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A theory of informal and formal social citizenship and welfare

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Abstract

Formal social citizenship is limited in how it enables us to think about informal social citizenship and informal welfare. This informal perspective is important in all contexts where access to social rights is negotiated through local and transnational spaces, and where the state is a relatively minor player. By drawing on work on moral economy (Scott, 1976) and informal welfare (Gough and Wood, 2006) the article aims to propose a new theoretical model to understand the nature and social practice of both informal citizenship and welfare. This model departs from a western-centric understanding of nation-state-based citizenship and national welfare states, adopting instead the perspective that informal social citizenship and welfare have existed independently of the nation state as long as there have been human communities. Formal citizenship together with formal welfare rights represent just one particular crystallization of such informal practice. Our proposed model highlights the interdependent (rather than evolutionary) relationship between formal welfare at national level and informal welfare practices at local and transnational levels.

Keywords: social policy; moral economy; citizenship; development; informal welfare

1. Introduction

The starting point of this article is the difficulty of formal citizenship rights to capture the processes by which citizens access social rights in local and transnational contexts. In particular, the primacy of the national welfare state as the main arbiter of formal social citizenships rights tends to overshadow the informal citizenship rights embedded in local and transnational spaces. So, is there a 'conceptual error' in how we think about formal social citizenship rights? The modern nation state-based citizenship is an abstract and disembodied concept

of citizenship underpinned by universal social rights. However, welfare and social citizenship tend not to operate solely according to formal legal rights and obligations but are dependent on informal, personal and contextualized communities where kinship, faith and ethnic belonging create forms of collective and clientelist citizenship.

The notion of social citizenship developed by T.H. Marshall articulates the concept as a social right protected through law and realised through state-led procedural and bureaucratic practices. According to Marshall, the concept of rights was evolutionary in nature and moved from liberal legal rights towards political rights, finally reaching social rights in the 19th and 20th century (Marshall, [1950] 1992) – with a focus on a legal, liberal perspective on rights, that aims at protecting ownership through legal procedures. Consequently, social citizenship, as it came to be understood in the context of post-Second World War welfare state building, was primarily focused on the processes and legal frameworks through which working people were granted "the right to participate in full in the heritage and economic wealth of society" (Wagner 2004: 280). Therefore, social rights emerge as a form of protection against some of the negative aspects of the market forces, contained by the nation state.

However, there is no single social citizenship of mankind, but multiple understandings and experiences of social citizenships. As Isin and Turner point out, Marshall's thinking on citizenship both responds to and is bounded by national Keynesian economics, and therefore offers a particular (and rather narrow) lens through which to explore questions of social citizenship (2007). We need to 'provincialize' social citizenship (see Chakrabarty, 2000), recognising that it is situated within the particular post-war European context of its production and informed by a particular understanding of social and economic progress, all the while opening the door for alternative interpretations

The Moral Economy of the Peasant by James C. Scott offers one such alternative. It focuses on the informal rights and obligations that communities and households develop through reciprocal exchanges in order to mitigate risks such as disasters, disease and scarcity of natural resources (Scott, 1976).

Scott takes the example of subsistence farming as a counter example of how social rights and social citizenship develop different norms and practices of solidarity in a development context. Reciprocal informal exchanges shape the norms and the expected behaviour of the members of the community, while any act interpreted as breaking these norms could provoke resentment and resistance. In a citizenship context, such strategies could be understood as morally grounded, reciprocal, informal community or kinship-based social citizenship practices.

This way of approaching the question of social citizenship resonates with the work of Ian Gough and Geoff Wood, whose work on 'informal' and 'insecurity' welfare regimes provides the most explicit discussion of informality in a welfare

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context. In conceptualising informal social rights, they suggest that "rights and entitlements may also be found (. . .) in the informal domains of social relationships and cultural expectations", which in some cases could be "personalized in a range of clientelist and reciprocal (perhaps kin) arrangements" (Gough and Wood, 2006: 1698). The institutional arrangements in weak-state contexts imply that people rely heavily upon community and family relationships to meet their security needs, making informal welfare security arrangements often the dominant form of welfare (Roumpakis and Sumarto, 2020; Midgley et al., 2019; Surender and Walker, 2013). As Dean has also noted in his critique of Marshall's theory of welfare state citizenship, 'human beings were social beings before they ever invented civic and political institutions. Human beings socially negotiate the basis on which they recognise each other's needs and establish social processes by which to provide such needs' (Dean, 2015: 165). Whilst such discussion tends to focus more on developing country contexts, their relevance to developed contexts is equally clear. Frericks et al., in discussing the German welfare state, highlight the intricate interplay between the formal welfare state and informal family welfare, ultimately describing the way the German state "institutionalises family as a redistributive principle" (Frericks *et al.*, 2021: 17). Wincott *et al.* question the "conventional framework" for understanding welfare state development where the tendency has been to "squeeze diverse strands of welfare policy/provision" including those non-state in character such as voluntary provision, "into a singular narrative" (Wincott *et al.*, 2021: 3).

The aim of this article is therefore to propose a theory of informal social citizenship and welfare that reflects the often complex and interdependent relationships between the two. Formal and informal practices co-exist and are constantly co-evolving. Our model highlights the interdependent and reciprocal – rather than evolutionary – nature of the relationship between informal and formal welfare practices. Our argument is twofold. First, informal citizenship is critical in understanding welfare and social policy in local and transnational contexts. We argue that Marshall's evolutionary perspective misses the importance of the constant negotiation between formal and informal on the one side and local and transnational on the other side. Formal national social citizenship and welfare state is therefore just one dimension of the complexities of social citizenship that should be of concern to welfare research. Second, we need to think more carefully about the interdependence of informal and formal welfare on all levels. We need to move beyond the 'gap-filling' role of informal social citizenship and instead locate it as an active and integral part of the welfare systems in both developed and developing countries. Rather than sidelining the formal welfare state in favor of the more prevalent and accessible informal welfare, our analysis highlights the crucial role for the welfare state in reflecting on its role in coordinating, supporting and even integrating informal social citizenship practices.

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Our approach builds on the existing literature on informality found in the discussions of mixed economy of welfare and welfare pluralism where the state and informal actors have distinct but complementary roles. An interdependent perspective suggests that the role of the state is less in devising the right division of labour between formal and informal welfare actors, but to see the integral role of both in the fulfilment of social rights.

2. Formal perspective: modern social citizenship

When we discuss formal citizenship, formal welfare and national social policy in a western context, Marshall provides the most natural starting point. Marshall's understanding of social citizenship draws on a modernist perspective that takes for granted both an advanced economy and access to a national formal citizenship as a mechanism for addressing the side effects of capitalist development that might otherwise hold back progress (Roche, 2002). Gøsta Esping-Andersen's seminal work on comparing welfare regimes and their systems of social rights also draws heavily on Marshallian ideas of national citizenship (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Marshall's contribution to the debate has cemented the relationship between social rights and the formal national welfare state.

It is a rich analysis of a particular, Western, national process of how social policy institutions for conferring social rights and duties developed. This also meant that this analysis limits our understanding of social citizenship and social rights to a particular model and context and sidesteps the fact that human existence has always relied upon a community for survival and to meet human needs. If we follow the logic of Marshall, social rights seem to be non-existing in any form before 19th century. Or as Dean summarises the Marshallian position, '[s]ocial rights were a tangible product of capitalist development: we had *made* them' (2015: 147).

Another important function of the Marshall logic is the dominance of the nation state and its bureaucracies for producing and delivering the welfare that would fulfil the social rights of the citizens. This creates on one side a powerful analytical framework to understand the role of social rights and duties in a modern western capitalist nation state era but does little to create an understanding for societies that does not fit in this mould or actually the whole concept of social rights and duties that must predate civil and political rights or even western societies.

This perspective helps us locate the Marshallian understanding of social citizenship within a 'national functionalist' system (Roche, 1992) and notice the many ways it appears to be divorced from both informal social practices and the family as not just a reproductive unit but also as a community in itself. We see in Marshall a citizenship that is more about "civilizing the otherwise

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'uncivilised' and conflictual dynamics of capitalism and capitalist societies" (Roche, 2002:72). One could see in Marshall a narrative around citizenship that is first about taming the state and other citizens (civil and political rights) and later, about taming capitalism (social rights).

This 'Marshallian paradigm of social citizenship' has been significantly eroded and no longer serves as the gold standard of welfare states (Turner, 2001). In part this is due to structural changes in the labour market, particularly casualization, which has meant that labour no longer offers a clear path to social citizenship. Second, national citizenship has been eroded by global citizenship rights: concerning issues such as the environment and culture, which supplant questions of social security with questions of ontological security. Much of the welfare state literature has of course also recognised the need to depart from a purely Marshallian paradigm, and informal perspectives have been for a long time a central aspect of the 'mixed economies of welfare' and 'welfare pluralism' (Johnson, 1999; Knapp, 1986; Powell, 2019; Evers, 1995). Similar debates can also be identified in relation to the 'southern' or 'Mediterranean' welfare regime that extends Esping-Andersen's original trio of welfare regimes by highlighting the role of family and church in the provision of welfare. Here the emphasis is on themes of 'fragmented' (Rhodes, 1996; Ferrera 1996) or 'hybrid' systems (Lyberaki and Tinios, 2014) in understanding how social needs are met either by the state or family. However, importantly, these are largely informed by the complementarity of formal and informal provision, where the state 'rolls back' and informal provision 'rolls in'. Our perspective departs from this by highlighting the interdependence of the two.

Moreover traditional focus on citizenship makes the membership unpersonal as rights and duties are "universal" and should be distributed "equally" to all citizens (Brubaker, 1992; Somers, 1995) but a focus on formal rights towards in theory every citizen clashes with how human and social needs are met by local communities and kinship groups in general in developing countries where informal rights and duties weigh high vis-à-vis a more distant, passive and sometimes even corrupt and predatory state.

3. Challenges to formal citizenship and formal welfare states

As we can see, in many cases citizenship studies have followed a western evolutionary discourse of rights and duties "while paying much less attention to the informal relations that are necessary for actually realizing those rights" (Berenschot and van Klinken, 2018:96). The informal relationships and networks are important in post-colonial states in particular, reflected in concepts such as "the everyday state" by Gledhill (2000) and Fuller and Bénéï (2001). The role of this informal group of mediators and networks is further described in terms such as 'political society' (Chatterjee, 2004), 'the gray zone' (Auyero, 2007) and

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'twilight institutions' (Lund, 2006) capturing a sense of mediated citizenship in a development context (von Lieres and Piper, 2014).

This has led to much rethinking of our whole understanding of citizenship, rights, duties and even social services within a developing country context (Robins *et al.,* 2008; Isin 2015; Berenschot *et al.,* 2016), highlighting the plurality norms, values and practices linked to particular historical trajectories. This has direct impact in how social rights and welfare services are accessed where informal brokers influence, pressure and mitigate how rights are duties are distributed (Jha *et al.,* 2007; Auerbach, 2016). Some researchers see these informal brokerage networks as central to how the state operates on a day-to-day basis (Blundo, 2006; Berenschot, 2010) and that individual citizenship is mediated through membership in intermediary organizations such as trade unions (Lazar, 2008) and criminal gangs (Jaffe, 2015), for example. Meagher (2012) and Jaffe (2013) suggest that a growing fragmentation of actual state authority has led to a "hybrid governance" that includes non-state actors and organizations in regulating the lives and acts of citizens. Lazar defines citizenship simply as 'a bundle of practices that constitute encounters between the state and citizens' (Lazar, 2008: 5).

It is here we get to the essence of informal interaction between rights and duties through personal relations of client and patron. "Chains of personalized deference linked clients to patrons up and down the social hierarchy and [n]onideological, factional politics from the village to the national stage were the result" (Berenschot and van Klinken, 2018: 100). Personal ties, based on relationships with friends, neighbours and kin that draw on affect, tradition or proximity play an important role, as has long been evidenced in studies of informal social care (Bulmer, 1987; Froland *et al.,* 1981). We can also see that patron-client relationships are intertwined with public welfare and social services through informal networks. Oliver de Sardan, observing sub-Saharan African societies, sees solidarity networks creating strong obligations of mutual assistance (de Sardan, 1999). The networks are underpinned by strong linkages between economic patrons who extend goods to clients in return for loyalty, which in turn underwrites the political power of patrons (Barnes, 2018). Patron-clientelism offers an example of informal citizenship, embedded in social networks, that is further characterised by a hierarchical particularism. The literature on social capital develops further parallel avenues to consider the role of informal networks (Granovetter, 1985; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993), where the concept is celebrated – as well as frequently problematized – for its ability to synthesise informal community relations (social) with market approaches to development (capital) (Fine, 1999).

An alternative way for rethinking modern citizenship is by focusing specifically on acts of citizenship. Isin points out how transnational processes of globalization and neoliberalism have meant that the 'sites and scales' where citizens

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engage in claim-making have multiplied and no longer match the nation-state terribly well (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). In other words, there are numerous ways of 'being or becoming a citizen' (Isin and Nielsen, 2008: 1) Isin proposes that 'citizenship is [not only] a legal status but that it also involves practices of making citizens – social, political, cultural and symbolic' (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Focusing on acts of citizenship requires attention to 'acts that may not be considered political' and shifting focus away from the extent (rules), content (rights and responsibilities) and depth (of belonging). As Isin and Turner point out, such 'struggles for redistribution' can extend across borders, highlighting the transnational context in which citizenship rights are sometimes enacted (Isin and Turner, 2002, 2007). Similarly, they can also take place within the private sphere or at community level, outside the gaze of the state. These contributions problematize the appropriateness of relying solely on legal definitions of citizenship obligations. To understand the informal aspects of rights and duties we need to consider the moral bonds that unite communities. In the next section we will outline an alternative approach that defines informal citizenship as moral.

4. Informal perspective: moral social citizenship

Where Marshall's modern perspective on formal social citizenship begins with nation states taming capitalism by managing the risks it poses to work and society, a perspective on informal citizenship starts with local communities and their role in providing welfare and mitigating social risks. Here, the concept of moral economy is key to understanding the role of communities in mitigating social risk and providing for welfare in a context where states are particular weak and social services are patchy at the best.

In the original discussion of moral economy, E.P. Thompson aimed to understand the informal regulation of the basic needs of the poor, by focusing on the ways in which actions surrounding food riots in 18th century England were legitimized. When it became clear that traders and middlemen were charging inflated prices, or deliberately creating scarcity of foodstuff, the poor invoked their social rights by forcing the sale of food at a reasonable price. The rioters, argued Thompson, believed they were 'defending traditional rights or customs' (Thompson, 1971: 78) and it was their actions and the values inherent in these actions that 'can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor' (Thompson, 1971: 83). It was the value system of the moral economy, channelled through popular protest, that the poor were enacting as they secured subsistence at affordable prices.

This all too brief foray to the origins of the concept of moral economy sets up two key points concerning the relationship between citizenship and moral economy. First of all, the concept is closely associated with informal citizenship

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practices. It specifically seeks to explain how the 'crowd' or 'community' were the guarantors of the moral economy, and how riots were compelled by the failures of the formal systems to enforce the right to access affordable foodstuffs. The concept aimed to characterize 'the process of asserting common "rights" and customary practice' (Randall and Charlesworth, 2000). Secondly, the assertion of social rights through moral economy points to a need to understand how informal citizenship rights are enacted and performed (Isin and Nielsen, 2008) rather than simply conferred. Together, these insights evoke the notion of a 'moral community': those informal social citizenship practices in community that implement a moral economy approach to citizenship.

There is also an important stream of recent literature about the moral economy in relation to the welfare state. This research looks at how social problems are framed and understood in relations to concepts like 'deservingness', 'equality' and 'need' (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018) in relation to welfare policies, or how certain 'moral repertoires' are used by political actors to make sense of policy problems (Hansen, 2019) or how we should understand the social responsibilities towards certain societal groups, who should be responsible, and what standards of provision might we reasonably expect (Sayer, 2000). This debate has been motivated by a desire to evaluate and make sense of how social policy approaches or certain institutional arrangements (Mau, 2003) are made legitimate, and resonates mostly with the study of formal welfare states.

One of the most prominent further developments of the concept in relation to informality can be found in the work of James Scott (1976). In *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, Scott finds that communities and households develop reciprocal exchanges of resources in order to mitigate risks and hazards like crop failure, illness, water shortages and natural disasters. These exchanges shape the norms and the expected behaviour of the members of the community, while any act interpreted as breaking these norms could provoke resentment and resistance (Scott, 1976). Scott uses the concept of moral economy to articulate the informal arrangements for risk mitigation peasants employ to secure subsistence. These approaches to risk mitigation explained a wide range of village customs, the informal practices that ensured practitioners were 'entitled to a living out of the resources of the community' (Scott, 2000: 190). His work further develops moral economy as a way of understanding the informal regulation and redistribution of resources that is at the heart of informal social citizenship and informal welfare.

Here Scott sees the family as a form of organisation that distributes rights and assigns duties to its members; it is informal as well as relational and reciprocal, and the main focus is not the rights of individuals but rather those practices that secure the cohesion and survival of the family and/or community (Nordensvärd, 2014). In this sense, the informal regulation of social rights is less about the 'riot and the threat of riot' as per Thompson, but the 'social

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sanctions which operate at the community level to reinforce the claims of the poor to some measure of social insurance from their better-off neighbours' (Scott, 2000: 193). It is such arrangements in Burma and Vietnam, but also in the rest of south-east Asia as well as the developing countries more broadly, that we might think of as a moral economy (Scott, 1976). For example, it is often expected that children participate in the informal citizenship arrangements of a community from an early age.

Gough and Wood highlight that the social citizenship and the provision of welfare can be found in most developing countries in the informal sector. The institutional arrangements' weak-state contexts imply that people rely heavily upon community and family relationships to meet their security needs (Gough and Wood, 2006) that could be "personalized in a range of clientelist and reciprocal (perhaps kin) arrangements" (Gough and Wood, 2006: 1698). Their work represents a significant intervention in the understanding of informal welfare arrangements as being clientelist, hierarchical and laden with power relationships.

5. Why informal social citizenship matters

Some have suggested that informal moral citizenship will always predate formal modern citizenship and see formal institutions as a crystallization of informal institutions (North, 1990; Dean, 2015). They co-evolve through social practices and operations of informal and formal social groups, which include households, kinship groups to networks, companies and governments (North, 1990). Casson *et al.* (2010) concludes that "moral and ethical behavioural norms are often embodied in informal institutions like religion and caste that determine the quality and sustainability of formal institutions like schools, labour markets, and the rules and regulations governing economic activity". Seekings points out that in many countries in the global South, families have a legally recognised duty to look after elderly family members. Welfare in developing contexts relies far more on kin and the family, as opposed to the market or the state (Seekings, 2008). Such an informal citizenship with rights and duties focuses on blood ties as the prime community. The goals of the individual and the group often merge in more communitarian approaches to society.

A formal social policy perspective may sidestep the fact that the success of communities and individuals relies on informal networks alongside state delivery services. As illustrated by Gough and Wood, many developing countries struggle to deliver more than fragmented social services and rely on other sources to meet human needs, where access to rights and entitlements is "personalized in a range of clientelist and reciprocal (perhaps kin) arrangements" (Gough and Wood, 2006:1698). This is not to say that informal is preferable, but rather to highlight the delicate interleaving of formal and informal citizenship. Informality is founded on embodied and unique understandings of communities, rights and duties that

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draw on the moral dimensions of traditions, reciprocity and relationships. These characteristics stand in stark contrast to the formal, disembodied legal social rights that are universally available to every citizen.

The main difference is that where formal citizenship is based on legal rights and duties enshrined in law through a political community, informal citizenship is based on meeting of human and community needs through a particular local and moral community. Our theoretical starting point is a symbiotic relationship where the social needs of individuals and communities are met through dynamic interplay of both formal and informal avenues to realising social rights. Our model highlights the interdependent rather than evolutionary relationship between informal and formal, where rights and responsibilities rely on both, as can be seen in Table 1.

While the table depicts informal and formal social citizenship as two ideal types located at the opposite ends of a continuum, such binaries rarely exist in real life. We might better conceive of them as two orientations, where our sense of membership in a community is informed by belonging to a moral informal community and a formal legal community. In practice these processes are ambivalent, fluid and intertwined with each other.

Social citizenship is also enacted through social practices that span the local and transnational in ways that formal, disembodied citizenship cannot realise on its own. Therefore, informal citizenship is also practiced through informal networks that connect the local and transnational contexts in ways that cannot be ignored and are critical in understanding welfare and social policy in developing country contexts where the nation state is more passive.

The local context matters for social citizenship especially in circumstances where the nation state fails to create a dominant citizenship and global alternatives cannot substitute for nation state identity. As Lipschutz projects, if the citizen loses interest in the nation state, they may to create new political communities within larger administrative units where each new political groupings have own understanding what such political community should contain and who it should include and exclude (Lipschutz, 1999). A consequence of these developments could be the reproduction of the nation state on a smaller, local scale and the transfer of international anarchy down below the borders of the nation state (Lipschutz, 1999). Informal citizenship practices speak to such local alternatives to the nation state, where citizens organize themselves in response to a failure by the state to offer a citizenship model that adequately caters to their needs.

The transnational context matters for social citizenship where we see 'sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors based across national borders' (Vertovec, 2009: 3). Gupta and Ferguson point to the 'creation of forms of solidarity that do not rest on an appropriation of space where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount' (1992: 9, cited in Vertovec, 2009: 5). In other words, we conjure transnationalism to draw out the informal characteristic of

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TABLE 1. Informal and Formal Citizenship and their interdependence

	Informal (moral) citizenship	*Interdependence*	Formal (modern) citizenship
Rights	• Embodied • Realised through relationships • Community-based • Engendered	*Social rights are realised through a combination of informal and formal processes and practices.*	• Disembodied • Realised through legal processes • Individual, via state • Evolutionary
Responsibilities	• Towards family, community and kin • Exchange-based	*Individual citizens negotiate obligations to both the state and their families, communities or kinship groups*	• Towards the greater good of state and society • Taxation and rule based

citizenship in an international context. In this way, we hope that transnationalism presents another avenue for us to think about the formal and informal domains of social relationships and redistributive practices, further sharpening the distinctions and connections between formal and informal understandings of citizenship.

Transnational migration is one of the defining characteristics of our time as individuals negotiate the often highly complex realities of transnational family life and a central focus in the study of transnationalism (Vertovec, 2009). Whilst some of the prominent studies on transnationalism take on similar approaches as those outlined – for example, focusing on the role of transnational regulation: the expansion of regulatory transnational actors as well as modes of regulation (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006), the studies on transnationalism are primarily concerned with research on migrants and diffuse ethnic groups, and their networks differentiated by the transnational patterns of resource and information exchange (Vertovec, 2001). Transnationalism has also pushed the thinking about citizenship beyond the dual perspectives to more imaginative rethinking of citizenship and social rights along a more flexible continuum of experiences (Ong, 1999;).

We are applying the term in a specific way in order to carve out a conceptual space that is separate from the domains of global and comparative social policy, and to use it to conceptualise the informal spaces of citizenship relevant to those citizens who 'live in social worlds that are stretched between, or dually located in, physical places and communities in two or more nation-states' (Vertovec, 2001: 578). Transnationalism, in our use of the concept, articulates the borderless qualities of migration and citizenship and highlights the informal connections migrants maintain to families and communities located outside the boundaries of the nation state.

In Figure 1 we summarize this discussion, highlighting the local and transnational dimensions of informal social citizenship, and positioning this against the international and nation-state centred dimensions of formal social citizenship.

6. Exploring Informal social citizenship and welfare

In this section, we will focus on examples that explore the informal aspects of our model presented in Figure 1. Since the study of 'formal-global' that explores the role of international organisations in the field of social policy (see, for example, Deacon *et al.*, 1997; Deacon, 2005; Niemann *et al.*, 2021) and the 'formal-national' devoted to the study of modern welfare states (see, for example, Korpi, 1989; Hemerjik, 2013; Bonoli and Natali, 2013) constitute the mainstay of welfare state research, our attention here is on the informal local and transnational dimensions of social citizenship and how these demonstrate the interplay between formal-national and informal-local-transnational modes of social citizenship.

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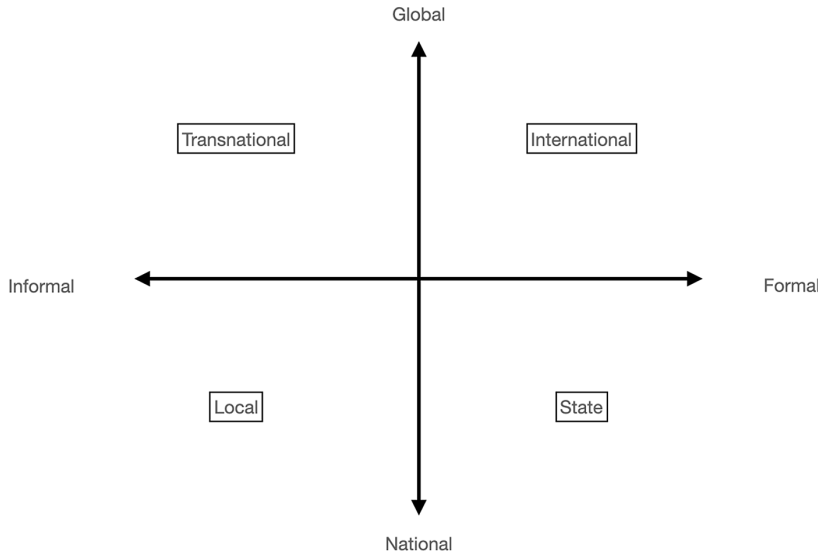

Figure 1. Informal social citizenship and welfare model

6.1. Transnational informal citizenship/welfare

A look at informal welfare practices in a transnational context highlights the informal norms of reciprocity within communities and kinship groups that govern the way human needs continue to be met outside the formal welfare systems. Remittances as Remittances often serve supplementary role as 'top-ups' that bolster an otherwise insufficiently resourced formal welfare systems, again pointing to the important interplay between formal and informal forms of social citizenship. It also demonstrates the changing connections that actors have with national territory, the growing relevance of informal social formations that span borders, decentred attachments to nation(s), as well as complex and particularised forms of resource exchange (Vertovec, 1999). In the context of remittances, migration serves as a driver of transnational informal social citizenship that funds a system of welfare redistribution that far outstrips all international aid efforts in its impact.

Therefore, the role of the nation state as the main driver for meeting human needs is challenged not only by local community alternatives but also by the prevalence of transnational kinship networks. In 2019, global remittances reached a record-high value of $548bn higher than foreign direct investment ($534bn) or official overseas development aid ($166bn). For many, remittances represent a key source of foreign capital, including large states as India ($76bn) and Mexico ($41bn), but in particular smaller states such as Tonga, Haiti, Lebanon and South Sudan where remittances make up to over a third of

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GDP (World Bank, 2020). In practice welfare states are only one – and often a minor – source of resources to meet social needs.

The role of hometown associations (HTA) offers a more focused illustration of how informal citizenship duties are experienced within transnational spaces. HTAs comprise a resourceful form of associational practice that brings together migrants, their families and communities of a given nationality who wish to support their countries of origin. HTAs give expression to transnational forms of belonging (Orozco and Garcia-Zanello, 2009) not captured by national definitions of citizenship and reflect a collective moral responsibility within a diaspora to support and maintain relationships with their communities of origin (Bada, 2014). In the case of Mexico, Orozco and Garcia-Zanello document how donations from HTAs can amount to anywhere upwards from 50 percent of the municipal public works budget, targeting the needs of the poorest through projects such as school renovations, microenterprises and water infrastructure (Orozco and Garcia-Zanello, 2009). Informal transnational social citizenship practices such as remittances demonstrate how the moral responsibilities towards community and kin also transcend the nation state.

6.2. Local informal citizenship/welfare

The case of education reform in Ghana demonstrates how efforts at recognizing formal social citizenship rights through free universal education can challenge the informal responsibilities individuals have towards their families, communities and kin. On paper Ghana's education policy was exemplary with eleven years of free basic education, together with government funding for tuition and other teaching materials (Yamada and Ampiah, 2009; Akyeampon, 2009). Primary education was an investment in human capital designed to develop the formal processes and 'rituals' of becoming a citizen (McLaren, 1986) and achieve a 'disciplined and reliable workforce' (Morrow and Torres, 2000). However, in practice, the policy faced various challenges. Every year spent in education led to further drops in completion rates, a problem augmented by significant gender differences. Only 86.5% of girls compared to 92.7% of boys completed their primary education in full, while high school completion rates were at 51.2% and 65.1% respectively (Nguyen and Wodon, 2013).

For some, the low enrollment and high attrition rates are "linked to child labour which remains a reality since in some poor households it is an important contributor to household income." (Akyeampong, 2009:145), suggesting that the formal education system is poorly equipped to consider the needs of poor families dependent on child labour. As Admassie points out, "participation in school reduces, first of all, the available time the child has for work at home or in the labor market" (2002: 262). These observations are consistent with an understanding of the extended sub-Saharan family as a productive multigenerational

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entity, where intergenerational responsibilities play a significant role in how the households operate.

As Laird observes, this form of social organisation is underpinned by a value system which emphasises the obligations "owed by children to their parents in terms of contributing to the household and providing care during sickness or old age" (Laird, 2005: 462). In Ghanaian kinship groups, for instance, children are not seen as a distinct category or as atomised individuals but rather in the context of a transition towards adulthood, where the children's evolving competences and ability to take on new opportunities is expected to support the survival of the group (Bourdillon, 2006: 1202). Such an informal understanding of citizenship rights and duties focuses on blood ties as the primary community. Local expressions of informal moral citizenship practices continue to present a meaningful alternative to national understandings of formal modern citizenship practices.

7. Conclusion

Our main objective has been to capture informal citizenship and its importance in understanding the meanings of social citizenship in local and transnational contexts. While development practitioners and scholars are intimately familiar with such local mechanisms to address poverty, exclusion and marginalisation and actively focus on informal communities in their work, in the formal realm of welfare states, the role of informal citizenship remains less explored.

Our second objective has been to make the point that informal and formal welfare are interdependent rather than complementary. Rather than envisioning a role for informal welfare alongside the formal welfare state, each fulfilling specific but complementary functions, we argue that in every area of welfare citizens realize their access to welfare through a dynamic combination of both formal and informal mechanism. However, the role of informality in meeting welfare needs does not represent a panacea, or even a solution to the problems of welfare delivery in weak welfare states. As Gough and Wood highlight, informal relationships tend to be hierarchical and asymmetrical (Gough and Wood, 2006:1709), entrenching existing power differentials and clientelist practices. By overtly acknowledging the symbiotic relationship between the two forms of citizenship and recognizing their combined value, we might begin to think of more ways in which the state can coordinate, regulate, support, foster and integrate informal welfare practices, and guide the two forms of social citizenships towards maximizing the wellbeing of citizens.

The framework of moral economy put forward by Scott has offered a productive way of thinking about welfare informality by highlighting the role of informal moral communities that, much like the welfare state, also serve to meet human needs and to regulate human behaviour. At the same time the discussion

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around informal social citizenship practices casts doubts on the state as the main source of social rights and social citizenship. Perspectives on the welfare state and western citizenship tend to crowd out other ways of understanding how social rights are constructed and redistributed. As Hartley Dean has observed:

> "Social rights ... are articulated through social policy and are widely framed by social legislation. But they were not invented by the welfare state; they are socially negotiated expressions of human need. ... but [Pre-historic hunter-gatherer] societies must also have contrived customs and practices (social policies and processes) by which they organised how resources should be shared; how their members should care for each other; and who should look to whom for what" (Hartley Dean, 2015: 148).

Hartley Dean rightly points out that social policy and social citizenship is something inherently human and not something that has evolved from liberal rights and social rights being treated as a mere afterthought more than half a millennium later on. Informality matters, because this is where all welfare originates and it continues to inform how we engage – or don't – with formal welfare. Informal welfare is not merely an add-on or a helping hand for the formal welfare state. These are integral to each other and constitute each other. Seen this way, we can see social citizenship in terms of an ecosystem of social rights and duties. We need to have a holistic understanding of how everything works together within that system, not just focusing on the constituent parts but understanding the system as a whole.

Competing interests

The authors declare none.

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