

Constructing Citizens: Social Policy and the State-Citizen Relationship.

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Abstract

This thesis argues that social policy is best seen as an attempt to define and encourage a specific relationship between the citizen and the state. Within this view, the paradigms of welfarism and neoliberalism are seen as attempts to alter this state-citizen relationship. New paradigms can be successful if they can establish legitimacy for a new state-citizen relationship, particularly if the existing relationship is sufficiently plastic to allow change. If a new paradigm falls outside of traditional discourses of legitimate relationship between citizen and state, radical policy change is likely to fail.

The methodology of the study fuses techniques of institutional analysis and discourse analysis. Institutional analysis is used to show how social policy ideas, along with their preferred practices of citizenship, are formed and articulated across the various bodies which influence policy in both the domestic and international arena. Discourse analysis and ‘governmentality’ studies are used to show how new policy paradigms are constructed as being consistent with traditional state-citizen relationships, in order to create space to accommodate radical policy change.

Sweden, France and Britain are used as case studies to illustrate the effect of the state-citizen relationship on social policy change. Each of these countries developed a unique tradition of state-citizen relations over many centuries of political struggle, and each country found itself responding to international social policy paradigms after World War II. In the immediate post-war period, the welfarist paradigm encouraged states to expand their social services and increase the role of the state in the life of the citizen; from the 1970s, the neoliberal paradigm encouraged states to reduce the influence they had adopted. Each country took unique measures to accommodate these international shifts. In some cases, policy change failed, as it fell outside of traditional state-citizen relations and was not accepted by the public or by necessary institutions. In each successful case, policy change was accompanied by discourses which either altered or reinforced ideas of state and of citizenship. The state-citizen relationship creates a space for new social policy ideas to emerge and offers a means by which such ideas could achieve political success. In sum, the thesis posits that changes in social policy can be understood as reflections of and attempts to recreate the state-citizen relationship.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Ben Revi and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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List of Abbreviations

CTC	City Technical Colleges
EC	European Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EU	European Union
FN	Front National
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LO	Landsorganisationen (Swedish Trade Union Confederation)
NHS	National Health Service
NPM	New Public Management
NSE	New Schumpeterian Economics
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PS	Parti Socialiste (French Socialist Party)
SAF	Svenska Arbetsgivaföreningen (Swedish Employer's Association)
SAP	Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (Swedish Social Democratic Party)
SERPS	State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact