

A Welfare State without Citizens?

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Introduction

- This paper critically examines the state of social citizenship in England.
- It claims that recent claims overstate the case for a decline in citizenship for three main reasons.
- First, they tend to draw on Marshall (1963) for their template of social citizenship. Some claims tend to misinterpret Marshall, setting up a 'strong' as opposed to a 'weak' citizenship (Powell 2002), and so exaggerate a decline from an overstated summit.

Introduction (cont)

- Second, the ‘theory’ of Marshallian citizenship cannot simply be equated with the ‘practice’ of the Beveridge Welfare State, which, again, incorporates a ‘weak’ rather than a ‘strong’ version of Marshallian citizenship.
- Third, moving beyond Marshall’s ‘citizenship as rights’ (Lister 2003: 16) to other conceptions of citizenship, it can be argued that in a number of important ways users of the welfare state have never been citizens: the UK has been, and remains, a welfare state without citizens.

Marshallian Citizenship and the Welfare State

- T H Marshall is probably one of the leading cited authors in social policy, with his essay on 'Citizenship and Social Class' (1963) generally regarded as a central reference point to the welfare state.
- Marshall's (1963: 87) famous definition that 'Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community'
- But what is the 'community' and what are the form and content of social rights?

The Decline of Citizenship

- A number of commentators have claimed that citizenship has declined in the UK under recent Conservative and New Labour governments.
- However, the decline of social rights assumes that the definition of citizenship is clear.
- There are few comprehensive definitions, but a piecemeal definition might claim that:
- Citizenship = free + universal + unconditional + 'as of right'

The Decline of Citizenship (cont)

- **Egalitarian?**
- **Commodification**
- **Universalism**
- **Collective Rights**
- **Conditional?**

Marshallian Citizenship and the Beveridge Welfare State

- The section above critically examined the decline of Marshallian citizenship on its own terms. The decline was less sharp than has generally been claimed because commentators have based their claims on a 'hard' or 'maximalist' rather than a 'soft' or minimalist interpretation of Marshallian citizenship (Powell 2002).
- This section claims that a similar verdict can be made when comparing Marshallian citizenship with the Beveridge Welfare State. Marshall is often placed in the same category as Titmuss and Beveridge (Esping-Andersen 1990: 58; Bulmer and Rees 1996: 272-3).
- However, there are important differences between these writers (Powell 1995, 2008a; Powell and Hewitt 1998).

Residual-----Industrial-Achievement-Performance-----Institutional Redistributive
-----BWS-----MWS-----E-AWS; BIWS/CIWS; TWS

Figure 1: Welfare States and the Titmuss model

Beyond Marshall

- This section argues that a Marshallian template is inadequate for understanding citizenship in today's welfare state.
- **Subjects**
- **Clients**
- **Full, second-class, partial or non citizens?**
- **Local Citizens?**
- **Active Citizens?**

Citizenship through 'thick' and 'thin'

- There are a number of classifications of citizenship, although the number, name and characteristics of classes are disputed (Isin and Turner 2002).
- Marshallian citizens and citizens in the Beveridge Welfare State are 'thin' or 'partial' or 'passive' citizens in the sense that the 'politics of entitlement' rather than the 'politics of contribution' was stressed

Conclusion

- In short, there is a major gap between the rhetorical emphasis placed on ‘citizens’ and the practice of social citizenship for three main reasons.
- First, there is a range of Marshallian citizenship from minimalist to maximalist types, and so there are both ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ versions of citizenship.

Conclusion (cont)

- Second, there is strong evidence that the Beveridge Welfare State is weaker than the weak version of Marshallian citizenship, and based more on contract rather than citizenship.
- Third, the Marshallian template is both too wide and too narrow. It is too wide because it is more weak, limited and minimalist than often allowed (Powell 2002). It is too narrow because it focuses on rights, with limited attention to responsibilities (Janoski 1998) and because it ignores elements of citizenship associated with other traditions such as participation in civic republicanism (Oldfield 1990).

Conclusion (cont)

- Moving beyond Marshall, other types of citizenship are marked by active status, participation, voice and obligations.
- However, citizenship in England has been marked by its passive entitlements rather than active contribution.
- Instead of the voice being the defining characteristic, there was loyalty (of clients to professionals) and more recently exit (or choice).
- Users of the welfare state have rarely been regarded as 'citizens' in any meaningful sense.
- Viewed from this wider perspective, 'citizenship' has not 'failed', but rather has not been tried.
- We have a welfare state without citizens.