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Radical Thought and Political Practice: Officeholding and Accountability in Seventeenth-Century Britain

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ABSTRACT

This article connects changes in administrative and bureaucratic processes that historians associate with state formation in early modern Britain with overlooked developments in thinking about political accountability. It blends the social history of state administration with intellectual history, and involves synoptic analysis as well as striking case studies. It argues that innovative political thinking emerged from new forms of political practice, and from the experiences of humble officials in the localities. Such individuals were increasingly professionalized and specialized, and their work was increasingly described using the language of trust, public interest, and state's service. The mid-seventeenth century accentuated the process by which they came to be accountable to a centralized state, not least through the routinization and intensification of quotidian practices associated with enhanced communication between center and locality. Ultimately, the article argues that such processes, as well as more regular and direct interactions between political elites and humble officials, encouraged new kinds of political thinking. These were not quite unintended, but they may not have been fully anticipated either, and they involved innovative attempts to subject higher officials to oversight from "below," and to legitimize their accountability to an adjudicating public, in ways that may even have had a lasting effect on English political culture.

In January 1651, the Commissioners for Compounding in London—a branch of the Interregnum state responsible for dealing with political "delinquents"—indicted two officials in Surrey. John Inwood and Benjamin Goodwin, who served as commissioners for sequestering delinquents' estates, were accused of corruption and dereliction of duty, and were deemed "unfit" for office. Claims were made about bribery, about official duties being conducted on market days when both men were preoccupied with private business rather than

"public" affairs, and about the failure to execute "instructions" issued in London. Intriguingly, however, it was also said that they would not "call to account Mr Say, MP," for money belonging to the "state."[1] This episode highlights the central issue of this article: important changes in how political accountability—the business of acting against, rather than simply criticizing, those who performed inadequately in positions of public trust—was understood and practiced in seventeenth-century England. Central here was the notion that accountability involved not just subjects being answerable to their sovereign, but also people in higher office being sanctioned by their subordinates, and ultimately by the public. This article highlights neglected aspects of how change came about, not least to reflect upon the relationship between political thought and political practice, and upon the intellectual ramifications of centralization, bureaucratization, and state formation.

In developing this argument, the essay embraces recent transformations in how accountability has been studied. As political scientists have demonstrated, the topic has not always been treated with analytical rigor. Vital questions need to be posed about accountability as both "virtue" and "process;" about who is held to account, and by whom or by which forum; and about the kinds of conduct involved; as well as about the nature of the obligation, or the rationale for judging performance.[2] Historians, likewise, have developed more sophisticated ways of exploring formal and informal processes of accountability, challenging distinctions between politics from "above" and "below," and recognizing the importance of state formation and officeholding. Crucial here has been appreciation that "popular" participation involved much more than merely conflict, protest, and resistance; that power was negotiated and that state formation may have occurred "from below." Scholars have become increasingly attuned to the need to explore communicative practices, and the kinds of "empowering interactions" that took place within political systems that were predicated upon "acceptance-oriented rule," and upon the possibility of ordinary people harnessing the resources of the state for their own purposes, not least as petitioners.[3]

Within the British context, Mark Knights has analyzed shifting attitudes towards trust, officeholding, and accountability. He has traced a gradual and decidedly non-linear process by which "corruption" was socially constructed and recontextualized, and mapped a spectrum of more or less consequential ways in which it could be tackled by interventions in public affairs, in terms of what political scientists have called the "participation ladder." Knights moves beyond conventional accounts of accountability that focus narrowly upon attempts to ensure that public finances were properly audited, and to promote parliamentary oversight of government officials.[4] He also moves beyond accounts that concentrate upon the downfall of Charles I and upon varieties of radicalism, which tend to privilege two key ideas. The first of these highlights how parliamentarian theory generated claims that entrusted power could be revoked, which were then applied to King Charles who was ultimately accused of a fatal breach of trust.[5] The second suggests that radical ideas of political accountability—as expressed by the Levellers—adapted parliamentarian ideas, challenging a theory of "virtual representation" that ignored accountability to the electorate, and proposing that Members of Parliament (MPs) held "a power of trust, which is ever revocable." Insisting that "we are your principals and you our agents," the Levellers contended that MPs could legitimately be held to account, and then applied the same logic to anyone who held public office. With both regicide and radicalism, in other words, historians tend to predicate changing ideas about accountability upon innovations in political thought, thereby positing a very particular relationship between theory and practice.[6] Even Knights traced shifting ideas about trust, corruption, and office to "ideological battles" in the 1640s and 1650s, and to the

willingness of writers like Henry Parker to apply fiduciary notions of entrusted power to public officeholders.[7]

This piece supplements recent scholarship by focusing upon bureaucratization, not so much to establish how far this occurred, and why, as to analyze how officeholders experienced novel administrative structures and processes, and new "chains of authority." As such, it revisits the early modern history of institutional change and administrative cultures—as discussed by Gerald Aylmer, Michael Braddick, and John Brewer, among others—but from a somewhat different perspective.[8] This involves observing how local officials interacted with their superiors in London, rather than just with the local communities in which they operated, and demonstrating that a vital dimension of shifting attitudes towards accountability involved the possibility of junior officials judging their superiors; that this was conceptually distinct from the emergence of parliamentarian theories in the early 1640s, even if it quickly became associated with the new regime in Westminster; and that novel ideas of accountability emerged from, rather than drove, political practice. Paradoxically, such developments will be traced to a dramatic intensification in central oversight of local officials. The importance of a social history of administration lies not in providing the only means of detecting novel ideas, but rather in relating the dramatic developments associated with the civil wars to more gradual changes in attitudes and processes. Indeed, the aim is to explore one aspect of a novel conjuncture that came into focus in the decades before 1642, which also involved innovative approaches to petitioning, a transformation in print culture, and heightened demands for political transparency, as well as greater possibilities for using print as a political tool.[9] Situating new notions of accountability within such a conjuncture will help to break down neat distinctions between formal processes of accountability and a public culture of accusations and investigative journalism, and make it possible to link the kinds of relationship that emerged within an increasingly bureaucratized state to broader changes in the relationship between political elites and wider society. Ultimately, the aim is to link changes in administrative culture to the emergence of much more expansive conceptualizations of "officeholding" and to broader claims about the need for popular participation and an adjudicating public.

I

Tracing the reconceptualization of accountability begins by recognizing how a traditional and highly participatory system of government—the "monarchical" or "unacknowledged republic"—came under increasing pressure from the forces of centralization, and how attempts to achieve oversight of local administrators acculturated contemporaries to ideas about trust, officeholding, and responsibility.[10] As scholars have shown, the early modern period witnessed tensions between "two concepts of order," or between "unified" and "federal" notions of the well-ordered commonwealth.[11] On the one hand, and whatever the impact of humanist notions regarding "true nobility," the *vita activa* and disinterested public service, demands were made for the effective implementation of a swelling body of statutes and proclamations, and for enhanced control over local officials. The fear was that the reins of government "hung too loose."[12] On the other hand, the "problem of enforcement" reflected the fact that the pre-civil war state remained small and decidedly non-Weberian, with official activities being poorly coordinated and somewhat undifferentiated, and with Whitehall being staffed by people who secured positions through patrimony, patronage, and

purchase. Posts were treated as private property, or held at the monarch's pleasure, and were generally rewarded with fees, gratuities, and perquisites, rather than with salaries.[13]

Locally, officeholding was highly participatory but predicated upon rotation and voluntary service. Although officials were responsible to the crown and expected to follow "rules," they were also drawn from, chosen by, and answerable to, local communities. Some regarded their positions as marks of honor more obviously than as serious responsibilities, and in a situation where authority rested upon social standing and reputation, and where a premium was placed upon maintaining harmony, officials tended to represent local interests and to be constrained by societal expectations. As such, they could as easily find themselves being lambasted as "busybodies" as challenged for being "idle slow-bellies."[14] In the face of "independently-minded gentry," it was "impracticable" for Whitehall to "enforce its will," the crown relying instead upon collaboration and negotiation, and using "pressure and persuasion," "exhortatory letters" and "blustering pronouncements." Indeed, a discernible increase of governance need not be attributed to greater central direction, but rather to local initiatives, the achievement of consensus, and the recognition of the need for local discretion. Similar conclusions have emerged in relation to taxation, the assessment and collection of which relied upon officials who were embedded within local communities and systems of patronage, who were sensitive to local interests, and who were more likely to be judged locally than to be controlled from the center. In short, "local practices distorted central prescription," through various forms of "favouritism," and without local buy-in policies tended to be unsuccessful, and undermined by "intransigence," "selfishness" and "localism," or by concerns about prerogative government.[15] To the extent that local officials were zealous, emphasis has been placed upon the determination to privilege *negotium* over *otium*, the desire for honor and personal advancement, and the "natural bonds of authority," as well as the importance of "duty" and "loyalty."[16]

In sum, scholars have sometimes detected little more than the "spectre" of "central interference," in terms of episodic schemes to create an "exact militia" and to alleviate dearth through the "books of orders," and in terms of controversial fiscal initiatives like the Forced Loan and Ship Money. Even here, amid debates about the success or failure of such policies, there has been considerable agreement that oversight was patchy at best and "ramshackle" at worst; that many central initiatives often met with "reluctant acquiescence;" and that there was a problem of mistrust.[17]

Such assessments have undoubted force, but they have tended to prompt reflections upon the politics of localism and constitutional conflict, and upon the causes of the civil wars, to the neglect of administrative thinking. Whether or not the Privy Council was capable of maintaining consistent pressure upon local officials, of dealing intensively with more than one issue simultaneously, and of processing large quantities of information, it is certainly possible to demonstrate how accountability was conceptualized.[18] This is most obvious with the "books of orders," which involved an "ambitiously far-reaching chain of command and accountability," and which attempted to impose "permanent oversight."[19] Proclamations ordered justices of the peace (JPs) to pass on instructions to high constables, established the kinds of information that needed to be gathered, and insisted upon "dutifulness and diligence . . . without any partiality." Local officials were required to "certify their doings and proceedings" to sheriffs every month—including information about "absent" colleagues—so that reports could be sent to Whitehall "without any delay." In addition to considering such reports, the Council was to note "the default in any justice," "whereby such persons . . . may not continue in those rooms wherein they shall be found not disposed," and so that they

could be replaced by others of "better disposition."[20] Attempts were made to address "supine remissness and wilful contempt," and determination was expressed "to take a more strict account . . . of the officers to whom the execution thereof is committed."[21]

It would be wrong, however, merely to focus upon attempts to alleviate dearth, and it is possible to show that such pressures were pervasive. During the 1580s and 1590s, addresses to Kentish juries by William Lambarde certainly highlighted the value of appointing men from within local communities, and continued to stress the need for "duty," "loyalty," and patriotism, but they also recognized the problem of overreach, reminding officials that their role was "to inquire and present, not to hear and determine," while also berating "remiss" performance, including jurors' failure to highlight failings by their "betters." Lambarde frequently stressed that men should "spare not for love, dare not for hatred, [and] stick not for fear," and that they should act "without any sinister regard of friend or foe, kith or kin, great or small, high or low, rich or poor." Such pleas for "indifferency" were coupled with warnings that jurors' responsibility to "represent the body" of their locality involved a "trust" and "office," and that they would be made to "answer" for poor performance.[22]

In the decades that followed, similarly stern rhetoric about accountability, and about the need for "diligent execution" of orders and statutes, was commonplace. Proclamations repeatedly deployed the language not just of "duty," but also of "trust" (and how it could be "abused"), criticizing "inferior officers" who used their discretion either to over-reach their authority or to show favoritism towards neighbors and local elites, not least by pursuing "lucre, gain and reward." They also insisted that "men of trust" would "answer" for their failures, be "deprived" of "office," and even suffer imprisonment.[23] Indeed, while precise instructions ("articles of direction") may have been rare, official orders frequently insisted upon the need to "give an account"—via "certificates" and "registers"—upon their implementation.[24] This can be demonstrated from the 1580s—when local officials were required to document when and where a proclamation regarding Mary Queen of Scots had been published—to the 1630s, when Charles I insisted that "gentlemen of quality" should leave London to oversee local government. Those who refused risked losing "places of trust" and the government attempted to ensure that "a strict and severe account" was taken of their responsiveness.[25] Myriad local officials became familiar with the notion that they would neglect their duties "at their peril," and petitions certainly emerged in the early 1640s from officials who had been punished for failing to implement policies like Ship Money.[26]

Such rhetoric involved more than merely wishful thinking, and official paperwork reveals that such ideas about enforcement and accountability filtered down through society, informed administrative processes, and came to be reflected in communicative practices that enhanced effective reporting. Lancashire's sheriffs and JPs recognized the need to provide humble officials with detailed instructions ("articles"), to "search whether the churchwardens and constables have done their duties," and to pursue those who were "negligent" or "delinquent." Such information-gathering was expressed in terms of the need "to give our account to the king."[27] Research into poor relief demonstrates that JPs became much more assiduous in keeping formal accounts, and recent work on Lenten regulations indicates how an increasingly print-based bureaucracy made it easier to disseminate instructions and to generate flows of information into Whitehall.[28] The records of provincial sewers commissions—which oversaw drainage works and flood defences—reveal how local officers were required to "make return of their doings," with warnings to "fail not at your peril," and with those who were "remiss"—not least in yielding financial accounts—being made to answer for their "contempt." Attempts were made to ensure that officials were impartial—or

"indifferent"—by blocking the appointments of those with conflicts of interest, and by stressing the need to act without "favor, corruption, dread or malice." Even humble jurymen heeded calls to monitor those who "neglect their duties and performance," submitting "presentments" about their social superiors, and making it possible to punish those who corrupted, colluded with, or threatened, local officials.[29]

Focusing upon administrative structures and processes, rather than upon the politics of "enforcement," thus provides a different perspective upon accountability. Serious challenges certainly remained, not least regarding oversight of local constables who were little more than "uneducated and unconcerned" farmers and artisans, and who lacked "the time, energy and ambition to transform … villages into model parishes." Nevertheless, officials went some way towards implementing changes aimed at overcoming the "debilitating consequences of decentralisation," not least by creating effective channels of communication.[30] Such changes were gradual in the decades before the civil wars, and it is certainly vital to calibrate the impact of "centralisation" with care. Nevertheless, both the rhetoric and reality of accountability became widely familiar, in ways that provide an important context for understanding much more dramatic changes after 1640.[31]

II

Making sense of developments during the revolutionary decades requires deepening our understanding of the culture of accountability that can be observed amongst the new breed of "state's servants." Here, it should be noted that historians have recognized the need to move beyond Gerald Aylmer's ground-breaking but somewhat "establishmentarian" approach, which focused upon a professionalized central bureaucracy rather than upon ordinary functionaries in the localities.[32] More recent work on parliamentarian taxation has thus demonstrated that an increasingly formalized and differentiated institutional landscape involved specialized, salaried, and oath-taking officials, who were more independent of local communities and more "responsible to central offices."[33] Hitherto, however, historians have reflected upon the ramifications of administrative change, and on the enhanced "reach" and extractive power of an emergent fiscal-military state, in rather particular ways. This involves emphasising how attempts to empower "outsiders" and undermine local discretion generated resentment about the "insolent behavior" of "self-seeking" officials. Historians frequently recite protestations about "mean men"—from the "the tail of the gentry"—being "intruded" into local government at the expense of men with "visible estates" and "unquestioned repute," and also highlight resistance—by Clubmen and crypto-royalists—that was predicated upon claims about parliamentary "tyranny."[34] Less well studied are those individuals—"Suckdry" the official, "Sneak" his clerk, and "Common Curse" the exciseman, as well as "Shallow Brains" his assistant—who worked within novel systems and structures, and who encountered more rigorous forms of accountability.[35] Here, too, an experiential approach to administrative change—and to the mental world of humble officials—is vital, and can be recovered from the vast archives of various "executive" bodies. These centralized committees have conventionally been used to highlight political and religious factionalism, but they also prove revealing about everyday bureaucratic change and intellectual innovation.[36]

At the most basic level, scholars have yet to grasp the immense—perhaps immeasurable—scale of the parliamentarian bureaucracy, or to assess how much control central committees exercised over specialized, oath-taking, salaried officials in the localities.[37] Local

committees clearly worked with traditional kinds of officeholder, such as unpaid "petty" constables; and in assuming the power to appoint "high" constables, efforts were certainly made to ensure that nobody remained in office for too long. It is also true that recruitment to some innovative roles—muster-masters, treasurers, commissaries—occurred locally.[38] Nevertheless, it is striking how much central control was exerted over even the most menial positions, including assessors and tax collectors, and thousands of messengers, "solicitors," and "agents." Thus, while the impetus for appointing additional officials often came from local administrators (who even recommended specific candidates), and while uncertainty frequently arose about who was responsible for whom, there was a limit to how far central authorities were willing to delegate power. Pressure was exerted to fill positions and keep track of who was employed, and national committees played a vital role in commissioning specific individuals, delineating roles, and regulating salaries.[39] To a remarkable degree it was central committees that received applications for employment, and it was their workings with which even humble officials became familiar. Surviving evidence makes it possible to document official activities and interactions in extraordinary detail.[40]

What emerges from archival material is granular evidence about the practices involved in bureaucratic oversight, and the attitudes by which these were underpinned. Central to new administrative processes were the "agents" and "solicitors" who liaised between central and local layers of the parliamentarian state, and who sought to ensure that policies were implemented consistently, rather than being applied with discretion by local elites. Parliamentarian administration was predicated upon central backing—conscious that powerful grandees might "crush" humble officials—as well as central control, which explains why greater emphasis was placed upon following "instructions"—without fear or favor, without discretion, and without exceeding one's remit—and upon ensuring that officials were "accountable from time to time."[41] Sequestration papers for Wiltshire reveal the frequency with which orders arrived from London, as well as efforts by their "agent" for "quickening" their execution, not least in response to concerns that action had not been taken against diverse "delinquents," even though it was "evident enough" that they fell within "the words of the ordinance." The point is not that "favor" ceased to be shown to such people, but rather how sternly officials in Westminster responded to "slackness," "connivances," and "neglect," not least by warning that they would "expect some speedy account thereof."[42] Here, as elsewhere, it is noticeable that official rhetoric revolved not just around "trust" but also "public service," and that this was quickly absorbed by local officials.[43] The Staffordshire county committee repeatedly referred to work done in "the state's service," while the sub-committee of accounts in Chichester referred to its "integrity and zeal for the service," and professed that it would "not fear any man in truly executing those commands we receive by ordinance of Parliament."[44] Humble people who sought and secured official employment made bold promises about diligent service in line with formal commissions, professing their willingness to follow instructions, and expressing determination to ensure a "more exact performance of the trust reposed in us," as well as a willingness to give a "full account" of their work.[45]

Central to standardized and accountable work was a mountain of print, another area where the fitful experimentation of earlier decades was intensified and routinized. Printed texts were vital to ensure that local committees acted "in obedience" to orders, and the use of print ensured that an ever larger volume of instructions could be cascaded to solicitors, collectors, agents, and churchwardens.[46] The use of standardized *pro formas* to demand tax, provide receipts, and summon people to hearings sent clear messages to contemporaries

about the bureaucratization of local administration, and made it clear that they were interacting with agents of a more centralized state, not least as "accountants" who were answerable for handling revenue.[47] For historians, this saturation of everyday business with print highlights the pervasiveness of financial accountability, and how familiar its rhetoric became. A printed summons issued to local officials might instruct them to bring a "just, orderly and particular account" regarding money that was "chargeable," and make reference both to their oaths and to parliamentary ordinances, and it almost invariably contained a warning: "fail not, as you will answer the contrary at your perils."[48] Very often, moreover, it is possible to document how such material was received and utilized, and it is noteworthy that on occasion centralized committees not only circulated instructions, but also dispatched printed statements about how such orders were "necessary to be observed" as a matter of course. One such missive made the pointed observation that these would have "eased . . . that trouble which you have been at, in the frequent writing of letters . . . desiring satisfaction in many things." It would be better for all concerned, in short, if officials followed precise guidelines.[49]

Similarly routinized and intensified were processes for monitoring performance, and centralized bodies employed an army of people to chase local officials for information and money, and to demand explanations when responses were inadequate or tardy.[50] It is possible to examine long lists of officials which note dates of appointment and discharge, and the state of individual accounts, and to document the scrutiny of precise duties, specific decisions, and menial errands.[51] Individual tax demands were dutifully returned to Whitehall, with responses and outcomes added, and officials who were tasked with publishing printed orders in churches and marketplaces—"that none may plead ignorance"—were required to submit a "speedy account" of their work, amid inevitable warnings to "fail not as you will answer the contrary to your utmost peril."[52] Time and again local officials responded by listing the times and places where printed material was posted and proclaimed, and here too the significance of such evidence lies less in the novelty of the practices involved than in how quickly they became a standard part of daily administration.[53] Indeed, a similar logic came to be applied to other forms of paperwork, as attempts were made to log the successful delivery of every single letter sent out by the Committee of Both Kingdoms, and every warrant and "ticket" (i.e. demand for money) issued by the Committee for the Advance of Money. Tabs were kept not just on routine tasks that were performed by people who were directly employed by centralized committees, but also on the agents and officials who conveyed even the most formulaic pieces of paperwork onwards within the localities. This ensured that detailed reports were submitted on journeys made, expenses incurred, and results achieved. To a quite remarkable degree, in other words, the aim was to monitor not just taxpayers but also officials and administrators, and this routinization of reporting meant that even humble officials came to recognize the need to document their performance of official duties, not least in order to get paid.[54]

The significance of such evidence lies in how the ability to monitor performance enabled the pursuit of wayward and corrupt officials, and in the wider impact of routinized accountability. Officials in London chivvied local committees, threatened those who neglected their duties, and inquired into performance on the ground, and then disciplined people who failed to discharge their trust.[55] The Committee for Compounding pursued those who were deemed guilty of fraud, who were corrupted by "bribes," and who ignored "instructions;" and then dismissed agents who were "unfit," who submitted faulty accounts, and who consorted with "malignants."[56] Moreover, while processes of accountability were clearly

imperfect, contemporaries did not simply react by urging a return to older ways. Some commentators decried the "insufferable loss" sustained by "neglect" in "calling to account" local officials who were "not capable to walk by rules and instructions," and recommended a more rigorous "methodizing of accounts," involving regulations "published in every marketplace" and the imposition of strict penalties. Thomas Fauntleroy wondered "what improvements may be made in the revenue" if officials were "watched so narrowly on every side." For Fauntleroy, in other words, bureaucratization had not gone far enough.[57]

Crucially, while accountability procedures often began in London, they frequently required input from local colleagues, in ways that were both helpful and problematic. The Committee of Accounts in London instructed its sub-committees to certify "neglects" and "misdemeanours" in the "execution" of an individual official's "place," and the Committee for Compounding inquired about agents like "Mr French," asking the local committees for which he had worked to comment upon his performance. The Cambridge committee replied that he was "just, careful and understanding in his office," suggesting that complaints against him proceeded from ignorance or malice.[58] But when officials in Gloucestershire responded to a similar request about one of their agents, they were much less positive, such that Edward Rogers was removed from his post.[59] Such intrusiveness could prove controversial, exposing rifts between different committees, and provoking claims that financial oversight was being stymied by obstructive behavior. However, while such tensions could clearly be factional and ideological, they also involved jurisdictional problems.[60] In grumbling about being held to account, county committees sometimes pulled rank by maligning the "kind of men" who sought to audit their finances. And while some officials were deemed "unmeet" on ideological grounds, others exposed difficult questions about lines of authority and accountability, not least the very legitimacy of being judged—as bodies authorized *directly* by Parliament—by sub-committees whose powers came from a committee that was answerable to MPs.[61]

Such cases also demonstrate that central oversight was frequently enhanced by local officials participating in processes of accountability actively rather than reactively. Like their colleagues in London, members of local committees instructed, and monitored the performance of, minor functionaries who were expected to "make an account," sometimes on a weekly or monthly basis, were held "accountable to the committee," and were told "not to fail at their peril," or they would answer for their "neglect."[62] Here too it was necessary not just to collect money, but also to demonstrate that letters and warrants had been delivered.[63] Non-compliant officials were pursued, and a commissary like John Sherrard, who delayed submitting accounts that had been "often demanded" by the Staffordshire committee, was threatened with being "discarded" from "the state's service."[64] Sherrard eventually complied and kept his job. Other evidence reveals how dutifully local constables reported back on parishioners who refused to pay taxes, and received orders for such people to be distrained or made to appear and answer their "contempt."[65] Here too, bureaucratic success was predicated upon the pervasive and routine use of print.[66]

Ultimately, centralization and bureaucratiszation ensured that complaints about local officials were often instigated in the provinces, in the expectation that action would be taken centrally. Here too, historians have tended to attribute such behavior to political and religious factionalism. But such ideological battles need to be set within a culture of accountability that was predicated not just upon the authority of centralized committees, but also upon local participation in official oversight.[67] Sometimes, local officials recognized the need for backing from Whitehall, as when officials in Cardiganshire provoked angry reactions by

prosecuting a registrar from the local sub-committee of accounts. In the face of questions about their authority, and accusations of delinquency, these men appealed to their superiors in London to "maintain our power."[68] On other occasions, central committees asserted their authority to intervene. The Committee for the Advance of Money pursued charges that were levelled against officials in Nottinghamshire, while the Committee for Compounding insisted that it was responsible for judging complaints about corrupt agents that emanated from local committees.[69] Similarly, in dealing with disputes between county committees and its own sub-committees, the Committee of Accounts encouraged local officials to discharge "the trust" that was "reposed" in them, but insisted that problematic cases should be adjudicated centrally.[70] By removing the scope for local discretion, in short, bureaucratization incentivized new modes of accountability that were more formal, and that involved submitting grievances to superiors in London.

Such cases highlight recognition by local officials that their fate lay in the hands of a centralized bureaucracy, and the explanations and appeals that they submitted to superiors are revealing. These often referenced zealous service within a bureaucratized system, as with the messenger, Richard Wynch, who told the Committee for Sequestrations that, "according to the trust reposed in me, I am to give you an account of what service I have discharged."[71] Often, however, such responses took the form of indignant protest. When the Somerset agent, Edward Curle, was accused of having "great sums of money in his hands," the case generated numerous petitions, letters, and certificates, and Curle defended himself with a petition protesting about his "industrious service" and "extraordinary pains," as well as with a "diary of his actions."[72] James East responded to accusations of financial malfeasance at the Farthing Token Office by noting that he was "put upon this service … without my privity or ever seeking after it;" that he was undone by men who wanted to "command the office at their pleasure;" and that accepting such behavior would be "contrary to the trust reposed in me." East portrayed himself as a disinterested bureaucrat, following the rules.[73]

In such situations, accountability could work rather differently. Claims about malpractice and poor performance often generated serious entanglements, and when accusations flew in all directions lowly officials sometimes complained about their superiors rather than just their colleagues.[74] This might involve attempts to deflect criticism, and having been tasked with publishing orders from the Committee for Compounding around Yorkshire, William Garthwaite explained his failure to do so at Hull by insisting that the local sheriff "would not suffer the order to be posted."[75] Others complained to the Committee for the Advance of Money about colleagues who refused to assist in the execution of official duties.[76] John Burgess, a minor functionary in Somerset, was more bold. His appeal to the Committee for Compounding—that his work was being obstructed, and that he should be formally charged or allowed to proceed uninterrupted—provoked robust exchanges between central and local officials. The county committee was rebuked for exceeding its authority in replacing Burgess with another agent, but defended its actions by insisting that the new man was "industrious," that Burgess faced serious "exceptions," and that when "rightly informed" the London committee would "judge him unfit for that service." Burgess responded by doubling down on his superiors in Somerset, insisting that the original accusations were intended "to blast me in the bud," and that his opponents were working to the "prejudice" of the commonwealth. This may not have worked—his protest merely provoked further accusations about his "disaffection"—but the crucial point is that officials in London accepted the validity of Burgess's original move against his superiors.[77] The Committee of Accounts even explained that local officials could legitimately complain to Parliament about its own performance.[78]

Everyday parliamentarian administration reveals acculturation to ideas of trust and accountability, and how this fostered novel thinking about how, when, and by whom oversight could be exercised, as well as about the processes involved, and about the legitimacy of holding superior officers to account. It was precisely this web of issues—how far bureaucratization fostered "downward" accountability—that was central to the case of Inwood and Goodwin with which this analysis began.

III

Demonstrating how contemporaries grappled with these issues requires scrutiny of specific episodes. An intriguing case study involves the Cambridgeshire sequestrator, James Whinnell, who demonstrates how challenging experiences with new kinds of officeholding generated considerable paperwork, including petitions and pamphlets that narrated his case and his thinking. Whinnell's story highlights new kinds of relationships between central and local authority, as well as new practices and claims regarding accountability.[79]

Whinnell became a focal point for tensions, involving social status as well as parliamentarian zeal, in late 1643. He provides an early example of friction between humble officials—Whinnell was "neither scholar nor lawyer"—and "gentlemen" on the county committee. Having been accused of "miscarriages" in his "office," Whinnell secured backing from the Committee for Sequestrations in London, which noted that its local agents had "demeaned themselves well and fairly," defended them as men "equally entrusted and authorised by the parliament," and insisted that the county committee should not "control or interrupt them," especially by granting "protections or discharges" to people who deserved sequestration.[80] In early 1644, however, the Earl of Manchester threw his weight behind the county committee, complaining to London about "many faults" by sequestrators of "inferior rank." Once again, the parliamentary committee backed Whinnell and his colleagues, noting that their appointment was a response to "remissness" by "others of better quality," that it was their "activeness" that had "drawn more envy upon them," and that Manchester should concentrate upon "reform" of others who were less zealous.[81]

Whinnell's opponents remained defiant, however, and in April 1644 printed notices, in Manchester's name, appeared in local marketplaces complaining about "persons of mean and low condition," about "ignorance and illiterateness," and about poor record keeping as well as about "fraud and deceit to the commonwealth." Having apparently been "molested" and "imprisoned" by Henry Ireton, on Manchester's orders, Whinnell escaped to London where a petition that protested about his "faithful service" was referred to the Committee of Examinations and then to the Committee of Sequestrations in May of 1644. Following a hearing in the presence of his lawyers, Whinnell was ordered to be released and explanations were demanded over the foot-dragging and "contemptuous words" by which former orders in his favor had been met.[82] Whinnell's troubles did not end there, however, and in June of 1645 he and his colleagues faced further allegations of fraud and incompetence, "notwithstanding their oaths to do all things to the best advantage of the state and faithfully to discharge the trust reposed in them."[83]

Such experiences may have become fairly common, but what makes Whinnell intriguing is his reaction, not least with printed pamphlets that documented his troubles.[84] Portraying himself as one who had not sought official duties, who had suffered "in the public cause," and who was both loyal and zealous, he noted that Parliament had invited men like him to participate in the defense of laws and liberties, and that he had ventured his life and estate—

"beyond my ability"—thinking "that justice and right should not be denied to any." As a public servant, he claimed to act without fear or favor, professing that "greatness could not fear me, nor affection draw me, nor pity move me . . . to discharge any traitors that were within the compass of the ordinance for sequestrations," and noting how he "enraged" local grandees by refusing to "discharge . . . their friends and brothers." This involved striking social commentary, and Whinnell explicitly asked: "were it the gentry chiefly, that stood so firm to the Parliament, or the yeomanry?" Equally fascinating is how Whinnell characterized his authority and his relationship with Parliament. Insisting that he implemented instructions to the letter, in the face of "protections" granted by local grandees, he complained about how he was treated for "executing the ordinance" and cited the text of ordinances in order to protest that his arrest was "contrary to law" and "destructive to our liberties." He did all of this as someone who was "trusted and authorised" and accountable to his superiors. And his complaint to the higher authorities was made expecting "the justice of this ever-honoured Parliament," which had "promised . . . to save harmless all those that shall put in execution those just commands."[85]

Implicit here were ideas about accountability, not just in terms of being answerable to Parliament but also in terms of the propriety of judging, and complaining about, the performance of others. In 1644 he secured the arrest of, and submitted formal articles against, one tormenter, Serjeant William Fisher, who as a JP "curbed the godly and well-affected party" and "encouraged the malignants," thereby hindering "our desired reformation." Fisher's faults sprang from being insufficiently puritanical: he indulged in sports and was a common swearer; he was devoted to the Book of Common Prayer and disparaged Oliver Cromwell. In Whinnell's words, however, Fisher was "not fit to be put to the helm in these boisterous times," and "such pilots" would "endanger our commonwealth." The "common sort of people," he insisted, wanted a Joshua who would "appoint over us men of courage, dealing truly and hating covetousness." The key thing was to avoid "mercenary men" who favored their friends and were "enriched" accordingly.[86] In the same year, Whinnell also participated in a complaint against other local men, like George Glapthorne and Henry Ireton, which their targets described as "malicious and scandalous," and Ireton clearly discerned Whinnell's influence behind demands that his financial accounts should be scrutinized. He railed against "malice and devilish practices" on the part of those who sought revenge for being "discountenanced" because of their "insolent and factious carriages," and who had been "called to account." Ireton bemoaned how such men had "tried their utmost interest with the Parliament" and its committees, "to procure . . . various orders, to trouble, distract and divert us."[87] Being held to account by people whom he deemed unfit for office evidently prompted Whinnell to make those very people accountable in return.

Ultimately, Whinnell made even bolder moves. Thus far, he had judged the performance of local officials who were insufficiently scrupulous about parliamentary ordinances, but he also expected Parliament to respond, and eventually developed ideas about the accountability of MPs (and peers) themselves. Whinnell's petitions and pamphlets certainly reveal frustration over costly delays: having sent for witnesses to appear at Westminster, he grumbled both that he "could never get them examined," and that "after the expense of £47 I sent them home." While insisting that he was "not quite discouraged, waiting with patience to see an end of these oppressions," ongoing problems eventually ensured that his tone became less ambiguous. He traded accusations of malpractice with an erstwhile colleague, Edmund Scotten, and provoked a physical assault by trying to block the appointment of Richard Fiennes as governor of King's Lynn, on the grounds that Fiennes was guilty of corruption

and was "not fit for any such trust." In 1645, Whinnell was accused of saying that Fiennes's father—the leading parliamentarian peer, Viscount Saye—had betrayed Leicester to royalists, and of exclaiming that "none of the Fiennes, nor my Lord Saye, ever did any good to the state." Whinnell was hauled before Parliament, fined, imprisoned in the Fleet, and removed from office. He responded by decrying such accusations as a "practice" to "undo" him, having discovered that they had "deceived the state" of vast sums of money.[88]

Such evidence certainly reveals how vengefulness informed processes of censure and accountability, but more intriguing is how Whinnell responded to the discovery that Saye refused him a pardon. This involved an appeal to Cambridgeshire's new MP Francis Russell, in which he boasted about his service in detecting "a practice to defraud the state" and referred to his repeated imprisonment as "contrary to the law." Whinnell reflected that the "chief cause" of the wars was "the liberty of the subject"—"Magna Carta was a great word"—and that he wanted to "recover our ancient liberties." But he also reflected on trust and accountability, exclaiming that "I hate and detest the betrayers of the trust reposed in them." He asked Russell to promote his petition to Parliament because "God and the country hath made choice of you," but he was already contemplating how to respond if support was not forthcoming. This involved reflecting upon Psalm 142 in which David appealed to God for help when "no man cared for my soul," and explaining that "the well affected . . . have but a small requital for all their desires towards your honor." More pointedly, Whinnell added that "our trust hath been too much upon man," and that "we had great hopes that your honor would not only have been forward in easing our particular grievances, but also that a remedy might be had for our great oppression." "When will the time come," he wondered, "that our worthies may say as Job said . . . I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame, I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not, I searched out"?[89] To Nathaniel Fiennes, meanwhile, Whinnell expressed concern that "our parliament have forgotten the declaration which they published in their necessities, for the subscription of plate, horse, etc," pointing out that people had been assured that their "alacrity and duty" would be acknowledged, and that Parliament would be "as careful of their safety, welfare and reimbursement, as of their own, and to live and die with them in this cause."[90] Whinnell effectively argued that MPs like Russell had neglected their duties and betrayed their trust, and he came close to arguing that voters needed to be more careful in scrutinizing parliamentary candidates.[91]

Whinnell's experiences as a new kind of administrator official are telling. Tensions were generated by attempts to discharge duties in line with parliamentary directives and by efforts to make local officials accountable, but ideas also emerged about "downward" accountability involving implicit and explicit justifications for scrutinizing the performance of superiors. Whinnell did more than merely deploy the rhetoric with which local officials had long been inculcated; he also felt compelled to reflect upon social divisions, and to blur the distinction between formal bureaucratic processes and public commentary upon political corruption. He ended up thinking and acting like a parliamentarian radical *avant la lettre*.

IV

Armed with such evidence, it is possible to reflect upon the wider landscape of civil war radicalism. This is possible because Whinnell was not the only minor local official whose experiences fuelled radical ideas, although here too care is needed about how to contextualize the

path he followed and the dynamic relationship that developed between political thinking and political practice during the English revolution.

Within recent scholarship, attention has been drawn to various characters who appear to resemble Whinnell, but who arguably make inappropriate comparators.[92] One of these is John Musgrave who helped to draft accusations against an MP, Richard Barwis, in 1645, and who subsequently published pamphlets decrying others who hampered attempts to "impeach" Barwis "for betraying his trust." Musgrave explicitly argued that MPs were "stewards and servants" to "the commons of England."[93] Another fascinating case involves Christopher Cheesman, another sequestrations agent who became embroiled in controversy after complaining to his superiors in London about the corrupt performance of colleagues in Berkshire, and who was in turn accused of rude and dissolute behavior including drinking "two and three days together." Here too, a protracted investigation brought Cheesman into contact with the state and its institutions, giving him a crash course in republican administration and (rough) justice. He too became an accomplished petitioner whose printed statements were distributed "to every individual MP." Cheesman provides further evidence that officials who were held to account—he was suspended and then dismissed—could respond by appealing to their superiors, by railing against the processes they experienced, and by judging the performance of officials and MPs.[94] What is noteworthy about Musgrave and Cheesman, however, is that their activism was generated not just by personal experience, but also by the radical ideas with which they had *already* been inculcated. Musgrave clearly knew his Lilburne and, having been involved in the 1649 Leveller-inspired Burford mutiny, Cheesman was already a noted radical by the time of his appointment as a local official.[95]

As such, a more appropriate context for understanding Whinnell involves other officials and commentators, and other vital dimensions of contemporary thinking about officeholding and accountability. Key here is another parliamentarian, George Wither: military governor and sequestrations official in Surrey who used the language of trust and disinterested public service, demanded that officials should be chosen for their integrity, and insisted that such roles were most suitable for "men of middling fortunes." Wither, too, became embroiled in controversy in the early 1640s over his own performance as well as his willingness to scrutinize local grandees who needed to be replaced by "true patriots," such as MP Sir Richard Onslow who wielded power "according to his discretion." Having come to see the nation's grievances "epitomised" by his own predicament, Wither used his own experiences to develop ideas about the legitimacy of holding MPs to account and pursued his targets through official channels as well as through print.[96] Like Whinnell, Wither highlights the capacity of minor officials to embrace ideas of disinterested public service, to engage in experience-led thinking about accountability, and to take specific claims into the public domain. Wither also did this independently of other radicals, and indeed his was one of the cases that informed Lilburne's own argument that MPs who "betrayed their trust" should be "accountable."[97]

Wither also makes it possible to trace the development of such ideas in ways that connected the responsibilities of minor officials to much more expansive notions of officeholding, and to the empowerment of a much broader public. Key here is Wither's long-standing determination to root out "corruption" and the problems caused by "artless riders" occupying "offices" and "high seats of state." And while his writings from the 1620s were predicated upon his unique qualifications as a quasi-prophetic commentator, he also described himself as a "remembrancer," in ways that denoted something more like a formal position.[98] Like other outspoken commentators, Wither linked campaigning to notions of "office," but in

ways that also implied the empowerment of other ordinary citizens. Thomas Scott, writing as "a member of the multitude" in 1624, described his "office" as being "to see, to watch, to speak, to blow the trumpet."[99] Here, it is tempting to detect the influence of practices from across Europe, not least the Venetian *bocche di leone* which facilitated an accusatory culture that was known in England through the work of Malvezzi.[100] More obviously, such notions became more explicit with Whinnell, whose attempts to enlist support from other local people—with certificates regarding his conduct, demeanor and service—revealed the dramatic possibilities for conceptualizing "officeholding" that emerged with Parliament's "Protestation" of May 1641. This episode has long been seen as a key staging post on the road to civil war because oath-takers promised to defend the reformed religion, the "power and privileges" of Parliament, and the liberties of the subject, and because vigorous efforts were made to both secure mass subscription and to record the names of refusers. More recently, scholars have used the subsequent wave of iconoclasm to argue that individuals felt empowered to use their judgment about how to fulfil such promises, and that the Protestation gave signatories responsibilities, and indeed an "office," predicated upon the need to identify and hold to account anyone who showed insufficient zeal for reform.[101]

It is precisely this interpretation of the Protestation that informed Whinnell's thinking about how to deal with under-performing MPs. He invited men like Russell to remember their duties and "former promises," and reminded them of the biblical injunction in Proverbs 3:27 to "withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." However, Whinnell also suggested a more forceful approach, asking anyone with a sense of "piety, honour or compassion" to "help a distressed state, especially such as have taken the Protestation, and are bound with the same duty with us . . . to come to our aid and assistance." Thereafter, it was precisely this kind of civic participation that flowed from Wither's ideas about accountability, in terms of advice about the need for care in choosing MPs, about the need to monitor their performance, and about the possibility of getting them "purged or removed." It was for members of the public to "mind them of their duties," not least by possessing "a share . . . in that which hath been called the common sense." Here too, Wither's ideas might be thought to have influenced Leveller's thinking.[102]

<h2 style="text-align:center">V</h2>

The civil wars did not represent a neat watershed in the terrain of political accountability, but they certainly witnessed an intensification of centralizing instincts that had long been evident and the routinization of practices that were integral to the process of creating effective chains of command, and meaningful channels of communication, connecting the center with the localities. This reflected broad processes of state formation as well as the conditions of civil war, which accelerated the development of a centralized and professionalized civil service. In this conjuncture, the dramatic expansion of print as a bureaucratic tool revealed and facilitated state power. Printed instructions, forms, and receipts, as well as the printed summons, were necessary to ensure the effective implementation of national policies; but they also facilitated oversight and accountability, and helped officials in London to monitor performance by local officials. They also helped to embed within political discourse the language of "trust," of disinterested, rules-based service of the "state," and of the tension between public goods and private interests, as well as of the need to reward actions rather than inherited status.[103]

This essay has argued that the process of making officials responsible to centralized authorities had implications for popular participation, popular politics, and popular accountability; implications that became clear after 1640 in ways that were not fully anticipated, but not exactly unintended. Of course, there is plentiful evidence from earlier decades about "ordinary" people—whose lips were only sometimes loosened by drink—declaiming against people in power and authority, albeit without deploying the language of trust and accountability.[104] Evidence can also be found of humble subjects threatening to call officials to account, albeit by force rather than through formal channels.[105] More intriguing is the possibility of tracing the implications of state formation for popular participation in the business of political accountability, in ways that involved greater formality and reflected notions of "office."

Amid a burgeoning centralized bureaucracy, a dynamic and symbiotic relationship emerged between notions of accountability within and beyond the center. This partly involved an educative process, whereby making local officials answerable to the center empowered them to assess the performance of others. However, it also involved a tendency for accountable officials to take their complaints upwards, to resolve problems encountered locally, to defend themselves against accusations, and to complain about the people by whom they were themselves held to account. This was a logical consequence of limiting the scope for local discretion: if challenging problems were not to be solved locally, and if orders and instructions were insufficiently clear, matters would inevitably be referred upwards. In the conditions of civil war, as political and religious factionalism became more severe, this commonly involved frustrations about the processes involved in executing responsibilities, and complaints about the performance of other officials. The possibilities for holding such people to account were also facilitated by new lines of authority and responsibility that integrated humble officials into state institutions, both institutional and political, and contemporary officials and MPs accepted that they were at least somewhat responsible and accountable to junior officials, and introduced mechanisms that made such accountability more feasible.[106]

These findings relate to vital dimensions of early modern history. These include the role of trust in the pre-modern world, and how contemporaries grappled with relations between "principals" and "agents" in institutional and organizational settings—not least in terms of how best to monitor and control the performance of officials and employees and thus ensure accountability, and how much scope there might need to be to permit local discretion, initiative, and entrepreneurialism.[107] More obviously, such findings relate to the history of state formation as a negotiated process, and one that was intimately associated with questions about who was deemed to be accountable, to whom, and by what mechanisms. This negotiation inevitably occurred in situations where the state assumed new powers, where centralized power was regarded as a resource that could be mobilized to address particular issues, and where people encountered state institutions in new ways, not least in conditions of religious and political division. Different modes of state formation entailed different kinds of encounter, and amid the print revolution such encounters could be indirect, involving the availability of new kinds of information about the activities and performance of public figures, as well as direct, in terms of personal interactions with national institutions.

Such encounters could be both sanctioned and unsanctioned, and crucial to processes of negotiation were contemporary tussles over legitimate forms of elite behavior, legitimate modes of popular participation, and legitimate styles of journalism and public commentary through the medium of print. Importantly, different kinds of encounter provided different

pathways towards the reconceptualization of accountability: since attitudes towards accountability were invariably associated with how different roles were defined, and with expectations about how power would be used, changes to roles and powers inevitably provoked reflections upon performance. This could involve people from all walks of life, from ordinary readers to frustrated petitioners and aggrieved constituents. Their reflections tended to generate challenging ideas about how to respond to poor behavior—or indeed breach of trust—by those who held office, as well as more or less innovative practices. Together, changes in ideas and practices helped to reconstitute the political nation.[108] It is arguable whether historians have adequately mapped such encounters and reflections, and the ensuing debates about how, and by whom, public officials could legitimately be critiqued and censured. It is certainly clear that too little has been done to trace how state formation was negotiated by those who became entangled with state institutions as officials or employees, including those who served the army. A key aim of this essay has been to show how commonly the reactions and reflections of minor "officeholders" involved the use of personal experiences to rethink accountability.

Attentiveness to experience-led developments in ideas and practices around accountability also makes it possible to engage with the history of radicalism. This means recognizing that radical ideas—expansive notions of who could and should be involved in monitoring the performance of officeholders—were developed by people who cannot readily be associated with 'radical' political movements. It means recognizing that bold conclusions about the legitimacy of holding superiors to account could be reached independently of, and earlier than, theories associated with the Levellers. And it means that such ideas could ultimately be shared across a wide ideological spectrum. This sometimes involved situations in which new institutional practices of accountability created expectations that local problems would be resolved at a national level, and in which frustrated expectations prompted political thinking and generalized conclusions. As with other kinds of encounter with the state and its institutions that became possible during the civil wars, those involving junior officials generated novel ideas about officeholding and accountability. Cases like those of Whinnell and Wither involved innovative thinking, which occurred as they addressed specific grievances, and it remains unclear whether either man straightforwardly ended up as a "radical." Much clearer is that the public controversies with which they became involved fuelled the development of Leveller thought, thereby supporting the idea that the Leveller movement emerged from the coalescence of aggrieved people who independently reflected upon the implications of their experiences, and sometimes began working together and with the Leveller leaders.[109]

Beyond this, it is also possible to demonstrate that such ideas came to be adopted more widely, even if only for tactical purposes. Some royalists and crypto-royalists certainly developed a critique of parliamentarian tyranny, and sought to revive older notions of public service involving the rotation of office and "men of quality," rather than "hungry persons . . . not such as have but seek a settled estate." Others, however, adopted novel ideas about accountability.[110] In 1648, Dorset royalists demanded that MPs should be "recalled, as having broken their trust reposed by us in them," and that new "patriots" should be chosen "as we can trust." Similarly, William Prynne's 1649 letter to constituents—following his ejection from Parliament and imprisonment by the army—referred to having been elected "without my privity or seeking," and to his determination to "discharge that trust and duty you reposed in me." Moreover, while denying that the army had any power to "question or restrain" him, Prynne was willing to be judged by voters who were best able to "know and judge" their "own trust." Prynne explained that while MPs could judge him "judicially" for the speech

that prompted his expulsion from the Commons, he nevertheless held himself "ministerially accountable" to his constituents.[111]

Of course, many questions remain unanswered, in terms of the origins of such ideas, their prevalence, and their long-term impact. There is scope to explore accountability within livery companies and urban corporations, not least to establish whether civic positions were regarded as "public offices."[112] It would also be possible to examine practices and developments in the ecclesiastical sphere, in terms of possibilities for accountability associated with conventional forms of participation (constables' presentments, visitations), as well as with Puritan campaigns against Laudianism (including parish petitions and "articles" against specific clerics).[113] Thereafter, it would be worth exploring whether popular accountability survived as a meaningful phenomenon after 1660, not least given claims that the experimentation of the 1640s— regarding the "civil service" and revenue raising—gave way to a more cooperative relationship between the state and traditional elites, as well as to tax "farming."[114] There is at least some evidence of lasting change in terms of instructing MPs, and in terms of administrative processes, print bureaucracy and record-keeping, all of which limited the discretion of local officials, and helped to inform an emerging "country persuasion."[115]

Addressing such questions involves a willingness to explore political and intellectual developments through the lens of officeholding and administrative processes, and to explore institutional change through the experiences of those who participated in evolving bureaucratic structures. It also involves recognizing that profound changes in political culture were rooted in the "little businesses" of everyday life.[116] The suggestion here has been that exploring the interaction between "elite" and "popular" practices, and between administrative methods and political mentalities, highlights significant change—gradually but then rapidly after 1640—in terms of the size, power, and reach of the state; in terms of the shape of the political nation; and in terms of new ideas and practices regarding accountability. The possibility of being held to account for one's performance in office was not so much invented as transformed during the seventeenth century. And as many more people became involved with centralized institutions and inculcated with notions of trust and accountability, fascinating ideas and practices emerged regarding the responsibilities, duties, and power of active citizens.

ENDNOTES

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16. Anthony Fletcher, "Honor, Reputation and Local Officeholding in Elizabethan and Stuart England", in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge, 1985), 92–115; Cust, ed., *Grosvenor*, xi–xxvii; Hirst, "Privy Council," 46–66.

17. Hirst, "Privy Council," 53; Slack, "Books of orders," 20–1. See: Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c.1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), 180, 207, 212, 242, 245, 296, 419–20.

18. Fletcher, *Reform*, 56, 59; Langeluddecke, "Book of orders," 1247–8.

19. Fletcher, *Reform*, 45–7, 56; Quintrell, "Book of orders," 553.

20. *Orders Appointed* (London, 1608), 2–21.

21. *Orders Appointed* (London, 1630), ¶4. See also: *Orders and Directions... for the Better Administration of Justice* (London, 1630), 11–14, 27.

22. Conyers Read, ed., *William Lambarde and Local Government* (Ithaca, 1962), 59, 69, 71–5, 78, 80, 89, 93, 99, 102, 105, 108, 112, 116, 119–21, 125–6, 131, 133, 139, 148.

23. J. F. Larkin and P. L. Hughes, eds, *Stuart Royal Proclamations I* (Oxford, 1973), 121–2, 169, 186–7. On accountability and the language of trust, see: Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 109, 111.

24. Larkin and Hughes, *Proclamations*, 188, 409–13. On instructions, see: Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 108.

25. *A True Copie of the Proclamation* (London, 1586); J. F. Larkin, *Stuart Royal Proclamations II* (Oxford, 1983), 112–13, 170–2, 350–3. For evidence that such threats were pursued, see: TNA, PC 2/42/243; Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1966), 398. I am grateful to Chris Kyle for the reference to Mary, Queen of Scots.

26. Larkin and Hughes, *Proclamations*, 122; Parliamentary Archives [hereafter PA], MP HL/PO/JO/10/1/44; HL/PO/JO/10/1/46; HL/PO/JO/10/1/69.

27. B. W. Quintrell, ed., *Proceedings of the Lancashire Justices of the Peace at the Sheriff's Table during Assizes Week, 1578-1694* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 121, 1981), 21, 71–2, 73, 74, 80, 87, 90, 171–7.

28. Hindle, *On the Parish?*, 180, 207, 212, 242, 245, 296; Chris R. Kyle, "'A Dog, a Butcher, and a Puritan:" The Politics of Lent in Early Modern England," in *Connecting Centre and Locality. Political Communication in Early Modern England*, ed. Chris R. Kyle and Jason Peacey (Manchester, 2020), 22–43.

29. Rose Hewlett, ed., *The Gloucestershire Court of Sewers, 1583-1642* (Gloucestershire Record Series, 35, 2021), 10, 18, 37, 131, 145, 149, 167, 185, 195–6, 207, 277, 280–1, 291–2, 306; A. Mary Kirkus and A. E. B. Owen, eds, *The Records of the Commissioners of Sewers in the Parts of Holland 1547-1603* (3 vols, Lincoln Record Society, 1959-77), volume I, xxxv; volume II, 62, 64, 93, 101, 146, 148; volume III, 47; Nicholas Herbert, ed., *The Forest of Dean Eyre of 1634* (Gloucestershire Record Series, 26, 2012), 7, 8–9, 26.

30. Langeluddecke, "Book of orders," 1247–8; Langeluddecke, "Parish officers," 227, 247; Fletcher, *Reform*, 45–7.

31. Jan Pitman, "Tradition and Exclusion: Parochial Officeholding in Early Modern England, a Case Study from North Norfolk, 1580-1640", *Rural History* 15.1 (2004): 27–45.

32. Aylmer, "From Office-Holding to Civil service;" G. E. Aylmer, *The State's Servants: the Civil Service of the English Republic, 1649-1660* (London, 1973), 282, 291, 341; Wilfrid R. Prest, "Judicial Corruption in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* 133 (1991), 84.

33. Fletcher, *Sussex*, 223–4, 325; Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 126, 131–2, 168–9, 175; Braddick, *State Formation*, 260–1; Michael J. Braddick, *Nerves of State. Taxation and the Financing of the English State, 1558-1714* (Manchester, 1996), 100–1; D. H. Pennington, "The Accounts of the Kingdom," in *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England*, ed. F. J. Fisher (Cambridge, 1961), 182–203. See also: Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1974), 132, 141.

34. Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 175, 177, 197–9; Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 187; Fletcher, *Reform*, 15, 32, 60; Fletcher, *Sussex*, 271; John Morrill, ed., *The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630-1650* (London, 1976), 197–9, 201–2, 207–8; Edward King, *A Discovery of the Arbitrary, Tyrannical and Illegal Actions* (London, 1647), 11.

35. Samuel Sheppard, *The Committee-man Curried* (London, 1647); Valerie Pearl, "London's Counter-Revolution," in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement, 1646-1660*, ed. G. E. Aylmer (Basingstoke, 1972), 40–1. For skepticism about the effectiveness of accountability, see: Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 197.

36. Jason Peacey, "Politics, Accounts and Propaganda in the Long Parliament," in *Parliament at Work*, ed. Kyle and Peacey, 59-78; Ann Hughes, "The Accounts of the Kingdom: Memory, Community and the English Civil War," *Past and Present* 230 supplement 11 (2016), 311–29; Ann Hughes, "Diligent Enquiries and Perfect Accounts: Central Initiatives and Local Agency in the English Civil War," in *Connecting Centre and Locality*, ed. Kyle and Peacey, 116–32.

37. For the administration of oath-taking in the localities, see: D. H. Pennington and I. A. Roots, ed., *The Committee at Stafford, 1643-1645* (Manchester, 1957), 9, 284, 287. For oaths and salaries, see: Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 169.

38. *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money, 1642-1656* (3 vols, London, 1888) [hereafter CCAM], volume I, 1–2; Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 16, 119–21.

39. TNA, SP 28/57, fo. 334; SP 18/100/72; SP 20/1,6; E 113/13; CCC, 162-740; *CCAM*, i. 1–9, 16–18, 64–5, 67–8, 82. Parliamentary ordinances made clear that a layer of bureaucrats would be imposed from the center, and although these men—perhaps drawn from specific localities—had power to appoint more junior officials, they were 'answerable' to central committees for their performance: C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (3 vols, London, 1911), volume I, 274–83, 322–7. See: Aylmer, *State's Servants*, 278, 420; Jason Peacey, "'Written According to my Usual Way:' Political Communication and the Rise of the Agent in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Connecting Centre and Locality*, ed. Kyle and Peacey, 94–115.

40. *CCC*, 168, 192, 348, 377–8, 388, 408, 544, 582, 590.

41. *CCAM*, volume I, 2-9; CCC, 229-30, 768; TNA, SP 28/252i, fos. 29, 36, 38v; J. P. Kenyon, ed., *The Stuart Constitution, 1603-88* (Cambridge, 1966), 279.

42. British Library [hereafter BL], Add. MS 22084, fos. 15v, 25, 26v-7, 31v.

43. TNA, SP 282/252i, fo. 11, 11v, 29, 41. For the shift in language towards "public office" and "strict account," see: Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 197.

44. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 56, 110, 203, 257; TNA, SP 28/255, unfol.

45. *CCC*, 168, 192, 348, 377–8, 388, 408, 544, 582, 590; TNA, SP 28/255, unfol.

46. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 223, 226, 229, 246-7, 271, 285, 291, 307.

47. TNA, SP 28/295, fo. 129; *CCAM*, volume I, 30, 38–9, 50–1.

48. TNA, SP 28/295, fo. 321; SP 28/296, fo. 1606, SP 28/269, fo. 1608; SP 28/269, fo. 2089.

49. TNA, SP 23/264, no. 26; SP 23/254, fo. 148; *CCAM*, volume I, 2-9, 16–18, 30, 59–61, 64–5, 75–6. Occasionally, the copies of instructions received and used by local officials survive: TNA, SP 23/254, fo. 150.

50. *CCAM*, volume I, 2–9, 12–16, 38–9, 59-63, 69–70, 81–2, 85–6.

51. *CCC*, 454, 740.

52. *CCAM*, volume I, 31, 38-9, 51-2; Beinecke Library, Yale University, Osborn fb.67, fo. 73; TNA, SP 23/259, fos. 24-5; Shropshire Archives, LB7/1950; *CCAM*, volume I, 9–12.

53. TNA, SP 23/248, fo. 35; SP 23/172, 557, 560; SP 23/156,142; Shropshire Archives, LB7/1951; *CCC*, 654–6.

54. *CCAM*, volume I, 2–9, 16–21, 24–7, 30, 36–9, 44, 54, 57–67, 75, 82, 86–97.

55. *CCAM*, volume I, 9–16, 44, 79–80, 86.
56. *CCC*, 325, 400-1, 575, 579, 590, 707.
57. Thomas Fauntleroy, *Lux in Tenebris* (London, 1654), 1, 13, 14–15, 16.
58. TNA, SP 28/212, unfol.; *CCC*, 575, 579, 585.
59. *CCC*, 234, 407.
60. For the politics of accountability, see: Knights, *Trust*, ch. 10; Peacey, "Politics, Accounts and Propaganda."
61. TNA, SP 28/255, unfol.
62. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 18, 20, 23, 58, 61, 63, 73, 75, 82, 85, 90, 93, 94, 106, 112, 117, 118, 138, 165, 234, 242, 259, 261, 263, 264, 265, 269, 270-3, 288, 290.
63. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 116, 149.
64. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 86, 110, 257.
65. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 258, 268–9, 276, 292, 300.
66. TNA, SP 28/295, fo. 828; SP 28/295, fo. 829.
67. Clive Holmes, "Colonel King and Lincolnshire Politics, 1642-8," *Historical Journal* 16 (1973): 451–84; David Scott, "The Barwis Affair: Political Allegiance and the Scots During the British Civil Wars", *English Historical Review* 115.463 (2000): 843–63; Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, lxxviii–ix.
68. *CCAM*, volume I, 107–8.
69. *CCAM*, volume I, 97–9; *CCC*, 234, 259, 325, 331, 332, 348, 365, 387, 395, 400, 407, 410, 454, 544, 575, 579, 585, 590, 707, 708, 727.
70. TNA, SP 28/252i, fos. 11, 11v, 41; SP 28/212. For an order to arrest, see: TNA, SP 28/252i, fo. 12.
71. Pennington and Roots, ed., *Stafford*, 348.
72. TNA, SP 23/79, 84, 85, 95, 97, 102–3, 111; *CCC*, 298.
73. TNA, SP 28/255; SP 28/252i, fo. 12.
74. *CCC*, 708, 727.
75. TNA, SP 23/172,560.
76. *CCAM*, volume I, 31, 33–4.
77. *CCC*, 365, 381, 393, 395, 410, 454.
78. TNA, SP 28/252i, fos. 10v-11v, 41.
79. For brief mentions of Whinnell, see: Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 192; Clive Holmes, "The Identity of the Author of the 'Statement by an Opponent of Cromwell'," *English Historical Review* 129.541 (2014): 1380–1.
80. TNA, SP 20/1, fos. 77-v, 90-v; *CCAM*, i. 29–30, 66–7; *The Humble Petition and Remonstrance of Edmund Scotten, James Whinnell* (London, 1644), B3v-4; James Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement* (London, 1646), 4–5. See: Holmes, *Eastern Association*, 192.
81. TNA, SP 20/1, fos. 129v-30; Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 6–7. See also: *Articles Exhibited Against Colonell Edward King* (London, 1644).
82. *Commons Journals* [hereafter *CJ*], iii. 502; TNA, SP 20/1, fos. 160v-1, 169, 175v, 185v, 190; *Humble Petition and Remonstrance*, A2-3v, B4v; Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 5–13.
83. TNA, SP 28/255, unfol.
84. *Humble Petition and Remonstrance*; Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*. See also: *A Relation and Vindication of one William Smith* (London, 1644). I am grateful to Edward Legon for bringing the latter to my attention.
85. *Humble Petition and Remonstrance*, A2-v; Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 4–5, 12, 17, 44.
86. Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 13–14, 16–17.
87. TNA, SP 28/255. Glapthorne was elected as an MP in 1654, but may have been excluded as a result of a campaign to besmirch his character and behavior as a local official in the 1640s: *A Brief Relation of the Proceedings before his Highness* (London, 1654). Ireton became an MP in October 1645.
88. *Lords Journals*, vii. 707; Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 11, 13, 22–3, 36.
89. Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 37–43.
90. Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 43–4.
91. Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 17.
92. Knights, *Trust*, 49, 233–43, 265–6.
93. *CJ*, iv. 226a; Scott, "Barwis:" John Musgrave, *Another Word to the Wise* (London, 1646); John Musgrave, *A True and Exact Relation* (London, 1650), 1–9.

94. *CCC*, 390-1, 410, 417, 426, 436–7, 681; Christopher Cheesman, *Berk-shires Agent's Humble Address* (London, 1651); Cheesman, *Oppressed Mans Second Outcry for Justice* (London, 1652).

95. Musgrave, *A Word to the Wise* (London, 1646), 20. See also Thomas Harby, *The Nations Claim of Native Right* (London, 1650), 7, 17–20, 71, 103. See also: Jason Peacey, "The Parliamentary Context of Political Radicalism in the English Revolution", in *Radical Voices, Radical Ways*, ed. Laurent Curelly and Nigel Smith (Manchester, 2016), 151–69.

96. George Wither, *Justitiarius Justificatus* (London, 1646), 1, 7; George Wither, *Se Defendendo* (London, 1644), 14; George Wither, *The Tired Petitioner* (London, 1648), 5. See: Jason Peacey, "Abuses Stript and Whipt: George Wither and Political Corruption" (forthcoming).

97. J. Lilburne, *Just Mans Justification* (1646), 17–20; J. Lilburne, *Englands Birth-right Justified* (London, 1645) 33; Lilburne, *Englands Lamentable Slaverie* (London, 1645), 6–7. Lilburne too had experience of such issues, having been involved in bringing accusations against a local official, Edward King, for breach of "trust" in 1644: *Articles Exhibited*, 1–6.

98. George Wither, *Britain's Remembrancer* (London, 1628), 221.

99. Thomas Scott, *Vox Regis* (London, 1624), 18.

100. Virgilio Malvezzi, *Romulus and Tarquin* (London, 1637), 196–8.

101. John Walter, *Covenanting Citizens. The Protestation Oath and Popular Culture in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2017); David Cressy, "The Protesation Protested, 1641 and 1642," *Historical Journal* 45.2 (2002): 251–79; David Cressy, "Revolutionary England 1640-1642," *Past and Present* 181 (2003): 35–71.

102. Whinnell, *Matters of Great Concernement*, 42–3, 44; George Wither, *An Improvement of Imprisonment* (London, 1661), 44; George Wither, *Opobalsamum Anglicanum* (London, 1646), 4, 12. See: John Lilburne, *England's Birth-right Justified* (London, 1645), 33; John Lilburne, *Englands Lamentable Slaverie* (London, 1645), 6-7; Overton, *Remonstrance*, 11, 16–17, 19; Richard Overton, *An Appeale from the Degenerate Representative Body the Commons of England* (London, 1647), 33.

103. I am grateful to David Harris Sacks for extremely helpful comments on these last points.

104. See: PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/35.

105. See: Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 72.

106. These mechanisms occasionally sanctioned wider public involvement, in terms of the possibility of complaining to Parliament about officeholders, and logging grievances about MPs: Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, volume I, 106-17; *CJ*, iv. 477; *CJ*, v. 196, 220.

107. Ann M. Carlos, "Bonding and the Agency Problem: Evidence from the Royal African Company, 1672-1691," *Explorations in Economic History* 31 (1994): 313–35; Ann. M. Carlos, "Agent Opportunism and the Role of Company Culture: the Hudson's Bay Company and Royal African Companies Compared," *Business and Economic History* 2nd series, 20 (1991): 142–51; William A. Pettigrew, "The Changing Place of Fraud in Seventeenth-Century Public Debates about International Trading Corporations," *Business History* 60.3 (2018): 305–20; Santhi Hejeebu, "Contract Enforcement in the English East India Company," *Journal of Economic History*, 65.2 (2005): 496–523.

108. Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*.

109. Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, ch. 8.

110. Philo-Dicaeus, *The Standard of Equality* (London, 1647), C5v-6.

111. Morrill, ed., *Revolt of the Provinces*, 207–8; William Prynne, *Mr Prynnes Letter to the Borrough of Newport* (London, 1648), 4*-4*v. See also: Jason Peacey, "Sir Edward Dering, Popularity and the Public, 1640-1644," *Historical Journal* 54.4 (2011): 955–83.

112. I am grateful to David Harris Sacks for discussion of such issues. Nathaniel Burt, an interesting writer on accountability whose views were based on "experimental" understanding, referred to the wisdom of his ancestors, who invested power to ordinary people in lots of different contexts, including corporations and companies. See: Nathaniel Burt, *For Every Individual Member* (London, 1649); Nathaniel Burt, *A New-Yeers Gift for England* (London, 1653), 13. Burt sought to use the Committee of Indemnity to take action against specific officeholders: TNA, SP 24/5, fos. 8v-9, 12, 28. I am grateful to Clive Holmes for discussion of Burt.

113. *Articles to be Inquired of by the Minister, Churchwardens and Sidemen* (London, 1615); *Instructions for the Ministers, and Churchwardens, of the Severall Parishes, of the Citie of London* (London, 1630). After 1640, some popular campaigns against wayward clerics were explicitly sanctioned by Parliament: *CJ*, iii. 231; Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, volume II, 968–90.

114. Fletcher, *Reform*, 34–5; Braddick, *State Formation*, 276; Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 173.
115. For the Interregnum, see: *A Remonstrance of Many Hundreds of Wel-affected People in the County of Hertford* (London, 1654), 2; *A Memento for the People* (London, 1654); *A Declaration of the Parliament... January 23. 1659* (London, 1659), 4–5; S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1906), 405–17, 447–64; Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation*, 208, 211, 220, 248; Braddick, *State Formation*, 262. For later decades, see: Naomi Tadmor, "The Settlement of the Poor and the Rise of the Form in England, c.1662-1780," *Past and Present* 236 (2017): 43–97; J. A. Sharpe, ed., *William Holcroft his Booke: Local Office Holding in Late Stuart Essex* (Chelmsford, 1986), 2–21, 41; James Rosenheim, "The Notebook of Robert Doughty, 1662-1665," *Norfolk Record Society* 54, 1989); Colin Brooks, "The Country Persuasion and Political Responsibility in England in the 1690s," *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 4 (1984): 135–46; J. A. Downie, "The Commission of Public Accounts and the Formation of the Country Party," *English Historical Review* 91 (1976): 33–51.
116. David Harris Sacks, "The Corporate Town and the English State: Bristol's 'Little Businesses', 1625-41," *Past and Present* 110 (1986): 69–105; Ann Hughes, "Parliamentary Tyranny? Indemnity Proceedings and the Impact of the Civil War: A Case Study from Warwickshire," *Midland History* 11 (1986): 59–78.