mitchell, 2010).³ Instead, we seek to explore the plausibility of giving some degree of systematic form and substance to the OGD and, as we suggest toward the end of the article, lend additional analytic precision to charting the broader relationships between “good” governance, “systems” governance, and “radical” governance.

Government, Practices of the Self, and Democracy

Government in Foucault’s work can be defined simply as “the conduct of conduct.” *Governmentality* names a historically situated manner in which we think about government, the logics or rationalities we use to think about *how* and *why* we conduct ourselves and others. As the term suggests, governmentality is a “mentality of government” (Rose & Miller, 1992; cf. Senellart, 2009, p. 502) and a “rationality” is understood as “any way of reasoning, or way of thinking about, calculating and responding to a problem, which is more or less systematic, which might draw upon formal bodies of knowledge or expertise” (Dean, 2010, p. 24). Foucault does *not*

identify the term *government* or *governmentality* narrowly or exclusively with the institutions of Government or the state. Rather, government is a dispersed regime of rationalities, technologies, and practices that share as their ends the conduct of conduct as informed by the logic or strategy of its *governmentality*. A *governmentality*, then, permeates human institutions and fields of interaction, including what we traditionally think of as Government and public administration (see, for example, Catlaw, 2007).

We can understand this work of government in a couple of ways (Dean, 2010). First, government aims to guide action, behavior, or thought. Thomas Hobbes, for example, describes law as an array of “hedges” that would circumscribe and bound human interaction. However, we can also consider the more active work of a symphonic conductor who aims to bring harmony or coordination to the actions of a diverse set of musicians—to get them literally and figuratively on the same page. Thus, government is bound up with a certain conduction of conduct so as to regularize and order a field of action and interaction, thereby rendering it calculable and, in some limited sense, predictable. In sum, beyond the conduct of conduct, government may be defined as

any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multitude of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects, and outcomes. (Dean, 2010, p. 11)

Within the calculus of the conduct of conduct, we may draw an analytic distinction among three modalities of government. First, government may use, in relative degrees, visible coercion and use of sanction to directly control or guide human action. Second, government may seek to influence the ways in which we conduct *ourselves* by enjoining us to engage in certain rationalities or calculations. We could consider this the domain of incentives and institutional design, which seeks to fabricate a field of probabilistic action. Third, there is what Foucault (1984/1985) calls the *practices of the self*, a form of action of “self on the self,” which in his work are considered the domain of *ethics* rather than traditional politics. Practices of the self concern how we can and ought to conduct ourselves or “the manner in which one ought to form oneself as an ethical subject acting in reference to the prescriptive elements that make up [a code of action]” (Foucault, 1984/1985, p. 26). These are practices, such as, common activities like dieting or exercise, through which we seek to regulate or re-form ourselves by subjecting ourselves to forms of power and knowledge

to transform our subjectivity. As Mitchell Dean (2010) notes, the practices of the self, although a form of self-governing, may also be practiced as a form of resistance against the other two modalities of government.

Although Foucault is often reproached for dissolving agency in the decentering of the human subject (notwithstanding his profound interest in the topic, especially in his later work), it bears emphasis that all three dimensions of government assume, at a fundamental level, a measure of freedom and autonomy of the self and also a certain degree of subjection of free selves to forms of government. All these forms, however, are engaged in the activities *both* of subjugation *and* subjectification. That is, although government imposes and constrains, it is also productive and generative. It produces, encourages, and maintains certain practices of freedom while circumscribing, frustrating, and dominating others; government enables some kinds of subjectivities and experience while marginalizing or excluding others. Moreover, government, including self-government, seeks to work *through* those affirmations and put its creations to work to the ends of its particular governmentality.

Some governmentalities seek to govern through these practices of the self and to make use of the agency of the subject. Barbara Cruikshank (1999) calls these specific elements of a regime of government “technologies of citizenship.” Technologies of citizenship are the “discourses, programs, and other tactics aimed at making individuals politically active and capable of self-government” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 1). As she writes, “Citizens are not born; they are made” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 3; cf., for example, Weber, 1979). Technologies of citizenship are distinguished from incentives in that technologies of citizenship seek not merely the use of a variety of rationalities but also seek to incite certain kinds of identity and identification among the governed so as to “enlist willing participation of individuals in the pursuit of [government’s] objects” so as to “govern people by getting them to govern themselves” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 39).

Self-Government and Neoliberalism

The technologies of citizenship are especially important to neoliberal governmentalities, particularly as they relate to neoliberalism’s promotion of *entrepreneurialism*. The ultimate aim of neoliberalism is to extend the economic model of supply and demand, and competition to all areas of life in an effort to make individual behavior more calculable and predictable (Burchell, 1996).⁴

Its primary vehicle for actualizing this aim is the enterprise model. For neoliberalism, promoting the enterprise model at the individual level involves a particular way of behaving: the individual-as-enterprise *competes*. Not only

this, but she begins to view not only herself but also all of her relationships through the lens of competition. As such, competition becomes the model for social and interpersonal relations, which in turn serves to extend economic rationality into civil society and what is, from the vantage of *classical* liberalism, noneconomic terrain (Foucault, 2008). With the enterprise as the model for human behavior and competition, the basis of interpersonal relations, government of the self becomes highly “responsibilized” (Burchell, 1996, p. 29), such that individuals actively seek to mitigate the negative impact their behavior has on the marketplace, viz., civil society through a responsible practice of freedom and individual choice. In other words, neoliberalism engenders the specification of a new subject (Rose, 1996b; see also Rose & Miller, 1992) who possesses the ability to freely act, but only in a responsible manner and within a prescribed enterprise mode of conduct.

The successful promotion and maintenance of the responsibly autonomous, self-governing subject is integral to neoliberalism (Dean, 2010), and it requires a network of discourses, technologies, institutions, and knowledges to organize and support it. In other words, whatever *laissez-faire* rhetoric, the conditions that organize and support the enterprise model must be *constructed* and this demands an interventionist, active form of governing. Primary among these discourses and technologies are the new prudentialism; the technologies of agency, which include the technologies of citizenship; the technologies of performance; and a new conception of pluralism.

First, O’Malley (1996) contends that we are confronting what he deems a new sense of *prudentialism* through which the individual assumes responsibility for her own risks by acting to minimize them both individually and institutionally. This development requires the slow retraction of social methods for contending with risk and replacing them with private methods, such as insuring oneself against potential risks and behaving in a manner so as not to invite the specters of unemployment, ill health, violence, and crime. Privatizing risk is seen as more efficient, “For individuals will be driven to greater execution and enterprise by the need to insure against adverse circumstances—and the more enterprising they are, the better safety net they construct” (O’Malley, 1996, p. 197). Of course, only active citizens are capable of managing their own risks—“target” populations need help doing so (Dean, 2010). As such, sovereign and disciplinary techniques accompany these private methods for mitigating personal risk to move the populace toward assuming more and more individual responsibility. In short, relying on the state to manage one’s own risk has come to indicate personal failing.

This new sense of prudentialism is enhanced and facilitated by the technologies of performance, which are most commonly asserted in the rhetoric

and practices stemming from movements that advocate, for example, the reinvention of government (e.g., Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) and strategies of the New Public Management (see Barzelay, 2001; Kaboolian, 1998; Lynn, 1998). In short, the technologies of performance aim to cut through the bureaucratically insulated privilege that was afforded to experts under welfarism (Rose & Miller, 1992) by subjecting their authority to “enumeration, calculation, monitoring, [and] evaluation” in nearly every way (Rose, 1996b, p. 54). This includes the systemic institution of measures for performance evaluation, including benchmarks and performance indicators (Dean, 2010), as well as the “monetarization” of the bureaucratic professions such that all individuals and activities become budgeted and, ultimately, calculable in cash terms (Rose, 1996b, pp. 54-55). Indeed, the technologies of performance aspire to rendering everything and everyone not only accountable in a quantifiable manner but also calculable and predictable.

The result is what Power (1997) refers to as an *audit society*—a society in which trust in bureaucracy and bureaucratic professionals is won only through the rituals of verification provided by the audit and like measures. (As Miller & Fox, 2006, suggest we may indeed see many of these practices, cynically, as merely *ritualistic*.) Of course, the technologies of performance remain unenforceable without the presence of an active, self-empowering citizenry to whom bureaucrats are ultimately beholden. While technologies of performance provide information about what bureaucratic institutions and personnel are doing, the technologies of agency, which include the technologies of citizenship and new sense of contractualism, aspire to create subjects who know how to use information to maintain a sense of individual accountability and risk management. It is through these activated enterprising citizens that, ultimately, neoliberal governmentality seeks to govern.

Collectively, the new prudentialism, and the technologies of agency and performance signal that a new kind of pluralism, is at work—one in which citizens move from an integrated welfare state into self-managing groups to assert political agency. Rose (1996a), in particular, contends that through political discourse, community has replaced the social as the territory of government. More specifically, the social has been fractured into a multitude of “localized, heterogeneous, overlapping” communities (Rose, 1996a, p. 333). As such, it is defined by its own set of characteristics, which serve to distinguish it from the social. For instance, although the individual is still self-governing and responsible, she is also bonded to others in the community—but only in the community—whereas in the social, one held collective ties and obligations to the broader society. In addition, the lines of an individual’s sense of personal identity are configured through allegiance to the things with

which one identifies emotionally and traditionally—indeed, directly—rather than as a member of an integrated, national whole, or society. Ultimately, this creates a new field of dividing practices to identify those who are affiliated with the community (i.e., those who have the economic and moral means to be entrepreneurial) and those who are to be marginalized because they cannot enterprise themselves, or are part of an anticomunity. In either case, these communities “no longer mediate between society and the individual but represent a plurality of agents that are put into play in diverse strategies of government” (Dean, 2010, p. 171). (We will return to this topic and qualify our comments later in the article.)

Before moving on to our analysis, we offer one caution regarding the relatively coherent, integrated vision of “neoliberalism” provided above. As geographers Peck and Tickell (2002) wisely insist, there is always the issue of

how “local” institutional forms of neoliberalism relate to its more general (ideological) characterization. This means walking a line of sorts between producing, on the one hand, overgeneralized accounts of a monolithic and omnipresent neoliberalism, which tend to be insufficiently sensitive to its local variability and complex internal constitution, and on the other, excessively concrete and contingent analyses of (local) neoliberal strategies, which are inadequately attentive to the substantial connections and necessary characteristics of neoliberalism as an extralocal project (see Larner, 2000). (p. 383)

Indeed, neoliberalism is more “a multifaceted hybrid, more Hydra than Goliath” (Peck & Tickell, 2006, p. 27)—and a remarkably adaptive, resilient Hydra at that.

To grapple with this tension, Peck and Tickell (2002) propose analyzing the *process of neoliberalization* rather than a static neoliberal form; although there is a kind of “meta-logic” at play (which we outline above), there can be no “simple convergence of outcomes” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 383). It is through a *situated* process of neoliberalization that these strong discourses of market rationality and competition are *actualized* in light of local conditions—conditions that include the histories, consequences, and failures of prior moments of neoliberalization and resistance to it. This view resonates in particular with our project insofar as Peck and Tickell argue that “[a]nalyzes of this process should . . . focus especially sharply on *change*—on shifts in systems and logics, dominant patterns of restructuring, and so forth . . .” (2002, p. 383). These shifts in system and logic rather than comparison with a static model are what we seek to explore via examination of the OGD.

Method

Our methodological approach draws on Dean's (2010) conceptualization of the "analytics of government," which examines the methods, processes, and timing by which certain practices become institutionalized so as to inform the way we accomplish things through the facilitation of certain forms of knowledge and expertise about particular objects. Although such analyses typically begin with identifying a *problematization* (see Dean, 2010), our focus here is to examine the governing rationalities promoted by the Obama administration in an effort to determine whether it is indicative of a *problematization* of the currently dominant governing rationality, neoliberalism.

There are four dimensions through which we can analyze Obama's governing rationality: (a) forms of visibility, (b) procedures for producing the truth, (c) specific forms of expertise and knowledge that define ways of behaving, and (d) ways of subjectifying the individual (Dean, 2010). Forms of visibility involve the construction of ways of seeing and perceiving through drawings, maps, charts, tables, and so on, that

make it possible to "picture" who and what is being governed, how relations of authority and obedience are constituted in space, how different locales and agents are to be connected with one another, what problems are to be solved and what objectives are to be sought. (Dean, 2010, p. 30)

An organization chart is a simple, everyday example of this; the increasingly popular "dashboards" are as well. The forces for the production of knowledge and expertise, which act to constitute truth and, in turn, our behavior, can be found in the *techne* and *episteme* of government (Dean, 1995). The *techne* of government involves the technical aspects by which government accomplishes its ends, whereas the *episteme* of government refers to the thought and forms of rationality that seek to produce the truth—indeed, to "render particular issues, domains and problems governable" through certain knowledges and expertise (Dean, 2010, p. 31). So, government not only deploys certain techniques but it also deploys certain kinds of knowledge in and through those techniques. Finally, our framework seeks to interrogate the processes by which individuals are made subjects. More pointedly, we examine the forms of identity and self-conduct, which the regimes of government seek to enact, on those who possess authority and those who are governed. In other words, governmentalities seek to constitute certain experiences of the self and put those selves to work.

The Open Government Directive (OGD)

We take as the terrain of our analytics of government the Obama administration's Open Government Directive (OGD). Specifically, we examine the discourse associated with the Directive to outline the fields of visibility, *techné* and *epistémé*, and modes of subjectification of Obama's governing rationality. This section sketches the broad contours and brief history of this Directive.

Announced on Obama's first day in office, January 21, 2009, the president's memorandum "Transparency and Open Government" (Obama, 2009) announced a commitment to secure "unprecedented level of openness in Government" and an expansive effort to "ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration." Such openness promises to "strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government." The memorandum announced three broad principles to guide this commitment: "Government should be transparent," "Government should be participatory," and "Government should be collaborative."

Transparency is described in terms of Government making available information and also soliciting "public feedback to identify information of greatest use to the public." The principle of participation asserts that knowledge and expertise is dispersed throughout society and that effective policy making requires the collection of that knowledge through participation by citizens in policy making. Finally, the principle of collaboration directs agencies and executive departments of the federal Government to find ways to engage the citizenry and to develop "innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate among themselves, across all level of [G]overnment, and with nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector." Collaboration "focuses on finding innovative strategies for solving challenges" (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 5). The memorandum further instructs the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to coordinate with federal agencies and executive departments to develop specific action items within 120 days.

On May 21, 2009, the director of the president's Office of Science and Technology Policy issued a call for public participation for developing recommendations "about possible initiatives and about how to increase openness and transparency in government." Consistent with the principle of participation, the call states that "there is a great deal of dispersed information among the nation's citizens. . . . Our goal is to use the principles of open government to obtain fresh ideas about open government itself" (Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2009, p. 23901). The call listed a number of questions to

which the public might consider responding, “What government information should be more readily available on-line or more easily searched?” “How might the operations of [G]overnment be made more transparent and accountable?” “What are the limitations to transparency?” and “What strategies might be employed to adopt greater use of Web 2.0 in agencies?”

The public comment period had three phases, which unfolded from May 21 to July 6, 2009 (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009). The first “brainstorming” phase from May 21 to 28 generated more than 900 ideas and comments. These ideas (available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/about/ideas>) were sorted into 16 themes, which then formed the basis of the “discussion” phase (June 3-21). This phase generated more than 1,000 posts on the dedicated open government blog. During the policy-making or “drafting” phase (June 22-July 6), the public crafted proposed language via a web-based collaborative tool (aka, a Wiki). In the end, 300 drafts were posted that “helped [administration officials] to think about specific implementing language” (p. 12). From March to September 2009, there was also discussion of open government initiatives and principles through the MAX OMB Wiki, a forum for Government employees (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/about/ideas>). Officials from the initiative also went “offline” during the comment period from February to November 2009 and conducted more than 20 in-person meetings with various business, academic, and professional groups.

On December 9, 2009, the OMB director issued a memorandum on what was now called the “Open Government Directive.” It directed “executive departments and agencies to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration” (Orzag, 2009, p. 1). The memorandum instructs agencies and department to take action within specific timelines (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/about/milestones>) with regard to four broad goals, including the development of an “Open Government Plan.” These are the four goals:

Publish government information online: The OGD states that “with respect to information, presumption shall be in favor of openness,” subject to limitations set by law, security, and so on. Agencies are directed to publish information in a “timely” manner, be accessible in a variety of formats, and widely disseminated. Agencies are also required to identify and make available at least three “high-value” data sets and to create a web-based “gateway” to their open Government initiatives that can solicit public comment. High value is defined as “information that can be used to increase agency accountability and responsiveness; improve public knowledge of the agency

and its operations; further the core mission of the agency; create economic opportunity; or respond to need and demand as identified through public consultation” (pp. 7-8).

Improve the quality of government information: Agencies are directed to “designate a high-level senior official to be accountable for the quality and objectivity of, and internal controls over, the federal spending information” made publicly available. Subsequent guidance will also come from OMB regarding development of a “method for agencies to report quarterly on their progress toward improving their information quality” (p. 4).

Create and institutionalize a culture of open government: The Directive states that “achieving a more open [G]overnment will require the various professional disciplines within the Government—such as policy, legal, procurement, finance, and technology operations—to work together to define and develop open government solutions” (p. 4). *Integration* is the key concept. To this end, agencies are required to develop an “Open Government Plan” that details in specific ways how they will “improve transparency and integrate public participation and collaboration into its activities” (p. 4, pp. 7-11).

Create an enabling policy framework for open government: “Emerging technologies” are the core of this element here. These “open new forms of communication between a [G]overnment and the people” and the new policies must be developed that “realize the potential of technology for open government” (p. 5).

Also issued in December 2009 was the report, “Open Government: A Progress Report to the American People” (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009). Clearly designed to communicate the ideas and nuts and bolts of the Directive to the general public, the report detailed specific initiatives within the three core principles of the OGD and the administration’s achievements to date.

Although space precludes a lengthier explanation, it is important to note that the OGD is tightly interconnected with other prominent administration initiatives, such as Data.gov, which aims to increase the public’s access to machine-readable, high-value data; the “Strategy for American Innovation,” which details a strategy for creating “sustainable growth and quality” jobs; the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation; the recently announced initiative to use prizes and challenges to encourage open government and innovation (Zients, 2010); and also the global Open Government Partnership Initiative undertaking in collaboration with the United Nations. However, for reasons we detail below, we view the documents of the OGD to

be fundamental in articulating the administration's ambitious plans to reconstitute the ways in which government and society interact.

The Governmentality of the OGD

If a governmentality is characterized by an orderly way of thinking about government that problematizes a prior regime of government, the OGD certainly appears to offer a distinctive rationality, one that seeks consciously to part ways with the prior regime of government, neoliberalism. First, the Directive's internal logic is captured in this statement from the *Federal Register*, "Our goal is to use the principles of open government to obtain fresh ideas about open government itself" (Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2009, p. 23901). Bringing to mind Dwight Waldo's (1948) observation that for progressive reformers the solution to the problems of democracy is more democracy, the OGD expresses a logic in which the form the ends take is dependent on the form of the means; indeed, the distinction between means and ends more or less collapses (see Harmon, 2007). This notion is reminiscent of John Dewey's (1909/1959) and other participatory-democratic theorists' (e.g., Pateman, 1970) assertion that democracy can only be cultivated by democratic means; or, for that matter, a neoliberal governmentality that holds that the logic of the market must be extended throughout all domains of social life.⁴

The Directive's rationality also appears to problematize the prior regime of government, neoliberalism, in particular by emphasizing the lack of connection between the Government and the individual citizen. Indeed, the *Progress Report* begins, "For too long, the American people have experienced a culture of secrecy in Washington, where information is locked up, taxpayer dollars disappear without a trace, and lobbyists wield undue influence" (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 1). The Directive thus openly problematizes the space between the Government and the individual citizen that has come to be occupied by the expert and by the community institution. The Directive means to "usher in a new era of *open* and *accountable* government meant to *bridge the gap* between the American people and their government" (p. 1, emphasis added), especially by establishing a clear linkage between Governmental openness and financial accountability. But how are "openness" and "accountability" understood? How is the gap to be bridged?

Informationalism: The Techne and Episteme of Obama's Governmentality

The plans for "openness" can be considered in three dimensions or what we will call, in keeping with the Directive's enthusiasm for information technology,

interfaces—the citizen–Government, the inter–Governmental, and the intra–Governmental. At the citizen–Government interface, the OGD aims to open and enhance the flow of information between Government and citizens—especially those “outside Washington.” This is the main concern of the first goal of the Orzag memorandum—to “publish government information online.” This is spelled out in the injunction that all federal agencies and departments create open government “gateways,” the aim to develop new modes for soliciting citizen feedback and comments, and the process for reforming the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process. Data are to be *democratized*. An example used in the *Progress Report* to highlight the kinds of changes that are desired inter–Governmentally is the “Virtual USA” initiative, which is described,

[A] collaboration among the Department of Homeland Security, the emergency response community, and eight states across the nation . . . [which is] an innovative information-sharing system that helps federal, state, local, and tribal first responders work with all levels of government to make fast, well-informed decisions. (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 6)

Clearly, the intention is to facilitate openness in intergovernmental interactions.

Finally, the intra–Governmental interface is evident in the third goal of the Directive—“create and institutionalize a culture of open government”—and the assertion that “achieving a more open [G]overnment will require the various professional disciplines within the Government . . . to work together to define and develop open government solutions” (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 4). Here, it is not merely agencies and departments that must find ways to collaborate and work together but also the many professionals, fields of expertise, and specializations within them.

“Openness” is given definite shading in the OGD insofar as it is almost categorically associated with *information* and *data exchange*. This is demonstrated in the description of the three interfaces and also in the three pillars or “core values” of the initiative. *Transparency* is defined in terms of government providing “citizens with information about what their government is doing and putting government data online” (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 2). Making information available (and, in particular, available online) entails “democratizing data,” from which all good things flow insofar as *openness* “reduces cost and eliminates waste, fraud, and abuse; creates new jobs and businesses; and improves people’s daily lives” (p. 3). The second pillar, *participation*, is considered as Government “actively solicit[ing] expertise from outside Washington” so that it has “the benefit of the best information”

(p. 1). Yet, consistent with the means-equals-ends logic outlined above, the practices of transparency enable participation because “greater access to information about how the [G]overnment does its work, drives citizen participation” (p. 4). A primary technique for generating and collecting this data is social media. Collaboration is certainly viewed in terms of Governments, agencies, and citizens working together, but even here, the centrality of information flows and information *exchange* is clear. Efforts to safeguard Americans, like Virtual USA, will enable public safety officials “across levels of [G]overnment to share information,” and creating a “healthier American” turns, in part, on “making crucial data on nutrition” available (p. 1).

For purposes of this discussion, we will call this pervasive and pervading concern for data and exchange *informationalism*. Here, we follow Manuel Castells (2000) who defines informationalism as “a mode of development in which the main source of productivity is the qualitative capacity to optimize the combination and use of factors of production on the basis of knowledge and information” (p. 7; see also Bang & Esmark, 2009). Informationalism presents an interesting position, viz., expertise and knowledge that emerge from and guide the work of government, or the *episteme* of government. On one hand, expertise is itself ostensibly “democratized.” The Directive asserts that information and knowledge are dispersed throughout society and some form of technology is needed to harness and put it to work. Again, this is meant not merely as a *collection* process but also the collaborative, participatory way *by which* new, innovative ideas, technologies, and strategies are created. On the other hand, there is an opening to more traditional forms of technical, scientific expertise as evidenced, for example, in the central concern for the release of “high value,” machine-readable data sets. This, combined with the level of sophistication required to make use of the data, suggest that well-educated, technologically savvy, information-using citizens are the “first among equals” in the OGD. (We will return to this issue in our discussion of technologies of citizenship below.) Yet, this does not mark a straightforward return to the reign of scientific experts that characterized welfarism (Rose, 1996b). Rather, we would suggest that this *episteme* may represent an attempt, albeit perhaps a somewhat uneasy one, to close the gap between “citizens” and “experts” without recourse to monetarization or other market-derived efforts to discipline and challenge the authority of expertise.

Informationalism, however, is surely the utopian dimension of this emerging regime of government (see Dean, 2010). It presumes that the condition for societal progress is setting information free and engaging people in such a way that their own personal, truthful information, in turn, is set free. The presumed power of democratized data is truly vast—it “reduces cost and

eliminates waste, fraud, and abuse; creates new jobs and businesses; and improves people's daily lives" (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 3) and drives citizen participation in government. Liberated data promises transparency of government spending, drives entrepreneurialism, and even enables parents to prepare healthier meals.

It is the free exchange of data that bridges the gap between people and government and which diagrams the reconfiguration of the relationship between citizen and Government. If the governmental regime of neoliberalism confined social obligations only to the narrow domain of the communities to which individuals belong, then the obligations of the citizen here are expressed in a way that is more akin to the social subject of liberalism. Indeed, the government rationality expressed in the OGD attempts to bypass the plurality of community groups that proliferated with neoliberalism and articulate a direct connection between Government and the individual citizen. As such, it seems that the government rationality expressed through the OGD is attempting to repeal a role for Government that is less "coordinative, arbitrary, and preventative" and instead mark something of a return to a role for Government that is more direct, even if it is not distributive (Dean, 2010, p. 171).

Technologies of Performance and Citizenship in a Reworked Prudentialism: From Empowerment to Social Optimization

We have seen that the subject of this emerging governmentality is technology savvy, information hungry, and educated. She must also be a data-processing and data-producing, accountable citizen. As suggested, informationalism is tightly bounded up with *accountability* in two ways. First, the accountability of Government hinges on the free flow of information. Openness "encourages journalists, researchers, government officials, and the public to scrutinize and thereby improve how [G]overnment works" (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 2). This suggests a refashioning rather than a rejection of neoliberal technologies of performance in the constitution of this active citizen subject. To be sure, the calculus of informationalist technologies of performance is different than market-based ones. Efficiency is not per se defined in terms of the adoption of market principles and practices; rather it follows from the free circulation of data among individuals. Nevertheless, the abiding concern for quantification and calculation as the primary means for securing political and financial accountability persists; information transparency and the ability to audit governmental activity (as evidenced by the proliferation of performance "dashboards" through the federal government), not professional or positional credentials, remain the dominant mode for securing trust (Power, 1997).

Second, individual citizens are responsible both for *providing* and *using* this data, and citizens need to be active and engaged to do so. Yet, note that this is a mode of inciting participation, or deploying a technology of citizenship, that is distinct from other deployments of participation and gives a singular, rather intensified twist to the “humanistic” benefit of participation or political life generally (see Campbell, 2005). Participation is important because participation means information, and information means better Governmental performance, accountability, economic growth, and so on. Moreover, “greater access to information about how the [G]overnment does its work drives greater citizen participation” (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 4).

Significantly, though, the benefits of democratized data are intended to accrue *personally* to the active citizen herself. It is useful to initially consider this in connection with developments in the medical domain. Rose (2007) describes one aspect of the shift in contemporary medical practice, which he broadly calls *molecularization*, as *social optimization*. Social optimization refers to a compromising of the conventional poles of thought between which human well-being has been considered—health and illness. To appreciate the nature of optimization, contrast it with the regulatory, molding processes of discipline, which characterized administrative and management action during the 20th century. Discipline effectively sought to bring individual modes of thought and action in line with some norm (Foucault, 1975/1995). The posited norm was linked to a presumptive justification or rationalization, which in turn enabled the identification of anomalies and pathologies and then justified the imposition of the norms or the command to reproduce them in one’s own behavior. Optimization changes this by reconfiguring the scope and scale at which the “individual” can be worked on in a singular, highly focused manner. The project is not reproducing the norm, but intervening (Rheinberger, 2000) to enable *personalized* generation, production, and creation.

The logic of social optimization takes the Maslowian project of “self-actualization” to another level. Armed with an understanding of how diet, habit, and environment influence, for example, the plasticity of the brain, the expression of the genome, or capacity for focused attention, “responsible” individuals can aspire to optimize themselves through a dynamic, data-driven intentional reflexing with their bodies (for an example in the popular press, see Wolf, 2010). Taken to an extreme, every human being holds the potential to be his or her own life-form through concerned attention on one’s biological and somatic processes.

So, the Directive does seek to incite a form of agency and does aim to put that agency to work in government. This is visible, again, in the other side of the informational equation: The subject of this governmentality is expected to

be engaged in her *use* of information in daily life to self-optimize. In a fascinating passage, the *Progress Report* says,

When the Department of Agriculture makes nutritional data available, parents can make smarter meals for their families. When the Department of Transportation makes information on the status and causes of airplane delays available, travelers, and those waiting with them, can better plan their work and play. When the Department of Labor makes safety information available, information can better protect their workers. (Open Government: A Progress Report, 2009, p. 3)

This is where the “rubber meets the road.” The encouragement of transparency, participation, and collaboration are designed to set information and data free and, in doing so, to enable to the creation of innovative strategies for addressing societal challenges. In a kind of modification of the “democratic feedback loop” (Miller & Fox, 2006), these strategies and data then are cycled back to citizens “on the ground” who use them to optimize their everyday lives.

The personalizing logic of optimization can be further illustrated by contrasting it with the logic of “empowerment” deployed, for example, in the War on Poverty and Community Action Programs (CAPs). In those cases, empowerment sought to motivate the poor because it was held that “the [G]overnment could not govern and win the War on Poverty without the voluntary participation of the poor” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 74), yet their participation was impeded by the very subjectivity, the “culture,” of poor Americans. The poor were thus constituted as a visible (Scott, 1998) target population that was an “expert” of themselves and their condition. The Directive largely refrains from identifying specific communities or target groups instead focusing on the individual, singular citizen; indeed, even where specific groups are identified, it is done in an effort to enjoin individually based integration and collaboration, which hints at a movement away from neoliberal pluralism.

Social optimization could be characterized as a modified version of the new prudentialism. As described above, the new prudentialism focuses primarily on the private, individualized management of risk by the entrepreneurial citizen; yet, the use and assessment of data is also crucial for the self-policing of this active citizen. As O’Malley (1996) insightfully notes,

[The prudential] responsible individual will take rational steps to avoid and to insure against risk, in order to be independent rather than a burden on others. Guided by actuarial data on risks (e.g. smoking and lung cancer; bowel cancer and diet, etc.) and on the delivery of relevant

services and expertise (e.g. relative costs and benefits of public and private medicine), the rational and responsible individual will take prudent risk-managing measures. Within such prudential strategies, then, calculative self-interest is articulated within actuarialism to generate risk management as an everyday practice of self. (p. 200)

This subject is also an information user. A similar kind of faith that individuals can and will use information to make informed decisions is demonstrated. Clearly, this also does not reconstitute the neoliberal primacy given to *choice* and *decision* and so holds fast to a constrained “choice-theoretic” model both of economics and human behavior (see Nelson, 1993).

Info-Liberalism: The New Social Terrain of Obama’s Social Government

Notwithstanding the continuities that we have identified, the terrain of governmental thought on which these data are generated and used has shifted. First, the emphasis on transparency and full disclosure represents a modest departure from a “pure” neoliberal (especially anarcho-capitalist; see Foucault, 2008) faith that efficient markets, when left to their own devices, will resolve social and economic problems, like the mortgage crisis in the United States. However, this does not entail, by implication, an effort to reassert an active “Keynesian” style regulatory state. The Directive does not assert a traditional welfarist governmentality that seeks to govern the whole of society through expert management of specified processes, such as health, the economy, and so on. As commentator John Cassidy (2008) intimates in his lucid consideration of Obama’s economic theory, the active citizen here is more the citizen of new institutional or behavioral—one in need of a nudge (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008)—than conventional neoclassical economics. Second, the efficacy of social optimization is linked to *circulation*. Government is central to convening sites for its generation of data and, subsequently, facilitating its circulation at the three interfaces outlined above. So while decision and choice remain central, the principle at work here, again, is not the market or the creation of a market-enabling, prudentialist ethic; rather, the *ethos* is integrative and rests on an image or diagram of a distributed, information-bearing and information-exchanging citizenry—in short, a network polity.

Thus, Obama’s government assumes the postwelfarist terrain of the social and much of a neoliberal governmentality. But it would be a mistake to see Obama’s adaptation of neoliberal government as simply more of the same because the principle or form of thought through which these technologies,

knowledges, and strategies are deployed is distinctive. There are continuities and discontinuities. On one hand, the OGD clearly indicates a fairly consistent adherence to neoliberal technologies of prudentialism and its choice theoreticism, and the technologies of agency, citizenship, and performance. However, by articulating a more direct link between Government and the citizen via a diagram of a reciprocal, information technology-integrated networked polity, the rationality of the Directive is different than the neoliberal pluralizing movement toward establishing a government of communities rather than a social government.

To really appreciate this move, we need to more fully situate the neoliberal practice of governing through community.⁵ As Peck and Tickell (2002) describe, the first “phase” of neoliberalization was marked by an effort to deal with the various crises of the 1970s and the efforts of state-restructuring projects (such as those of Reagan and Thatcher) to actualize the theoretical program of Friedman and Hayek—one rendered into actionable policy by neoconservative think tanks (e.g., in the United States, the Cato Institute, and in the United Kingdom, the Adam Smith Institute). This was what they call *roll-back* neoliberalism. It took aim at collectivist institutions and policies (like unions and social insurance) generated within the Keynesian-welfarist settlement. As Margaret Thatcher famously claimed, “Society does not exist.”

The second moment of neoliberalization, *roll-out* neoliberalism, confronted the negative, socially destabilizing effects of the first, “epitomized by the Third Way contortions of the Clinton and Blair administration,” which included

inter alia, the selective appropriation of “community” and nonmarket metrics, the establishment of social-capital discourses and techniques, the incorporation (and underwriting) of local-governance and partnership-based modes of policy development and program delivery in areas like urban regeneration and social welfare, the mobilization of “little platoons” in the shape of (local) voluntary and faith-based associations, and the evolution of neopaternalist modes of intervention (along with justifications for increase public expenditure) in areas like penal and workfare policy. (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 390)

In this sense, the second, or roll-out, moment represents a *deepening* of neoliberalization insofar as welfarism is not merely being rolled back but displaced by a different governing rationality—one that serves to institutionalize market-driven logics where they previously did not exist and to unstitch pockets of resistance. Indeed, here is where tensions (or contradictions) in neoliberalization appear between noninterventionalist, antistatist discourse

and highly invasive, interventionist practices (see Harvey, 2004). Yet, these tensions are moderately assuaged by the “restorative” or “recuperative” color of the discourse, which frames interventionist—often authoritarian and nationalistic—strategies as returning social relations to their natural, prewelfare state. This has the paradoxical implication of setting no limits as the presupposed domain of the “natural” is actively reconstituted (Catlaw, 2007, pp. 182-187) or “engineered through explicit forms of political management and intervention” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 396).

In this context, then, the OGD can be seen as a project within the rolling out of neoliberalism that clearly replicates core aspects of neoliberalization. However, it seems to be a distinctive one by virtue of its fundamentally *integrative, connectionist* logic. That is, unlike both the anticollectivist and pluralistic communitarian strategies pursued by the first two moments of neoliberalization (though we surely can find evidence of the continuity of these strategies in the administration’s fiscal policies and faith-based/neighborhood partnerships), the Directive expresses and deploys a rationality that, in its way, seeks to govern through the social but in a seemingly novel manner that reflects the contemporary reimagining and reworking of the term *social*. This reimagining shifts away from a definition of “to bring under public [i.e., political, state] control” and to redistribute wealth equally toward one that is more reflective of the information-sharing, networking, and high technology-focused activities of “social” media and other Web 2.0 applications (Zimmer, 2010, p. 6). Social government means “connected” government and to “socialize” government means something quite different here (though clearly this new meaning shares airtime with the old, as the debate over health care policy in the United States makes clear).

We call Obama’s neoliberalized social government *info-liberalism*.

Info-Liberalism and Dangerous Government

How might the distinctive practices of the self and technologies of citizenship being incited by this information-driven dynamic between the citizen and Government in this network polity contribute to our broader understanding of contemporary governance and administration? We address this question, first, by engaging Henrik Bang and Anders Esmark’s (2009) exceptional analysis of good governance and the network society. Bang and Esmark accept Manuel Castells’ (2000) position that there is a new macro level, global social formation called “the network society” and that this new formulation is “defined by the social morphology and transformative capacity of networks based on the potentials of new information technologies” (Bang

& Esmark, 2009, p. 10). Insightfully, they read the expanding literature on networks governance as evidence for Castells' thesis and contend that good governance is "the normative program of network governance" (p. 8). By good governance, they specifically mean,

[A]n art of government that is not intrinsically related to the norms and institutions of liberal, representative democracy but proceeds rather from a normative program of good governance—that is, a program emphasizing the transformative, empowering, and creative potential of network governance as part and parcel of the ability of public regimes to produce policy solutions needed in network society. (p. 15)

This marks an important shift in governing insofar as good governance is more focused on "wise policies" than democratic policy or politics (p. 16). It is more concerned with action than decision or, central to their argument, policy *before* politics. "Good governance . . . frames politics within policy" (p. 17).

Good governance, however, is "increasingly dependent on the ability of political authorities to empower and involve ever more laypeople in the exercise of authority in the political community" (p. 10). Using the language of governmentality studies (e.g., control society), they write that the contemporary regime of government "asks subjects to transgress limitations, to 'think outside the box,' and to push the borders of the accepted" (p. 26). The crowning paradox is that "the efficiency of this form of rule and governance seems to increase proportionally with the level of freedom it affords its subjects," (p. 26) which is precisely the means-equals-ends logic that we identified in the OGD.

Thus, what they name good governance, we would identify as a dimension of the *governmentality of info-liberalism*. Bang and Esmark (2009) rightly call attention to the ambivalence that info-liberalism engenders. It is the exercise of rule, the efficacy of which depends on the very cultivation of the freedom to optimize—that is, to create, disseminate, and use information—which prompts criticisms that this freedom is unreal or illusory. Yet, there are good reasons to draw such conclusions given that, as many researchers have noted, the neoliberal/good governance clarion call for individual freedom has proceeded in lockstep with the dispersion of restrictive, disciplinary, often highly punitive practices in everyday life (Braedley & Luxton, 2010; Kupchik & Catlaw, in press; Peck & Tickell, 2002).

As Mark Bevir (2006) shows, there is a similar ambivalence expressed in the normative and empirical literatures on governance. On one hand, as Bevir writes, "systems governance" emphasizes elite rule and the use of networks, inclusion, and participatory venues to the ends of securing consensus and

legitimizing the political system in the eyes of the public. It is an ultimately liberal view of Government, working through liberal institutions like representative democracy. On the other hand, radically democratic views of governance, by contrast, tend to view democracy as embedded in particular practices and not coincident with the state. Thus, good governance becomes an avenue for radical pluralization and the dispersion of inclusive, deliberative, and participatory processes throughout the broader society. This duality is in play in the OGD and, consistent with our reading of Bang and Esmark, it is our conclusion that info-liberalism as a governmentality is characterized *precisely by this ambiguity* between a radical openness and connectivity and maintaining the system through market-driven rationalities that ultimately double-back on themselves as authoritarian, disciplinary stabilization measures.

In our view, it is this ambivalence that makes info-liberalism dangerous and volatile—and we are not the first to observe this dynamic in neoliberalization (Harvey, 2004; Peck & Tickell, 2002)—but Obama’s info-liberalism suggests particular dangers for democracy. This dangerousness shows itself in two ways. First and in the most accessible sense, info-liberalism’s ambivalent systems/radical attitude toward participation and inclusion as manifested in the OGD portends to create, to borrow from Bryer (in press), a “democracy bubble.” In observing the Obama administration’s initiatives, Bryer describes a worrisome gap between citizens’ expectations when entering into participatory processes and their ultimate outcomes. This mismatch runs the risk of deflating future expectations and actually exacerbating public disillusionment, political withdrawal, and distrust of government—a paradox long recognized in the political science literature (e.g., Hibbing & Theise-Morse, 2002). Here, we can understand the contemporary setting of the “bubble” in terms of the ambivalence between the “systems” and “radical” aspects of info-liberalism.

So, this is one real danger: that the ambivalent logic of info-liberalism actually could, in fact, undermine the efficacy of democracy if not acknowledged and attended to. Indeed, more generally this points to the fact that, as a governmentality, info-liberalism is not *inherently* democratic and may be put to work in an array of political systems, though its ambivalent attitude toward freedom is likely to generate uncertainty and volatility wherever it is deployed. This calls particular attention to the import of scholarship on “metagovernance” and the concern for “democratic anchorage” advanced there (see Sorensen & Torfing, 2005, 2009). Related to this, Bryer (2011, in press) elaborates on the importance of expectations setting, stating intentions and purposes of processes clearly, and giving administration adequate resources as ways to manage this structural problem on the ground.

Second, there is a sense in which info-liberalism rests on a dangerous practice of the self for the citizen. We have seen that info-liberalism operates according to the cultivation of conditions for the free exchange and distribution of information and the use of that information for social optimization by individual citizens. This in turn places the Government in an ambivalent, potentially unstable relationship toward its citizenry in that the Government is acutely vulnerable by virtue of its dependence on the participation and inclusion of citizens to the ends of governing *with* and not merely through or over them. This corresponds with Bang's (2003) notion of the citizen as "everyday maker," who is potentially both the ideal subject and the worst nightmare of the contemporary Government. But in an info-liberal governmentality, the citizen, too, is highly vulnerable. She is vulnerable not only in terms of the potential disillusionment that could result from poorly designed or ambiguously intended democratic encounters—though this is real—but also by virtue of the visibility or exposure required to generate and share information. Information generation and exchange requires *openness*. As sociologist Scott Lash (2002) writes, in the age of information, "My body, the social body, becomes more or less open constellations. Social bodies cannot interface with one another unless they are to a certain degree open" (p. 16). Thus, the concern is not merely *that* the Government uses my input as a citizen but also *how* it is used by the system.

Conclusion

The dance of info-liberalism's collaborative governance and the social government it conceptualizes—and the Obama administration's open government initiatives in particular—is a bold and innovative but precarious one. It is fraught by the overlapping vulnerabilities and ambivalences of its two partners: Government and Citizen. Government is split by the info-liberal governmentality's tensed systems and radical elements. The citizen, in turn, is summoned to enable a dynamic information sharing and optimizing partnership with Government—a relationship that holds the promise of considerable freedom. At the same time, however, the relationship portends of a perhaps unprecedented degree of personal openness and, correspondingly, exposure to control, harm, and disillusionment.

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Notes

1. We will use a lowercase “g” when we intend government in the Foucauldian sense here and capital “G” in Government when referring to the traditional understanding of a specific set of “public” institutions. We generally eschew use of the term *the state*.
2. A regime of government specifically refers to “the organized practices through which we are governed and through which we govern ourselves” (Dean, 2010, p. 18).
3. A handful of scholars and watchdog organizations have commenced ongoing evaluations of the Open Government Directive (OGD) that are worth noting. For example, a consortium of government watchdog groups called “OpenTheGovernment.org,” which includes members such as Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Watch and the Center for Media and Democracy, has conducted periodic audits of federal agency plans related to OGD objectives, and has ranked them according to their “openness” (see the results here: <https://sites.google.com/site/opengovtplans/home>). The results of these audits echo scholars’ initial findings related to OGD initiatives that progress is mixed. Although the OGD has accomplished a great deal (e.g., agencies adopting a more deliberate sense of openness, increasing the use of technology, the evolution of like initiatives at the international, state, and local levels, etc.), there remain challenges, such as a lack of resources for agencies’ OGD initiatives, a lack of consistency in implementation due to conflicting political pressures, and the absence of measurable criteria by which agencies can judge their own progress toward implementing a new culture of openness (Linders & Wilson, 2011; see also Nam, 2012; Wilson & Linders, 2011). The Obama administration has acknowledged these challenges but remains confident that significant progress is being made toward creating a more transparent, collaborative, and participatory government (The Obama Administration’s Commitment to Open Government: A Status Report, 2011). Indeed, the administration continues to develop and implement OGD initiatives, as evidenced by the unveiling of Open Government Plans 2.0 (Sunstein & Vein, 2012) and the U.S. National Action Plan (The Open Government Partnership: National Action Plan for the United States of America, 2011) as a part of the international Open Government Partnership.
4. Here, it is important to note the distinction Foucault (2008) makes between American and European forms of neoliberalism. Although both forms of neoliberalism aim to replace the inherent naturalism of liberalism with more constructivist

tendencies (Burchell, 1996), European ordoliberals sought to organize the marketplace through social policy (Gordon, 1991) so that it functions optimally but without impinging on the legal and social rights of those who participate in it. In the United States, however, a brand of neoliberalism that Foucault dubs *anarcho-capitalism* emerged in which economics becomes “an ‘approach’ capable in principle of addressing the totality of human behavior, and . . . of envisaging a coherent, purely economic method of programming the totality of governmental action” (Gordon, 1991, p. 43). In other words, American neoliberals propose to extend the rationality of the marketplace to all corners of human existence. As our focus and context here is squarely on American policy, it is the American form of neoliberalism, which informs our analysis. It perhaps bears noting, though, that Foucault’s presentation could be situated in comparison with Hall and Soskice’s (2001) “varieties of capitalism” framework, which posits, at two poles, two distinct types of capitalist economies: liberal market economies (LMEs) and coordinated market economies (CMEs). The former is aligned with contemporary American capitalism, the latter with European forms, such as Germany. An excellent critical analysis of the “varieties” approach from the governmentality perspective can be found in Peck and Theodore (2007).

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