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Chapter 6 *Reassembling Citizenship in Austere Times*

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Formations of citizenship that were put together in the global North during the 20th century have been dis-assembled through a variety of means. Anti-statist and anti-welfarist projects have undermined the array of legal, social and political rights associated with citizenship while the revival of ethno-nationalist politics has given new impetus to questions of who is eligible to be a member of the ‘political community’. Most recently, austerity politics and policies in the European Union and elsewhere have further eroded the substance of social rights: reducing public spending on social benefits and services and deepening inequality in the process. These processes of dismantling or disassembling citizenship have been accompanied by efforts to reassemble new models of the citizen, articulated around commitments to independence, self-direction, and responsibility as new disciplines of the social. But in such times, how is citizenship imagined and practised in everyday settings? In this chapter we draw upon a current study of Citizens Advice (one of a few organizations in the UK which expresses an idea of citizenship in its naming) to explore how people manage and make sense of citizenship. In the second part of the chapter we use data from this study to explore how citizenship is assembled in the context of a citizen-to-citizen network of advice-giving. How are conceptions of citizenship as a horizontal relationship negotiated in the face of the dis-assembling of citizenship in politics and policy? The emerging data suggests a complex field of negotiation, leading us to some conceptual reflections on theory and practice in everyday sites and relationships. But first we explore the tortured relationship between neoliberalism and citizenship first from the perspective of the global North, then focusing down on the UK.

CITIZENSHIP AS A MOBILE TRANSLOCAL ASSEMBLAGE

We begin from a conception of citizenship as a mobile assemblage rather than a singular entity: it is composed in specific forms in particular times and places. In that sense, citizenship needs to be viewed as a conjuncturally specific formation (Clarke et al, 2014). Its legal forms, its clusters of rights, obligations and entitlements, its structures of inclusion and exclusion, domination and subordination, its fields of horizontal and vertical relationships, its articulation with nationality and ‘membership of the political community’, and its suturing into social formations all vary considerably, even in the Global North. This variation points to the fundamentally *assembled* character of citizenship as it becomes specifically institutionalised and enacted in specific national formations. Citizenship is also the recurring object of different – and conflicting – political projects that seek to ‘reform’ it and bring new configurations into being. For us, this implies thinking about the *articulation* of two different assemblages: neoliberalism as a political project, and citizenship as a social and political relationship. Different strands of neoliberalism address different aspects of citizenship – sometimes working on social rights, sometimes on social responsibilities, and sometimes on the national question (who gets to be a citizen, and under what conditions). Rather than simply attacking, dissolving or eroding citizenship, we also need to think about the ways in which varieties of neoliberalism treat citizenship as an object of desire, or – more minimally – as a necessary condition of existence. This is particularly significant when we examine the ways in which neoliberalism is materialised in the programmes, policies and discourses of national governments.

Both ‘citizenship’ and ‘neoliberalism’ could be described as ‘translocal’ assemblages: as “something that is both situated (but not locked in place) and formed in articulation with processes that transcend and crosscut various spatial and temporal registers” (Sharma, 2008:2). In European and North American variants of neoliberalism, we have seen very different politics, policies and practices during the last forty years (Peck, 2010). Although there are some common tendencies in policies remaking citizenship – towards greater conditionality, a workfare orientation, and a renewed concern with distinctions between national and aliens – these need to be assessed with some care, given still extensive national variation. Conditionality remains very different between the Nordic countries, Germany and the UK, for example; while the

national question is the subject of considerable regional and national contestation (Bosniak, 2009). In part, this reflects the ways in which neoliberalism is materialised and enacted within specific national/regional formations and is articulated with other political projects and discourses (Clarke, 2004). Even in the UK context, neoliberal objectives have changed, both in response to the shifting configurations of economic, social and political disorder and contradictions, but also as different political programmes (in the form of successive Conservative, New Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments) have ‘voiced’ neoliberalism differently. Citizenship has been a constant theme in these shifting configurations, yet has been the focus of rather different ‘reforming’ ambitions.ⁱ

REASSEMBLING CITIZENSHIP UK-STYLE

In order to trace the ongoing changes to what we have labelled the ‘mobile assemblage’ of ‘citizenship’, we will use the Marshallian trilogy of social, political and legal rights to describe different ‘vectors’ of citizenship, considering the ways in which they have been dis-assembled and reassembled in neoliberal times. Before addressing these, however, we wish to raise a significant problem with the Marshallian framework – a problem whose import will become clear in later discussion of ‘emergent’ formations of ‘citizenship’ within the work of Citizens Advice – namely that it marginalises the issue of how nationality and citizenship are articulated. This issue did not, of course, arise with neoliberalism, dating back at least to the immigration controls introduced in the 1905 Aliens Act. The relationship between citizenship and nationality was further reconfigured in the following decades, in particular during the 1960s and 1970s when the focus became the control of post-imperial migration and the restriction of access to citizenship. From the 1980s onwards, the double movement of European Union enlargement and the growth in refugee/asylum seekers have underpinned a recurring obsession with controlling access and constraining the citizenship rights of those who arrive in the UK (e.g. requirements to be financially independent or delaying access to social benefits for non-citizens). Reassembling citizenship in the UK rests heavily on both the presumption of ‘Britishness’ (no matter how elusive its characteristics might be) and the practices of exclusion, which have themselves been both intensified and extended: the UK has combined tougher border controls, while externalising border control

work and internalising status checking, e.g., in demands that employers, medical workers, universities and landlords check the immigration status of their clients and customers). The resurgence of the national question is one of the great paradoxes of neoliberalism: the economic liberalism that seeks both the free movement of capital and the free movement of some types of labour itself generates nationalist and protectionist sentiments, desires and policies in national spaces (Kalb and Hamai, 2011; but see Harmes, 2012 and Lueck et al, 2015 on the possibilities of neoliberal varieties of nationalism).

The Social Vector

The social vector of citizenship in the UK has been the focus of many reworkings, largely associated with the continuing reform of welfare and the state. The main dynamics are well established – conditionality, workfare and responsabilization – and all of these have been pursued by successive governments. Greater conditionality has restructured access to both benefits and services, including fitness for work tests particularly for those in receipt of sickness or disability benefits, performative conditions (the requirement to be ‘actively looking for work’) and a preparedness to undertake unpaid work experience or community service in order to receive benefits. During the Coalition government of 2010 a range of extra conditions were introduced that aimed to prevent those in receipt of benefits from achieving a higher income or better standard of living than people on the average wages, a policy tendency made manifest with the ‘Benefit Cap’ but also present in the ‘Spare Room Subsidy’ (otherwise known as the ‘Bedroom Tax’) and the proposed (and now abandoned) reductions of Tax Credits (a supplement for low wages).

While the ‘new conditionality’ (Gould, 2005) also includes pushing back pensionable age, introducing nationality checks and a growing interest in suspending or removing benefits from parents who fail to manage their children ‘responsibly’ (failures of school attendance, delinquency, etc), it is most intimately tied to the rise of ‘workfare’ (Peck, 2001). Again, the relationship between welfare and work has always been shaped by anxieties about avoiding incentives to not work: Beveridge’s plan for the British welfare state was explicit that ‘The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity and responsibility’ (1942: 6). Indeed, this formed the

Third Principle for the creation of a new social insurance system in the 1940s. Nevertheless, governments in the last forty years have sought to restore ‘incentive, opportunity and reward’ by reducing both the value of, and access to, social insurance and social assistance benefits as a central means of ‘making work pay’.

For governments pursuing neoliberal economic and social programmes, work (that is, waged work) has been the central theme. Work magically articulates entrepreneurial individualism, consumerism, the family, self-development, personal fulfilment, role-modelling and a contribution to the nation’s well-being and competitiveness. For these reasons, everyone should work – despite the stalled value of wages (between 2007 and 2014 the real value of UK wages fell: Office for National Statistics, 2014: 2); and despite the increasing degradation of waged work (characterised by fragmentation, contingency and part-time working). But work (or perhaps, more accurately, the image of Work) provides an anchoring point for the projection of responsible citizens, since responsible citizens are those who are self-supporting.

The themes of work and responsibility have been consistently linked in the figure of “hard-working, responsible families” (a favourite trope of New Labour discourse) who form the bedrock of the imagined nation. Responsibility is the sterner side of the expansive entrepreneurial/consumerist hero of neoliberalism: the new model citizen – despite the promises of freedom – will be responsible in all things: in their work, in their patterns of consumption, in their use of public services and in their parenting. Failures to act responsibly bring sanctions in their wake (legal, moral and economic): the irresponsible citizen is likely to discover that the powers of the state have been extended rather than reduced (see, for example, Baker and Brown, 2012). Indeed, people should be encouraged to be independent through the imposition of tough, demeaning demands, expectations and scrutiny; in the case of the Coalition Government’s flagship Workfare programme, the troubled embodiment of the Secretary of State’s promise to ‘create a new contract with the British people’ with ‘work’ at its centre (Duncan Smith, 2010), the proximity of these demands to enforcing slave labour was laid bare by the Supreme Court in *SSWP v Reilly*. This sterner side of neoliberalism is an important reminder that there is no single, simple and coherent neoliberal project: rather it is multiple and contradictory – diminishing

the state yet expanding (some of) its capacities; and liberating individuals while subjecting them to intensified surveillance, scrutiny and judgement.

The Political Vector

Recent governments in the UK have remade the conditions of political citizenship in a number of ways, most of which point to what Wendy Brown (2015) has called ‘undoing the demos’ as the ways in which neoliberal rationality subverts and subordinates democratic processes, practices and apparatuses. We think it is worth disentangling three different ways in which this displacement and subordination of politics has taken place in the UK. The first, and most recognisably neoliberal, is the subordination of political rule to the ‘needs of the economy’. While capitalism has always involved a strained and contradictory relationship between politics and the economy, this dynamic has increasingly been resolved in favour of the economy. Neoliberal rationality equates the national interest with the economy while insisting that governments can do little in the face of global processes, particularly when, as in the UK, the national economy becomes equated with the City of London and its role at the leading edge of the global financial system (Massey, 2007). For example, arguing against increased regulation of financial services at a European Union summit on December 10, 2011, Prime Minister Cameron’s equated ‘defending British interests’ with protecting the City of London from such regulation. In this economised view of the UK, there is a homological equivalence constructed between the entrepreneurial family, the entrepreneurial corporation and the entrepreneurial nation – all benefit for reduced regulation, and less ‘government interference’: they work best when they pursue their natural interests (a logic that Thomas Frank (2001) describes as ‘market populism’).

This diminution of the scope of politics has a complex relationship with the second dynamic of changing the political vector of citizenship – declining popular involvement in (institutional forms of) politics. The limited capacity or impact of national governments in the face of wider economic and political changes (from a global economy to the impact of the European Union) has contributed to popular detachment, cynicism and anger. Popular detachment from political processes and institutions has been widely discussed (see, for example, the Power Inquiry, 2006) as

a problem needing urgent remedies – particularly among young people. But the detachment from conventional politics – and from dominant political parties – has also contributed to the rise of populist or ‘anti-politics as usual’ parties in the UK and across Europe. Such mobilizations have ranged from green movements and anti-austerity parties to nationalist, xenophobic and anti-EU tendencies and suggest that the decline of political participation may have been overstated. But other forms of political rights have certainly diminished, particularly rights to organise, demonstrate and protest as governments claim more exceptions to the right to protest. These exceptions range from statutory powers of detention, interception of communications and the extension of the offence of trespass through to more interventionist police practices such as ‘kettling’, pre-emptive arrests and closures, and an array of ‘suspicion persons’ powers (see Kennedy, 2005; and the discussion of ‘Police State UK’ on Sciptonite, 2013). Discourses of anti-terrorism and anti-extremism have facilitated these changes, legitimating a massive expansion of the security state in both its public and private forms and their entanglements (Ball et al 2015).

Finally, the decline of political citizenship has been paradoxically accompanied by a proliferation of programmes of ‘public participation’ (see, for example, Barnes et al, 2007; Neveu, 2007; Newman and Clarke, 2009). Such practices have linked many sites – particularly in public services and local government. They have been variously viewed as a supplement to formal democracy, a mainly performative approach to inclusion, and a supplanting of political representation. This instability of judgement is a characteristic feature of political innovation in neoliberal times. For some, participation is a de-politicising strategy deployed by neoliberalism to add a veneer of legitimacy to the underlying shifts in power (e.g., Abrams, 2007). For others, it emerges from, and combines, different political impulses – and its existence within ‘neoliberal times’ does not guarantee its political character (Newman and Clarke, 2009).

However, contrary and even contradictory trends and tendencies (from the reduction of the voting age to forms of devolved government in the nation regions of the less than United Kingdom) have taken place alongside the diminution of established scenes of politics and the reduction of citizenship’s political reach. The displacement of politics by the (represented) needs of the economy, and the substitution of expert or

technocratic judgement for political and politicised decision-making (e.g., in the technocratic independence of central banks, including the Bank of England) have been particularly powerful anti-democratic changes. There is then a crisis of the political, deriving from its subordination to the logic of the economy, and its combination of speed-up and urgency (the claimed pace of change or depth of crisis) allows little time for the forms of collective deliberation that characterise democratic politics.

The Legal Vector

Finally, we turn to the legal vector of citizenship and here the picture is again contradictory. There have been significant extensions and deepenings of legal rights in several respects. The folding of (certain elements of) the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law through the Human Rights Act 1998 has remained controversial, with Conservative threats to overturn or disregard it being a feature of their hostility to Human Rights in general. Similarly, various measures promoting specific forms of legal equality (e.g., around same sex civil partnerships and subsequently marriage) and against forms of discrimination (e.g., ‘hate’ crimes in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998: see Dixon and Gadd, 2006) have advanced specific aspects of equality politics. It is arguable whether rights based politics are neoliberal (in their individualism) or can be accommodated within neoliberal regimes (Douzinas, 2007; Rua Wall, 2010; Langlois, 2013). Nevertheless, such changes – and the devolution of some legal powers to the nation-regions – form part of a complex reconfiguration of the legal conditions of citizenship. At the same time, however, the coercive reach of the state has been massively extended through the criminalization of types of ‘anti-social’ behaviour (Burney, 2005), and, most importantly, the basic condition of the juridical status of citizenship – equality before the law – has been dismantled (even if full equality was never achieved in the past). In particular, changes in the conditions of legal aid and the introduction of legal charges for courts and tribunals have further undermined access to justice. In short, though, if citizenship involves the ‘right to have rights’ (Arendt’s phrase) then access to the law is a critical condition for materialising those rights as a citizen.

Messy Assemblages

In sum, the pre-existing assemblage of citizenship has been remade along all of its key vectors – nationality; social rights, political rights and legal rights. Yet this reassembling of citizenship cannot be understood as a simple transition from one coherent social democratic or ‘welfarist’ model to a neoliberal one. Not only do the processes of dis-assembling and reassembling reveal multiple and contradictory dynamics, the processes themselves have been uneven and remain unfinished: *uneven* because some components of earlier assemblages have proved sticky or intractable, while new social or political forces have generated other citizenship demands or pressures that interrupt the work of neoliberalization; *unfinished* in the sense that it seems unlikely that the programme of constant reinvention that has characterised neoliberalism is yet exhausted.

Citizenship is being reassembled at its intersection with neoliberalism. There is no singular neoliberal conception of citizenship, not least because there is no single logic of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism cannot be reduced to its simplifying economization of life, nor to the interests of capital or a single coherent political rationality. Rather it has proved to be highly mobile (in space and time), immensely adaptive to different social and political conditions and capable of cohabiting with a wide variety of other political programmes and forms of rule (from social democracy to dictatorships). Instead, we have seen a protracted struggle to rework, reform and reassemble the formation of citizenship in the UK in a neoliberal direction – a series of moves to de-socialise, de-politicise and dislocate the collective conditions of the imaginary and practices of citizenship.

How is this messiness enacted and inhabited at a local level? Many social actors (individual and collective) occupy the messy terrain of citizenship: from border control staff to refugees; from police officers to protesting activists; from job centre workers to unemployed people (to say nothing of academics wrangling over the meaning and significance of the term). In order to explore how some actors come to understand, and work with concepts of citizen and citizenship in these complex spaces, we have used Citizens Advice as a case study. It is a service whose work involves mediating between the private troubles of individuals and the public issues recognised in legal processes. In the next section we highlight how understandings and practices of citizenship within Citizens Advice express the multiple and

conflicting schemas, scales and logics that compose these developments: the messy landscape of an assemblage in the process of being reassembled forms the terrain on which the work of Citizens Advice takes place.

REALISING CITIZENSHIP: THE TERRAIN OF CITIZENS ADVICE

Created in 1939, Citizens Advice (CA) has always been a voluntary organization, largely staffed by volunteers who give ‘peer to peer’ advice, supported by forms of legal and managerial expertise. The network of semi-autonomous local organizations aim to respond to those in need of advice and assistance across a wide range of problems – employment, housing, debt and immigration status among others. Our programme of researchⁱⁱ has explored the advice process through a variety of methods (participant observation; interviews and focus groups with advisers and managers). in which we have explored (amongst other issues) the question of the ‘citizen’ in Citizens Advice: how are citizens and citizenship understood and enacted in this field?

In analysing the data we have borrowed Raymond Williams’ (1977) trinity of dominant, residual and emergent formations to organise the responses. By examining possible residual and emergent understandings and practices of citizenship alongside dominant understandings we can recognise ‘the complex interrelationships between movements and tendencies both within and beyond a specific and effective dominance’ (1977: 121). In Williams usage, ‘residual’ is not a mere historical left-over, rather it ‘is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present’ (1977: 122). Similarly, the category of ‘emergent’ acknowledges the difficulty of disentangling new meanings, values, practices and relationships that are ‘elements of a new phase of dominant culture .. [from] those which are substantially alternative or oppositional (1977: 123). Such residual and emergent meanings also shed new light on the dominant and its dynamic development.

Dominant formations

The centrality of ‘responsibility’ to the dominant articulations of citizenship is most apparent in our research where participants responded to the question of what the ‘citizen’ in Citizens Advice meant through a discourse of rights and responsibilities:

Citizenship is doing the right thing within the Law, or standing up for things that you think are wrong with the Law or with practice or even you know if you see someone doing something in the street that you don’t think they should be doing in the street, that’s citizenship is holding everybody to account. Everyone has social responsibilities and if we’re all living in each other’s pockets as we are then that’s the only way that society will function and people have any quality of life.

So that’s where the legal side comes in, how far is it my responsibility as a person and how much can I rely on the legal system? Same as any other area, what are my rights and responsibilities as a person, as well as being a member of the organisation? And the organisation bringing all that together, if that makes sense. ... Every now and then a new person will ask me. It’s called Citizens Advice, what does that mean, sort of thing? And I suppose, in my own naïve way, that’s how I sort of sum it up really. A citizen is a member of the society that we live in and it’s all about rights and responsibilities and offering this service to everybody and being open to everybody and it’s just how I see it.

[Daniella: Generalist adviser, semi-urban bureau]

The role of the Bureau, in this regard, was typically held to be that of a helpful intermediary; although one trainee adviser expressed bewilderment that the task of informing people of their ‘rights and responsibilities’ was being carried out by unpaid volunteers rather than the Department for Work and Pensions,. In an extension of this ‘dominant’ expression, a small minority of advisers framed ‘rights and responsibilities’ primarily in terms of clients’ unwillingness to accept their reciprocal duties:

the implication is that you are acknowledging your part of a wider group and you have your part to play. Rather than just a person who has a problem and wants someone to solve it for them. If you're a citizen there are rights and responsibilities. But I don't know if that will ever get changed in their thinking.

[Mark: Generalist adviser, semi-urban Bureau]

And he comes in and says, I think they're expecting too much to be looking for all this work, and so on and so forth. And I said, well, I'm sorry, but you know you're not gonna get your benefits for nothing... So, there are some times when you have got to be a bit tough.

[Rosalyn: Generalist adviser, urban bureau]

Residual and emergent formations

The above conception of citizenship is, however, addressed and challenged by several other respondents who, while not rejecting the importance of informing clients of their 'responsibilities', specifically framed the importance of the service in terms of its extension of rights to those who would otherwise lack the access or understanding to act upon them.ⁱⁱⁱ In one such response, an adviser presented their own 'responsibility' as a citizen as follows:

Well I think ... my responsibility is to, even outside, is to stand up for people that can't stand up for themselves and to help people who can't help themselves and like I said, it's not just a job it becomes you.

[Annette: Generalist adviser, semi-urban bureau]

In these cases, 'citizenship' is framed in terms that evoke older/residual understandings of citizenship; as an equally distributed protection and assistance derived from one's relationship to a community. For the following adviser this conception is directed critically against tendencies within governmental and other institutions:

I think it [citizen] denotes some sort of ... active stake in the community, the wider society, if you're a citizen of a particular nation or community, then you have a stake in that, you have a say in that, you're important within that. I don't think that's always, on reflection, the reality of it, I'm afraid. For Housing Officers generally my clients are street numbers. They're not. So that's an example in a sense of how a citizen – somebody who's got a stake in their local community, someone who perhaps is working, contributing, paying local taxes, is seen by the authorities, actually you're not a citizen, you're a street number, and I think that goes wider, for example, even if I was to ring my bank today, the first thing they would ask me: what's your account number? They wouldn't want my name, they'd want my account number.

[Focus Group, urban bureau]

For another adviser this focus is framed through a politicised understanding of citizenship in light of the present significance of rights and responsibilities – and a refusal to accept those as the proper terms of reference:

And citizenship has connotations of rights and responsibilities very much. That's about the contract, if it is a contract, between the individual and the state. In my mind, and forgive me, these are personal politics, that has been betrayed and I don't.... a) a great many people I advise are not citizens and b) most who are, as I say, don't feel the other side of that bargain has been upheld. So I will tell people their responsibilities. I have to. It protects them. And I will tell people their rights. It protects them. But I have no emotional need for them be invested in the sense they are responsible. I don't think, in that they have a responsibility that they should have an investment in because they are a citizen of this country and responsible to this state. So yeah, I perceive it as a distinctly secondary part of what we stand for and what we do. Yes, it [citizen]'s a curious word... I'm so used to initials or just saying Bureau that I very rarely think about it. But yeah, I find it quite a difficult concept, particularly in the current political climate.

[Susan: Specialist adviser, urban bureau]

Turning to the most common framing of citizenship and ‘the citizen’ in our research, many responses were articulated around what feels like a ‘residual’ sense of egalitarianism associated with citizenship – that anyone in need can ‘come though the door’ and be offered support:

What do I consider the citizen? Well, the fellow man and woman. It can be anybody. A human being. It can be a young person, an old person, or anybody basically... I have seen a huge range of people here and it’s anybody who walks in the door.

[Ben: Specialist adviser; urban bureau]

Equally powerful was the sense that citizenship in Citizens Advice was associated with an ethos that escaped, following Phillip Goodchild, the ‘social institution of money’ – ‘the way time, attention and devotion are shaped’ by our financial relationships (Goodchild, 2009:6). The fact that advice was free to the client, and the particular sensibility created through this relationship, were central to what Citizens Advice stood for:

So CAB for me has always been quite a powerful entity and I’ve always felt comfortable, ever since that day when I first started volunteering for them all those years ago, all of a sudden this person got all of me and neither of us had to worry about how much they’d got in their back pocket, and that just felt so comfortable. Very few things these days are free.

[Gordon: Manager, rural bureau]

Such statements stress the value of non-commodified interactions in a society where more and more types of interactions, and most importantly *legal* interactions, are seen as becoming increasingly mediated by the ‘cash nexus’, and in which, as noted above, the political is increasingly subordinated to the economic. This focus upon the ‘free’ service was linked to a further ‘residual’ sense of citizenship present in Citizens Advice, namely that of a *horizontal* relationship between citizens that implied a momentary suspension of the language of ‘adviser’ and ‘client’. This was raised in two particular modes. In the first participants would refer to the history of the service:

one of the key things that distinguishes us from a lot of other services is our volunteers because when the service started out, there weren't any paid staff, it was all volunteers that were doing it. And they'd got a very basic information system and some of them were even doing it in the front rooms of their homes. Go along to so-and-so and they've got a CAB in their home and they'll give you some advice, with very, very little training. [Kayley: specialist adviser, urban bureau]

In this respect, Citron (1989:6) notes the significant struggles within the service in the 1970s over the introduction of a more formalised and rigorous training programme; this proposition was seen as being in conflict with this founding sense of the 'citizen' among advisers; that there was no differential of expertise between the two parties.

The second mode affirmed the equivalence of adviser and client, either through the phrase 'there but for the grace of god go I', evoking the possibility of advisers requiring assistance themselves, or by affirming the possibility of clients become advisers:

Well, we're all citizens aren't we, so equal, equality. Anybody essentially, I would say. In Citizens Advice, the citizen in Citizens Advice, I would say anybody who wants to be part of it really, whether you come in as a client, whether you work here, whether you're a volunteer, whether you're the cleaner, whatever you are, the photocopier guy. [Focus Group of Bureau Managers]

This respondent then explained, with some pride, how, when a recent client had successfully negotiated with a 'difficult' bank, she had encouraged him to join the training course and he was now a paid money adviser.

Returning to the idea that the 'citizen' was 'anybody', it is important to stress how this was often strongly and explicitly voiced in an register that refused the dominant connection of citizenship and nationality:

I don't think it means, like you have to be a citizen of the country, like a British citizen. I personally think it's anybody who walks through the door for advice is a citizen in Citizens Advice Bureaux. So it is anyone within society who basically needs out help, who comes through the door. [Rebecca: Specialist adviser, urban bureau]

This was frequently expressed in a way that made it clear that this conception ran counter to current politico-legal framings of citizenship. For instance, one focus group was asked whether someone's legal status as a citizen of the UK made any difference to their access to Citizens Advice:

B: Makes no difference at all, as far as I can see.

G: In fact, it's the asylum seekers who are queuing outside the door at 6 o'clock in the morning because they're the ones who know that we're the only place that they can get support.

D: It's word of mouth with them. They know about us through friends who've been here and who realise that we're not biased in any way...

[Focus group, urban bureau]

In these discussions, a 'residual' egalitarianism was tied to an 'emergent' framing of citizenship as an open community; an expression that cuts directly against the resurgence of national impulses that has driven significant cuts in benefits for EU workers (e.g., HM Treasury/DWP, 2014), yet can neither be tied to the ideal of freedom of movement seen by many as a driver of economic growth.

It is important that this 'emergent' framing was linked to the *practice* of advice, rather than broader politics evoked through abstract ideals. These abstracted expressions of citizenship, involving a certain *suspension* of ethno-national framings, evoke theories of citizenship that speak of citizenship in terms of 'acts' and 'events', that disrupt the figure of the citizen defined by 'territorialized boundaries and limits' (Isin, 2013:11) or as indicative of a political community that is always open to being contested and re-drawn (Rancière, 2010). Yet while these theories focus on political acts operating

independently of everyday practices, our data shows ‘emergent’ expressions as components of a translocal and mobile assemblage of citizenship, being practised in local Citizens Advice Bureaux where discourses of citizenship formed part of a shared working environment. They are articulated in relation to long and short-term cultural-political conditions, experienced as sites of resistance or frustration; and are developed relationally in response to different clients and the emotionally complex spaces of advice-giving.

CONCLUSION:

Williams’s view of residual and emergent formations has important implications for thinking about the temporalities of the reassembling of citizenship and its enactment in practices. It suggests that different formations will continue to be contemporaneous, even while one dominates the present. Residual and emergent orientations towards citizenship operate alongside the neoliberal dominant in the ways in which citizenship is imagined, talked about and practised. This sense of different temporalities illuminates a problem of how to think about multiplicity, disjunction and contradiction ‘in neoliberal times’: it is not, we think, the case that everything taking place in neoliberal times is itself neoliberal.

How, then, might we conceive of the intersection of ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘citizenship’ as it is played out in the spaces of the Citizens Advice service? It is instructive to put our analysis alongside Andrea Muehlebach’s fascinating study of ‘the moral neoliberal’ in Italy (2012), in which she explores the paradoxical, and similarly contradictory, strands of thought and feeling that animate the rise of voluntary care in Italy, including both Catholic and Socialist lineages. She argues that the apparent opposition between such orientations and seemingly rational, market-centred, neoliberalism conceals a larger unity. This larger view, she argues, ‘allows us to grasp neoliberalism as a form that contains practices and forces that appear as oppositional yet get folded into a single order’ (2012: 8). Her exploration of the connections between rationality and other-oriented sentiments allows her:

“to grasp neoliberalism as a complex of opposites that can contain what appear as oppositional practices, ethics and emotions ... Neoliberalism thus appears not simply as malleable, but a process that may allow for the simultaneity and

mutual dependency of forms and practices that scholars think of in oppositional terms. Neoliberalism is a force that can contain its negation – the vision of a decommodified, disinterested life and of a moral community of human relationality and solidarity that stands opposed to alienation.” (2012: 25)

Reaching further, Slavoj Žižek (2007) states that these resistant and oppositional politics are *necessary* for neoliberalism; ethical commitments to voluntarism and mutual assistance act as the ‘superego’ that justifies the destructive work of the neoliberal state. While agreeing that it is important to view neoliberalism as both mobile and malleable, we would seek to question a neoliberalism that can ‘contain’ its opposites. We can imagine our Citizens Advice actors being folded into a UK version of this ‘moral neoliberalism’, but we think it would miss something of the incompleteness of neoliberal domination and the heteroglossic voicings (Holland and Lave, 2001) and practices of citizenship that persist within advice organisations.

Addressing these conflicting formations as they are expressed and practised leads us to question a neoliberalism that has no outside, or one that lacks any sense of strain, antagonism or contradiction as it attempts to manage, exploit or subordinate its others. What the differential and mobile expressions of citizenship across our research reveal is that the articulation of other projects, forces, discourses and imaginaries remains a site of political struggle in which incorporation or subordination is rarely complete or successfully stabilised. Instead, we insist that an approach to both neoliberalism and citizenship through practices of reassembling provides a more productive way of understanding what Antonio Gramsci called ‘a series of unstable equilibria’.

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ⁱ We use the word 'reform' without any implication about the *direction* of political travel.

ⁱⁱ The research project 'Ideas of Legality and Citizenship' was carried out as part of a programme of research 'New Sites of legal consciousness: a case study of UK advice agencies', funded by the European Research Council. For more details: www.bristol.ac.uk/law/research/centres-themes/aanslc/. All names in extracts from the fieldwork are pseudonyms.

iii The ‘Work Programme’, it should be noted, was widely criticised in the participants in our research for targeting “vulnerable people and people who do not understand why the sanctions are being applied” [Focus group of Bureau Managers].