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HISTORICIZING CITIZENSHIP IN POST-WAR BRITAIN*

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ABSTRACT. *Citizenship has been widely debated in post-war British history, yet historians discuss the concept in very different, and potentially contradictory, ways. In doing so, historians are largely following in the footsteps of post-war politicians, thinkers, and ordinary people, who showed that citizenship could – and did – mean very different things. The alternative ways of framing the concept can be usefully described as the three registers of citizenship. First, there are the political and legal definitions of what makes any individual a citizen. Secondly, there is the notion of belonging to a national community, an understanding of citizenship which highlights that legal status alone cannot guarantee an individual's ability to practise citizenship rights. Thirdly, there is the idea of citizenship as divided between 'good' or 'active' citizens, and 'bad' or 'passive' ones, a differential understanding of citizenship which has proved very influential in debates about British society. This article reviews these registers, and concludes by arguing that all three must be taken into account if we are to comprehend properly the nature and citizenship as both status and practice in post-war Britain.*

Citizenship is one of the most important themes of post-war British history. Traditional narratives of the 1945–79 'post-war' period have emphasized the rise and fall of political consensus, the decline of British power amid decolonization and cold war, the paradoxical nature of economic discourse which identified relative economic decline on the one hand and growing affluence on the other, and the rise of what is sometimes crudely described as 'identity politics' (often used as a catch-all term to cover the discontents of those who felt excluded from mainstream political life: such as those affected by or involved in the social and political consequences of immigration, the rise of nationalism in Scotland and Wales, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland).[1] The issue of citizenship is foundational to many of

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[1] The best recent surveys of the post-war British past have been Paul Addison, *No turning back: the peaceful revolutions of post-war Britain* (Oxford, 2010); and Brian Harrison's two volumes, *Seeking a role: the United Kingdom, 1951–1970* (Oxford, 2009), and *Finding a role? The United Kingdom, 1970–1990* (Oxford, 2010).

these narratives. 'Citizenship' has been used by historians to examine the role of the welfare state in people's lives,[2] popular engagement with politics,[3] immigration and the experience of racism,[4] and consumer identities.[5] The legal framework of citizenship was also changing in post-war Britain. In 1945, votes for all those over twenty-one had been secured,[6] but the creation of universal welfare rights not yet assured.[7] As the decades wore on, deep anxieties were felt about what citizenship would mean in a multi-racial nation.[8] At the same time, political elites were keener than ever to see a rise in social and political participation.[9] To put it simply, citizenship has been a key way of framing questions relating to the basic interactions between individuals and the state, and between individuals within society – but those interactions and relationships were changing in the post-war period, as was the value attributed to different articulations of citizenship. The aim of this article is to map the often radically different ways historians and other scholars have understood citizenship in post-war Britain, and to suggest an outline for a synthetic approach to the topic which combines these different understandings to allow us to reconstruct its history, both as a category of historical analysis and as a concept that had real meaning and impact in Britain after the Second World War.

What historians mean by citizenship varies widely. In a pioneering essay on gender and citizenship, the cultural historians Kathleen Canning and Sonya Rose called it 'one of the most porous concepts in contemporary academic

[2] For example David Vincent, *Poor citizens: the state and the poor in twentieth-century Britain* (London, 1991); Abigail Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950–1970', *Past and Present*, 187 (2005), pp. 157–86; Pat Thane, 'The "big society" and the "big state": creative tension or crowding out?', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2012), pp. 408–29; Glen O'Hara, *Governing post-war Britain: the paradoxes of progress* (Basingstoke, 2012).

[3] Lawrence Black, *Redefining British politics: culture, consumption and participation, 1954–1970* (Basingstoke, 2010); Matthew Hilton, 'Politics is ordinary: non-governmental organisations and political participation in contemporary Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), pp. 230–68.

[4] Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: race and citizenship in the postwar era* (Ithaca, NY, 1997); Randell Hansen, *Citizenship and immigration in postwar Britain: the institutional origins of a multicultural nation* (Oxford, 2000); James Hampshire, *Citizenship and belonging: immigration and the politics of demographic governance in postwar Britain* (Basingstoke, 2005); Wendy Webster, *Englishness and empire, 1939–1965* (Oxford, 2007); Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the place for me: Black Britons, citizenship, and the politics of race* (Oxford, 2016).

[5] Mike Savage, 'Affluence and social change in the making of technocratic middle-class identities: Britain, 1939–1955', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), pp. 457–75; Matthew Hilton, 'Social activism in an age of consumption: the organized consumer movement', *Social History*, 32 (2007), pp. 121–43.

[6] Pat Thane, 'The impact of mass democracy on British political culture, 1918–1939', in J. Gottlieb and R. Toye, eds., *The aftermath of suffrage* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 54–69.

[7] Pat Thane, *The foundations of the welfare state* (London, 1982).

[8] See W. W. Daniel, *Racial discrimination in Britain* (London, 1968).

[9] Lawrence Black, 'Which?craft in post-war Britain: the Consumer's Association and the politics of affluence', *Albion*, 36 (2004), pp. 52–82.

parlance'.[10] Social scientists also take a wide-ranging approach to citizenship, with Andreas Fahremier arguing it 'has come to mean anything and nothing',[11] and Ruth Lister noting it 'runs the danger of meaning what people choose it to mean'.[12] This confusion is particularly important in the context of post-war Britain: the relationship between the individual and state was undergoing massive change as a result of the new welfare state, and mass immigration challenged notions of who 'belonged'.[13] These were profound issues for contemporaries, who understood citizenship in a variety of ways, just as historians have. In post-war Britain, we can see that citizenship has been historicized within three broad registers. First, historians often see citizenship as a narrowly politico-legal framework, analysing the legal, political, and social rights of the population, but also the obligations expected in return. Secondly, historians see citizenship as resulting from 'belonging' to a constructed national community, and investigate both how belonging has been a key marker, or gateway, to citizenship status, and the ways in which concepts of national community have been constructed (not to mention the consequences for those deemed 'outside' that community). Thirdly, historians have also focused on what we can call differentiated aspects of citizenship, particularly on the creation of 'good citizens' and on debates about how citizenship can be enhanced or improved, often with a particular emphasis on voluntary action or 'engagement'.

For citizenship to have any analytical meaning, however, and if historians are to be able to understand all its ramifications in historical context, there needs to be a definitional core which encompasses the different understandings of citizenship, allowing the term to be used in a way that retains meaning rather than becoming unmanageably malleable. Fundamentally, citizenship is both a status and a practice.[14] People are born into, are awarded, or achieve citizenship *status*. This status must be understood as an amalgamation of all three registers: in legal terms in connection with formal state power (such as the possession of a passport or the right to claim benefits), social terms (such as the ability to participate within civil society in a number of ways), and finally cultural or 'discursive' terms (such as being deemed a citizen within popular culture, or understanding oneself as a citizen). Through their everyday interactions with state and society, people *practise* citizenship. They live out, or perform, citizenship in a variety of similar dimensions: legal (such as by voting), social (such as by volunteering), and cultural (by talking, or perhaps even just thinking,

[10] Kathleen Canning and Sonya O. Rose, 'Introduction: gender, citizenship and subjectivity: some historical and theoretical considerations', *Gender and History*, 13 (2001), p. 427.

[11] Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: the rise and fall of a modern concept* (New Haven, CT, 2007), p. 1.

[12] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: feminist perspectives* (2nd edn, Basingstoke, 2003), p. 13.

[13] See, for example, Edmund Neil, 'Conceptions of citizenship in twentieth century Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), pp. 424–38.

[14] My definition is influenced in particular by Lister, *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*.

about citizenship). Status and practice are linked. Citizens can achieve, enhance, lose, or diminish their status through the practice of citizenship. Furthermore, how citizens understand themselves or their status is shaped by their interactions with other citizens, the state, and a whole panoply of institutions and organizations which make up political, social, and cultural life in Britain: shaped, that is, as much by their own agency as by the political, social and cultural structures around them.

The three ways historians have understood citizenship in post-war Britain may differ from each other, but all adhere to this definitional core. This is why it is useful to consider the main ways historians have approached the topic as different 'registers' rather than as competing or alternative conceptions. The first three sections of this article focus on how historians have investigated each of these different registers of citizenship, while the fourth and final section explores how we can usefully combine the three registers into a synthetic approach to the topic that adheres to the identified definitional core, but does not leave behind any of the fundamental ways citizenship has been understood in its historical contexts. In particular, it will discuss the methodologies needed to further historical understandings of the topic at the elite level, within popular culture, and in the realm of experience. The task for historians is to understand the vast range of activities, ideas, values, and behaviours that made up 'citizenship', both as status and practice, in any given society at any given time. By placing historical and cultural specificity at the heart of any analysis of citizenship, we can gain new insight into how it was understood and experienced, made and remade, by people at different points, and how it changed over time.

I

The first register takes as its starting point the inclusion of sections of the population within 'formal citizenship', the politico-legal relationship between citizens and the state which enshrines both rights and obligations. For historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this naturally leads to an emphasis on the extension of voting rights, as accession to full political rights is, within this register, the fundamental threshold of citizenship.[15] Historiographical interest in 'formal citizenship' in the post-war era of mass democracy, however, has focused on two key areas: the concept of 'social citizenship', and the way immigrants, and particularly non-white ones, have been included or excluded as formal citizens. Both areas illustrate the continual importance of politico-legal frameworks to the understanding of citizenship, but also raise key issues about how citizenship is experienced and how ideas of citizenship change. They also raise different issues about the importance of obligations as opposed to rights in notions of formal citizenship. Above all, it seems

[15] A recent example being Robert Saunders, *Democracy and the vote in British politics, 1848–1867* (Aldershot, 2011).

clear that formal citizenship alone is inadequate for understanding the history of citizenship in this period.

'Social citizenship' has been integral to debates about British citizenship since 1945.[16] Central to the concept of social citizenship has been the theory T. H. Marshall expounded in a lecture in 1949, and in print in 1950.[17] Marshall argued that in addition to legal and political rights, citizens were also entitled to 'social rights', especially access to welfare benefits. Marshall has been central to the history of citizenship thought, serving as a touchstone for discussions of 'social citizenship' more generally.[18] For historians, whether charting the history of the welfare state or the welfare reforms of the early twentieth century, social citizenship is a paradigm through which much welfare history has been written. As Jose Harris has argued, 'the ethic of social citizenship as an automatic right was a "rhetorical hallmark" of the early welfare state'.[19] Social citizenship has come more sharply into focus for social scientists with the undermining of universal provision in the years after 1979, with the curtailment of welfare rights seen as a diminution of citizenship.[20]

Although social citizenship is usually associated with social rights, Marshall himself argued that citizens received rights 'conditional only on the discharge of the general duties of citizenship'.[21] Those 'general duties' have served to undermine or limit social citizenship. As Lydia Morris has powerfully argued, the renewed emphasis on the unemployed to prove their rights to benefits throughout the 1980s and 1990s involved 'a discouraging, demoralizing and humiliating procedure', but was construed as 'one of the duties of the citizen'.[22] In this sense, the contingent nature of welfare provision echoed the bitter experience of the 1930s.[23] To give another example, Abigail Wills's work on delinquency has shown how the 1950s delinquent was deemed to have 'failed in his obligations to an organic community which then had the right to "cast him out" symbolically, until he fulfilled the requirements that

[16] Eugenia Low, 'The concept of citizenship in twentieth century Britain: analysing contexts of development', in Peter Catterall, Wolfram Kaiser, and Ulrike Walton-Jordan, eds., *Reforming the constitution: debates in twentieth-century Britain* (London, 2000), p. 178.

[17] T. H. Marshall, 'Citizenship and social class', in his *Citizenship and social class and other essays* (Cambridge, 2005).

[18] A far from exhaustive list of rewarding work engaging with Marshall includes: Martin Bulmer and Anthony M. Rees, eds., *Citizenship today: contemporary relevance of T. H. Marshall* (London, 1996); Peter Dwyer, *Welfare rights and responsibilities: contesting social citizenship* (Cambridge, 2000); Robert White and Jed Donoghue, 'Marshall, Mannheim and contested citizenship', *British Journal of Sociology*, 54 (2003), pp. 391–406.

[19] Jose Harris, '"Contract" and "citizenship"', in David Marquand and Anthony Seldon, eds., *The ideas that shaped post-war Britain* (London, 1996), p. 122.

[20] See, for example, Dwyer, *Welfare rights and responsibilities*.

[21] Marshall, 'Citizenship and social class', p. 94.

[22] Lydia Morris, *Dangerous classes: the underclass and social citizenship* (London, 1994), p. 53.

[23] See Stephanie Ward, *Unemployment and the state: the means test and protest in 1930s South Wales and north-east England* (Manchester, 2013).

allowed him to return'.[24] Obligation was at the heart of William Beveridge's social thought,[25] and although his more contractarian, voluntarist vision of social insurance was rejected in favour of a more 'rights'-based approach by the Attlee government,[26] it is clear that while the status of social citizenship might officially be enshrined by law, it is always reliant to some extent on dynamic and changeable citizenship practice. So in order to understand social citizenship historically, we must go beyond the legal framework of welfare rights, and focus on changing practices and assumptions that determined whether citizens could actually access their rights.

The second focus of academic work on 'formal citizenship' has been immigration and race.[27] Some of the most vibrant and vital work on the issue of citizenship has tackled how non-white people in Britain and the empire were included or excluded as 'British' citizens in the legal sense through the implementation of a range of legislation from the 1948 British Nationality Act to the 1981 Act which shared the same name, although not the same aims. Such work is crucial for understanding the impact of legislation on citizenship, as political imperatives could serve to strip rights away from groups of citizens.[28] The key piece of legislation in this context was the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, which reduced the right of entry to the United Kingdom of those granted legal citizenship by the 1948 Act. There is broad historiographical consensus that underpinning the restrictions to entry in the 1962 Act was the belief that 'colonial' citizens, guaranteed formal citizenship and concomitant rights of access to Britain in 1948, did not really 'belong', or were not 'really British'. There is disagreement as to why this belief existed. Kathleen Paul has argued that the government's own rhetoric, inspired by a racist desire to limit immigration, sparked popular racism.[29] Chris Waters's classic article argued for deeper-seated cultural attitudes based on racial difference.[30] Work by James Hampshire

[24] Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship', p. 175.

[25] Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith, 'Labour, charity and voluntary action: the myth of hostility', in Matthew Hilton and James McKay, eds., *The ages of voluntarism: how we got to the big society* (Oxford, 2011); Jose Harris, 'Voluntarism, the state and public–private partnerships in Beveridge's social thought', in Melanie Oppenheimer and Nicholas Deakin, eds., *Beveridge and voluntary action in Britain and the wider British world* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 10–11.

[26] Thane, *Foundations of the welfare state*; Dennie Oude Nijhuis, 'Rethinking the Beveridge strait-jacket: the Labour Party, the TUC and the introduction of superannuation', *Twentieth Century British History* 20 (2009), pp. 370–95.

[27] Perhaps the key conceptual work on race and citizenship is Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1992).

[28] For an example, see Callum Williams, 'Patriality, work permits and the European Economic Community: the introduction of the 1971 Immigration Act', *Contemporary British History*, 29 (2015), pp. 508–38.

[29] Kathleen Paul, 'From subjects to immigrants: Black Britons and national identity, 1948–1962', in Richard Weight and Abigail Beach, eds., *The right to belong: citizenship and national identity in Britain, 1930–1960* (London, 1998), pp. 223–47.

[30] Chris Waters, '"Dark strangers" in our midst: discourses on race and nation in Britain, 1947–1963', *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (1997), pp. 207–38.

and Raieko Karatani focuses closely on the Acts themselves as the pillars of formal citizenship.[31] However, once the *causes* of the Acts are examined, a more fluid conception of citizenship emerges, illustrating that although non-white people may have had the *status* of formal citizens, they were not treated as such, politically or socially.

This difference between the status and practice of citizenship is of crucial importance. Hampshire spends much of his book discussing the differences between 'belonging' and 'non-belonging' citizens, but argues that citizenship was 'a legal status not a substantive ideal' and rejects the idea that 'citizenship simply *is* full membership of a community, which entails a full sense of belonging by self and others'.[32] This narrow definition of citizenship does not correlate to how 'citizen' and 'citizenship' were used, understood, and experienced in post-war Britain, nor does it reflect the importance of citizenship practice. It is clear that many white people did not consider Black people to be citizens of equal status in this period.[33] The rise of Powellism in the late 1960s and early 1970s illustrated that such attitudes towards non-white people were widespread, underpinned by assumptions about whiteness, belonging, order and disorder, and a basic sense of who 'deserved' to have access to the nation's resources.[34] Such attitudes resulted in direct discrimination throughout the post-war period, restricting access to the basic necessities of life such as housing and employment. This discrimination was actively resisted by Black Britons who articulated their own sense of citizenship in opposition to anti-Black racism, challenging the state, in Kennetta Perry's words, 'to acknowledge and guarantee their rights as British citizens'.[35] The history of racial discrimination, and the fight against it, highlights that formal citizenship – the possession of a British passport and political rights – did not in itself define what citizenship was or who was a citizen in post-war Britain.

The complex relationship between 'formal' citizenship and the ability to practise citizenship is also visible in the history of Northern Ireland. The actions of both the Stormont government and local authorities throughout the province in the fields of local political representation and above all in housing amounted to a denial of citizenship to large parts of the Catholic

[31] Hampshire, *Citizenship and belonging*; Rieko Karatani, *Defining British citizenship: empire, commonwealth and modern Britain* (London, 2003).

[32] Hampshire, *Citizenship and belonging*, p. 203n.

[33] On the other hand, Jodi Burkett has highlighted the emergence of a coherent, radical attempt to re-imagine Britishness in this new context: *Constructing post-imperial Britain: Britishness, 'race' and the radical left in the 1960s* (Basingstoke, 2013).

[34] See Bill Schwarz, *The white man's world* (Oxford, 2011); Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the making of postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013); Amy Whipple, 'Revisiting the "rivers of blood" controversy: letters to Enoch Powell', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 717–35; for an interesting analysis of Powell's speech in the context of citizenship debates, see Julia Stapleton, 'Citizenship versus patriotism in twentieth-century England', *Historical Journal*, 48 (2005), pp. 151–78.

[35] Perry, *London is the place for me*, p. 4.

population in the post-war period, whatever the formal status of individuals. As Richard Bourke has described, Harold Wilson was fully aware of the problems faced by Northern Irish Catholics before the election of the 1964 Labour government, although he proved relatively powerless to deliver change.[36] Eradicating such basic injustices in a peaceful way was the key aim of the Civil Rights Association, formed in 1967, one of a number of initiatives to 'normalize' politics and civil society in Northern Ireland.[37]

Both social citizenship and the racialized or sectarian nature of citizenship practice demonstrate the difficulty in keeping citizenship within narrow legal boundaries. Whatever the legal status was, it rested on practices which were constantly changing and historically specific. As Michael Freeden puts it: 'citizenship was not just a recognition of one's formal standing in the community…It was also the expression of an active, demand-generating, and socially constructive populace, embodying a dynamic cluster of social interactions within the domain of both state and civil society.'[38] Narrow definitions of citizenship as a legal status miss this dynamic remaking of citizenship, providing a partial picture of what it means and neglecting both individuals' understanding of themselves and others as citizens, and political, social, and cultural assumptions about the role of citizens and how they should behave. In order to historicize citizenship successfully, we need to tackle the issues raised by formal citizenship relating to obligations, the relationship between formal citizenship and the 'demand-generating' populace, and how this relationship changed over time.

II

The second register of citizenship used by historians, focusing on citizenship as a wider process of inclusion and exclusion in a 'national community', addresses some of these issues raised by formal citizenship. Citizenship on the formal level, as we have seen, necessitated an understanding, or at least an assumption, about who 'belonged' or who 'deserved' to be included within any regime of citizenship rights. Historians who have understood citizenship as a much broader category of inclusion and exclusion can be said to be searching for the cultural underpinnings of these understandings or assumptions of belonging. In defining citizens as those belonging to a national community, exclusion is as much a category of analysis as inclusion. Historians have long seen 'national identity' as being defined against the values and characteristics of those 'others' outside the nation.[39] Citizenship has been seen as defined in a similar way:

[36] Richard Bourke, *Peace in Ireland: the war of ideas* (London, 2003), p. 55.

[37] See Colin Coulter, '"British rights for British citizens": the campaign for "equal citizenship" for Northern Ireland', *Contemporary British History*, 29 (2015), pp. 486–507.

[38] Michael Freeden, 'Civil society and the good citizen: competing conceptions of citizenship in twentieth-century Britain', in Jose Harris, ed., *Civil society in British history: ideas, identities, institutions* (Oxford, 2003), p. 286.

[39] Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, 1990).

created positively in terms of the values possessed by citizens, but also negatively in terms of certain characteristics, values, and behaviour not possessed.[40] Possession of supposedly 'negative' qualities, or even the lack of certain supposedly 'positive' qualities, can lead to stigmatization as a 'bad citizen', and exclusion from the constructed national community of citizens.

The idea that citizenship resides in a 'national community' was a central feature of T. H. Marshall's theory,[41] but one open to the criticism that such a 'national community', defined by a 'shared civilization', was untenable once the nature of British society began to change through the process of mass immigration. Historians who use this broad register of citizenship can be said to be subverting Marshall's central precept: whereas he saw the national community as inclusive, some historians see it rather as something which excludes precisely because some groups and individuals are stigmatized as not belonging to the 'national community'. This view of citizenship discourse as exclusionary arises out of the approaches and techniques of cultural history, and particularly from belief in the cultural construction of identities through the play and interplay of discourse. Citizenship becomes fluid in this formation, defined and redefined in different contexts and excluding different groups at different times. Two exemplary practitioners of this approach are Nicoletta Gullace and Sonya Rose, authors respectively of books on citizenship in the First and Second World Wars. Gullace examines how the 'cultural environment created by the war reconfigured the way Britons understood the rights and obligations of citizenship', and in particular how this environment led to the changes in the suffrage enshrined in the 1918 Representation of the People Act (the enfranchisement of women over thirty, but also servicemen under twenty-one and the temporary disenfranchisement of conscientious objectors).[42] Similarly, Rose sees citizenship as 'a *discursive framework* explicating the judicial relationship between the people and the political community', which defines 'who does and does not belong to a particular (national) community' and therefore is 'a synonym for nationality, but one that is formally linked to the notion of rights that accrue to members, and to the obligations that citizens owe the state in return'.[43]

Central to Rose's argument is that during the war years 'good citizenship', seen as 'voluntary fulfilment of obligations and willingness to contribute to the welfare of the community',[44] became elevated through political rhetoric and propaganda to the point where those who were not 'good citizens' were seen as failing to contribute to the war effort. Within popular culture, 'good

[40] See David Miller, *Citizenship and national identity* (Cambridge, 2000).

[41] Marshall, 'Citizenship and social class'.

[42] Nicoletta F. Gullace, *'The blood of our sons': men, women, and the renegotiation of British citizenship during the Great War* (New York, NY, 2002), p. 2.

[43] Sonya O. Rose, *Which people's war? National identity and citizenship in wartime Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 15–16 (emphasis in original).

[44] Rose, *Which people's war?*, p. 20.

citizenship' was promoted partly through positive stories praising heroism and self-sacrifice, but also partly through identifying and stigmatizing the behaviour of 'bad citizens'. Labelling 'bad citizens' served not only to inspire renewed 'good citizenship', but to recalibrate perceived 'normal' behaviour as the everyday actions of good citizens.[45] This is a productive way of thinking about how citizenship is constructed, as is Rose's insistence on the importance of moral discourse in the labelling of bad citizens, which highlights the key difference between citizenship-as-belonging and national identity.[46] Although closely linked, citizenship in this register is different from national identity because it is as much about people being excluded for their perceived behaviour as it is their 'ethnic' or 'national' characteristics.

After 1945, it is clear that citizenship was indeed considered by many to consist of 'belonging' to a national community from which certain people or communities were excluded.[47] Here we can return to James Hampshire's rejection of T. H. Marshall's idea of the national community as a definition of citizenship. His own work lucidly shows how non-white immigrants were considered as 'not belonging', with important consequences for those communities and individuals.[48] Likewise, Kathleen Paul has argued that in the age of mass immigration 'formal definitions of citizenship increasingly have had less influence than racialized images of national identity'.[49] Whatever the legal status of non-white people in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s, the racism many experienced was underpinned by a widespread assumption among the white population that Black Britons were not 'in' the national community, making a mockery of the argument that they held citizenship in the fullest sense of the word. Again, in their attempt to counteract racist discourses which sought to exclude them from a racialized national community, Black British activists articulated a vision of citizenship which explicitly linked belonging and citizenship.[50] In short, people understood citizenship broadly, and as a category which achieved meaning through the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others.

Exclusion was central to the discursive framework of citizenship, but it had important consequences beyond discourse. Although people excluded in this way still formally had the same rights as anyone else, attacks on 'belonging' did have direct consequences, as the history of racism in Britain shows.

[45] Sonya O. Rose, 'Cultural analysis and moral discourses: episodes, continuities and transformations', in Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the cultural turn* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), pp. 217–39; see also Matthew Grant, 'Citizenship, sexual anxiety and womanhood in Second World War Britain: the case of the man with the cleft chin', in Sean Nicholas and Ton O'Malley, eds., *Moral panics, social fears and the media: historical perspectives* (London, 2013), pp. 177–90.

[46] Rose, 'Cultural analysis and moral discourses'.

[47] Becky Taylor, *A minority and the state: travellers in Britain in the twentieth century* (Manchester, 2008).

[48] Hampshire, *Citizenship and belonging*, ch. 4.

[49] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, p. 189.

[50] Perry, *London is the place for me*, pp. 59–63.

Likewise, changing assumptions about the nature of rights and obligations underpinned 'real' assaults on rights. Once we accept that duties and obligations change over time, and that state policy is not created in a vacuum but is rooted in these changing cultural assumptions, the question of how exclusion occurs becomes central to how we historicize citizenship. For Rose, the key to inclusion and exclusion was how 'ordinary people' made sense of, and operated within, the Gramscian 'hegemonic discourse' of citizenship which permeated popular culture during the war.[51] In particular, her argument rests on examining citizenship as a form of subjectivity.[52] Michael Roper has taken issue with such ambitious claims about subjectivity and citizenship, claiming that in arguing for 'citizenship as a subjectivity', Rose and Canning 'collapse distinctions which are surely important to maintain between actual citizens, and the laws, rhetorics and practices to which those citizens are subject'.[53] The relationship between citizenship discourse and experience is immensely important, but historians must emphasize agency as well as the 'governmental' nature of citizenship.[54] We must bear in mind that historical citizens were not blank subjects acting out linguistic codes, but were engaged in establishing *different* modes of citizenship within the discursive structures around them.

To fully understand citizenship within the context of post-war Britain, we need to comprehend how it was constructed and circulated within popular culture. Individuals were affected by a citizenship discourse which could be subject to intense government intervention,[55] but we also need to answer the question of *how* apparently 'bad' citizens understood citizenship or their own place within the supposedly 'hegemonic' narrative.[56] For example, cold war tensions led to the stigmatizing of Communists in Britain as archetypal bad citizens, attacked throughout society, from the civil service to the trade unions, and even the Boy Scout movement, as inherently disloyal and dangerous.[57] Yet

[51] Rose, *Which people's war?*, pp. 25–6.

[52] This approach is outlined in more depth in Canning and Rose, 'Introduction: gender, citizenship and subjectivity', pp. 431–2.

[53] Michael Roper, 'Slipping out of view: subjectivity and emotion in gender history', *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005), pp. 58–9.

[54] See Nikolas Rose, *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self* (London, 1989).

[55] As it was during the cold war: see Matthew Grant, '"Civil defence gives meaning to your leisure": citizenship, participation and cultural change in cold war recruitment propaganda, 1949–1953', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22 (2011), pp. 52–78.

[56] It is clear that people could negotiate the structures placed on participating in the black market in wartime and afterwards while still considering themselves 'good' citizens: Mark Roodhouse, *Black market Britain, 1939–1955* (Oxford, 2013).

[57] C. Andrew, *The defence of the realm: the authorized history of MI5* (London, 2009), section D, chs. 4 and 5; Peter Hennessy and Gale Brownfield, 'Britain's cold war security purge: the origins of positive vetting', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), pp. 965–74; Giora Goodman, 'The British government and the challenge of McCarthyism in the early cold war', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12 (2010), pp. 62–97; Richard Stevens, 'Cold war politics: Communism and anti-Communism in the trade unions', in Alan Campbell, Nina Fishman, and John McIlroy, eds., *British trade unions and industrial politics*, I: *The post-war compromise, 1945–1964* (London,

Communists themselves not only rejected the attempts to portray them as such, but also understood their own political activity as a radical form of citizenship – one devoted to the building of socialism in Britain.[58]

The gap between labelling and the experience and agency of people labelled seems difficult to bridge: certainly, we need to bear in mind that citizens, as individuals or in groups, practised citizenship in their own way, within or indeed against existing cultural scripts, and in doing so could contribute to wider rhetorics and perhaps even laws. Any analysis of citizenship must be rooted in experience and social relationships. Discourse is clearly important, but we need to understand its relationship with experience and agency as a two-way street. We need to probe processes of inclusion and exclusion further, and this can only be done by researching how ideas and experiences of citizenship shaped people's lives, whether directly or indirectly. This is not the same as understanding people's 'subjectivities', although it does involve accessing individual reactions to and understandings of citizenship. This is not a minor issue. The emphasis on subjectivities suggests historians can discover what people *really* felt or thought about an issue. Searching for people's interactions with citizenship ideas, and how they practised citizenship, relies on something more knowable – how people articulated citizenship and practised it in relation to the state and their fellow citizens. Once we can grasp this, we can map the relationships between discourse and experience, the processes by which people were included in or excluded from the 'national community', and the ways they claimed their own, different relations to it.

III

The third and final register is the emphasis on the differential quality of citizenship, and in particular what is often called 'active' or 'good' citizenship. Active citizenship is a traditional way of understanding citizenship (the 'republican' model). It is argued that active citizenship improves society and political discourse, and is of enormous benefit for both the individual and the wider polity and society.[59] As such, it is opposed to 'passive' citizenship, the enjoyment of citizenship rights without undertaking the work of citizenship.[60] The 'active' and 'passive' divide in citizenship has deep roots within British social discourse,[61] but has been increasingly politicized by both left and right since the

1999), pp. 168–91; Sarah Mills, 'Be prepared: Communism and the politics of scouting in 1950s Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 25 (2011), pp. 429–50.

[58] See Raphael Samuel, *The lost world of British Communism* (London, 2006).

[59] See Nicholas Deakin, *In search of civil society* (Basingstoke, 2001).

[60] Most surveys of citizenship point out this crucial divide: Richard Bellamy, *Citizenship: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2008); Fahrmeir, *Citizenship*; Derek Heater, *Citizenship: the civic ideal in world history, politics and education* (Manchester, 1990); Charles Pattie, Patrick Seyd, and Paul Whiteley, *Citizenship in Britain: values, participation and democracy* (Cambridge, 2004).

[61] See Julia Stapleton, *Englishness and the study of politics* (Cambridge, 1994).

1980s, with the promotion of active citizenship a rhetorical marker for every government since Thatcher's.[62] It is also the central plank of 'Citizenship Studies', a subject taught to schoolchildren in the United Kingdom.[63] Historical attention, however, has so far focused on the extent to which such active citizenship existed, and how it was promoted. It has, to date, been less concerned with how it was experienced and the wider consequences of promoting a differentiated conception of citizenship.[64] One reason for this is the fact that much of the writing on this topic is less concerned with the history of citizenship per se than with voluntary action. As volunteers are by nature 'active', it is unsurprising that the literature has more to say on 'active' citizenship than its supposed alternative, 'passive' citizenship.

This is not to criticize such scholarship, which has gone a long way to correct long-held assumptions about the decline of participation, the paucity of voluntarism, and the basic aims and thought of many of the pioneers of the welfare state. Geoffrey Finlayson's pioneering work detailed the persistence of the voluntary sector in providing welfare services within the context of the post-war welfare state, dismissing lazy arguments that state welfare had strangled voluntary action.[65] Further research has emphasized the vibrancy of a range of organizations throughout the post-war period, and a general picture has emerged from such detailed research of a voluntary or NGO sector acting, not only in opposition to the state, but as part of a mixed welfare economy.[66] These groups, recruiting active citizens to run and support them, were also interested in educating or training 'good' citizens as part of a wider desire to transform society.[67] Often, such activities were explicit attempts to improve or defend the citizenship rights of certain people. Peter Shapely has argued that the emergence of local tenants' groups in the 1960s was directly linked to an assumption of increased rights in the

[62] See Martin Durham, *Sex and politics: the family and morality in the Thatcher years* (Basingstoke, 1991); Anthony Giddens, *The third way: the renewal of social democracy* (Cambridge, 1998); Jesse Norman, *The big society* (Buckingham, 2010).

[63] See Department for Education, *National curriculum in England: citizenship programmes of study for key stages 3 and 4*, 11 Sept. 2013, www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study-for-key-stages-3-and-4, accessed 8 Apr. 2016; for background, see Bernard Crick and Andrew Lockyer, eds., *Active citizenship: what it could achieve and how* (Edinburgh, 2010).

[64] A recent exception, concentrating on the Second World War, is James Hinton's *Nine wartime lives* (Oxford, 2010).

[65] Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, state and social welfare in Britain, 1830–1990* (Oxford, 1994).

[66] Jane Lewis, *The voluntary sector, the state and social work in Britain* (Cheltenham, 1995); Nicholas Crowson, Matthew Hilton, and James McKay, eds., *NGOs in contemporary Britain: non-state actors in society and politics since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2009).

[67] Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state: charities and the working classes in London, 1918–1979* (Manchester, 2009); Caitriona Beaumont, *Housewives and citizens: domesticity and the women's movement in England, 1928–1964* (Manchester, 2013).

period of the welfare state.[68] Organizations like Gingerbread or One Parent Families, on the other hand, fought the attempted stigmatization of single mothers as 'archetypal welfare scroungers' in the 1980s and 1990s.[69] As the introduction to a recent edited collection put it, far from retreating from some sort of 'golden age' the voluntary sector 'constantly reinvented and redefined itself in response to social and political change' throughout the post-war period.[70]

In terms of citizenship, however, this emphasis on voluntary action raises a crucial issue concerning the perceived worth of volunteering, active citizens: namely, are they 'better' citizens than the 'passive' ones who do not volunteer? Recent scholarship has decisively shown that such an assumption was prevalent throughout social thought after 1945. For example, there has been a new emphasis placed on the role of voluntarism in the thought of William Beveridge, who firmly believed that it improved both society and the individual, perhaps unsurprisingly given his training in social investigation during the early part of the century.[71] In essence, the tenor of this work reflects the fact that for many in the post-war period and before, citizenship was understood as the practice of participation, altruism, and of course voluntarism, and a key social aim was to enhance citizenship in this sense throughout the country at large.[72]

The desire to increase 'good' citizenship was partly driven by a general tendency to assume that the British public was increasingly apathetic after 1945, to the detriment of the overall quality of political life. David Marquand's trenchant *Decline of the public* argued that the public's ability and willingness to participate in politics has declined from a mid-century heyday.[73] Likewise, the landmark, but controversial, co-written book *England arise!* argued that the Attlee government's attempt to 'transform people from private individuals into active citizens' was stymied by the mass apathy of the population, most of whom 'remained preoccupied with their private spheres and rejected institutions to make them community-spirited'.[74] More recently, the increase in research on 'political culture' has led to a rethinking of what is meant by political participation. Lawrence Black has argued that political culture

[68] Peter Shapely, 'Civil society, class and locality: tenant groups in post-war Britain', in Hilton and McKay, eds., *The ages of voluntarism*, p. 100.

[69] Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England* (Oxford, 2012), p. 169.

[70] Matthew Hilton and James McKay, 'The ages of voluntarism: an introduction', in their *The ages of voluntarism*, p. 2.

[71] Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: a biography* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1997). See the essays in Oppenheimer and Deakin, eds., *Beveridge and voluntary action*.

[72] Freeden, 'Civil society and the good citizen'.

[73] David Marquand, *Decline of the public: the hollowing out of citizenship* (Cambridge, 2004).

[74] Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson, and Nick Tiratsoo, *England arise! The Labour Party and popular politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester, 1995), p. 213; for a strong rebuttal of the book's key arguments, see James Hinton, '1945 and the apathy school', *History Workshop Journal*, 43 (1997), p. 272.

became more dispersed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the 'decline' of traditional party-based political activity compensated by alternative forms of political engagement.[75] A related argument is cogently made by Matthew Hilton, that the rise of NGOs and the struggles of traditional political parties amounted to a transformation of the political after 1945, *not* a decline in political participation through 'opting-out'.[76]

Two major interlinked questions are often left unanswered by this emphasis on the differentiated quality of citizenship. The first is the whole question of agency. How did people interact with, and influence, citizenship? The second is to do with apparently 'passive' citizens. There is an often unwritten elision between 'active' citizenship and 'good' citizenship, based on the assumption that 'active' citizens are 'better' than 'passive' ones, with 'passive' citizens crowded out of the historical record. Agency is crucial to active citizenship: it is, after all, a theory based on individual and collective participation. It is also often presented in socially progressive terms, but the agency of 'active' citizens can also be aimed at resisting social change, whether through entrenching the privilege of those with economic or social power within organizations,[77] or through a large range of socially conservative groups which are as much a part of the voluntary sector as so-called 'new social movements'.[78] The issue of passivity is closely linked to the question of agency. Ruth Lister argued that acting as a citizen 'involves fulfilling the full potential of the status', but those 'who do not fulfil that potential do not cease to be citizens; moreover, in practice participation tends to be more of a continuum than an all or nothing affair and people might participate more or less at different points on the life-course'.[79] What about those who do not participate? Lister and other theorists have been primarily interested in non-participation in terms of exclusion, of the inability to participate. The class basis of voluntarism, and the exclusionary nature of the whole ethos of 'good citizenship', is curiously neglected by historians.

Passivity is usually viewed as a negative quality, seen to have increased with affluence and the growth of more home-based and family-oriented modes of leisure. However, it could be argued that this view of 'passivity' adheres to a contractarian concept of citizenship. Individuals who fulfilled what could be considered to be their social roles and basic legal responsibilities – as mothers, workers, consumers, tax payers, and law-abiders – could be said to be 'good

[75] Black, *Redefining British politics*.

[76] Hilton, 'Politics is ordinary', pp. 230–68; see also Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nicholas Crowson, and Jean-Francis Mouhot, *The politics of expertise: how NGOs shaped modern Britain* (Oxford, 2013).

[77] Finlayson, *Citizen, state and social welfare in Britain*, ch. 4.

[78] Lawrence Black, 'There was something about Mary: the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association and social movement history', in Crowson, Hilton, and McKay, eds., *NGOs in contemporary Britain*, pp. 182–200.

[79] Lister, *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*, p. 42.

citizens' despite their lack of 'activism'. It is certainly doubtful that they would have considered themselves to be anything less. Not enough is known about ideas of citizenship at the level of how ordinary people understood their own obligations to state and society, of what citizenship meant at the level of the family. Certainly, there were fears within the political class about the passivity of consumers,[80] and activism in this area often concentrated on educating such passive citizens, but the history of consumer groups shows how citizenship discourse could, and did, reach into the home.[81] Understanding the citizenship of the apparently passive, however, remains an important, although complex, task. Analyses of differentiated citizenship naturally equated 'active' citizens with 'good' citizens, with the obvious value judgement that those who were less 'active' somehow failed in some way. By understanding apparent 'passivity' in terms of agency, of people's understanding and choices about citizenship, we can grasp the changes to ideas of citizenship in post-1945 Britain in a more nuanced way. Doing this, and according historical respect to people's own conception of their relationship to state and society, might disrupt the tendency to criticize those who were or are less likely to participate in the sorts of activities given undue prominence within current, and historical, citizenship debates.

IV

None of the registers discussed above is 'incorrect'. Each seeks to answer valid questions, and to tackle aspects of citizenship which are of fundamental importance in the post-1945 British context. To fully understand citizenship in its historical context needs a synthetic approach that takes account of all three registers, understanding that they co-exist and overlap rather than compete, and that each fits into the definitional core outlined in the introduction. Using this definitional core as a starting point, however, historians can attempt to understand *how* citizenship was understood in post-war Britain, analysing how people conceptualized and articulated their understanding of their own relationship to the state and wider society, their own citizenship status and practice.

One reason for the existence of these differing registers is that competing definitions and understandings were able to jostle against each other and operate in the same space without direct conflict. For example, there was a *relative* lack of theoretical discussion of citizenship at the level of elite political culture. As Edmund Neill has stated, 'in the immediate post-war decades…in general, politicians and intellectuals largely eschewed the term'. The 'perceived unity and homogeneity of British society' after the Second World War and the existence of full employment and the welfare state combined to create a sense

[80] Lawrence Black, *The political culture of the left in affluent Britain, 1951–1964* (Basingstoke, 2003).
[81] Hilton, 'Social activism in an age of consumption'.

that the basic problems of citizenship had been dealt with.[82] As David Marquand put it, for many intellectuals after 1950 it was 'self-evident' that 'political rights and social citizenship were secure'.[83] Yet this may be explained by the fact that such intellectuals had a narrow view of what citizenship was. Beyond the bounds of the register of formal political and social rights, this period saw wide and varied discussion about citizenship. In addition to the already noted debates about race and voluntarism, there were discussions within the left concerning the need to improve 'political education', a synonym for the sort of engaged citizenship which was such a concern within political thought in the 1920s and 1930s.[84] Comprehensivization in secondary education was also a debate loaded with assumptions about the role of schooling in creating a politically informed and empowered citizenry,[85] although its introduction was much more bipartisan and piecemeal than often thought.[86] Several historians have noted the tradition of alternative models of political citizenship articulated within the non-Labour radical left, from Raphael Samuel's discussion of the unique culture of citizenship within the Communist Party of Great Britain onwards. The New Left's earnest discussions at the end of the 1950s about the 'commitment' of intellectuals was at its heart a debate about what a 'citizen' should be.[87] Likewise, Celia Hughes has shown the complex ways young people on the radical left understood their citizenship as they participated in different activist groups designed to improve Britain and the wider world.[88]

Engagement with the formal register of citizenship was resurgent in the 1980s and 1990s, when the underpinnings of the post-war settlement (such as full employment) had been lost and social citizenship came under attack. There was an explosion of writing about the Thatcherite onslaught on the rights of citizens and the articulation of an alternative model of citizenship based on the 'Victorian' value of self-reliance. Similarly, the left wished to reinforce and renew political and social citizenship, with a particular focus on both the

[82] Neil, 'Conceptions of citizenship in twentieth century Britain', p. 424; much the same point is made in Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British left: a study in progressive political thought* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 201–4.

[83] David Marquand, 'Civil republicans and liberal individualists: the case of Britain', in Bryan S. Turner and Peter Hamilton, eds., *Citizenship: critical concepts*, 1 (London, 1994), p. 241.

[84] Recent work on this topic includes: Stapleton, 'Citizenship versus patriotism in twentieth-century England'; Brad Beaven and John Griffiths, 'Creating the exemplary citizen: the changing notion of citizenship in Britain, 1870–1939', *Contemporary British History*, 22 (2008), pp. 203–25; Tom Hulme, '"A nation depends on its children": school buildings and citizenship in England and Wales, 1900–1939', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), pp. 406–32.

[85] Glen O'Hara, *Governing post-war Britain: the paradoxes of progress, 1951–1973* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 4.

[86] Melissa Benn, *School wars: the battle for Britain's education* (London, 2011).

[87] Scott Hamilton, *The crisis of theory: E. P. Thompson, the New Left and postwar British politics* (Manchester, 2011), p. 60.

[88] Celia Hughes, *Young lives on the left: sixties activism and the liberation of the self* (Manchester, 2015).

need for citizenship education and the awareness that British citizenship was far from the inclusive category it had been assumed to be.[89] The work of social theorists from the 1980s and 1990s has greatly enhanced our understanding of how citizenship operates as both status and practice, and of how citizenship discourse operates beyond normative political theory. It has seen citizenship become defined more widely, encompassing, as Bernard Crick has put it, 'significantly different meanings' but also no '"essential" or universally true meaning'.[90]

Historicizing citizenship, however, requires an acceptance that it is not so much a category of analysis as a concept with historically and culturally specific meanings. As such, as the introduction to this article suggests, it requires a definitional core, one that encompasses the enormously varied uses of the term. A criticism of such an approach might be that it risks imposing a definition on the past, labelling something as 'citizenship' that was not understood as such. But tracing the history of words is not the same as understanding the history of ideas or concepts. As the three registers discussed above show, 'citizenship' was a term that signified different things for different people in post-war Britain, and is still a term which signifies different things for different historians. What these registers have in common is a shared basis in setting out the individual's relationship with the state and with others in society, whether that be in legal, social, or cultural terms. As Thomas Dixon has explained, such 'concept history' needs to chart synonyms, near-synonyms, and other terms used which allow us to understand contemporary understandings of the concept.[91]

For citizenship to be successfully historicized in this way, close attention has to be paid to historical specificity. Citizenship clearly did not mean the same for people in 1990, say, as it did in 1945. This change can be seen across all three registers, and addressing how and why concepts of citizenship changed will allow us to tackle questions of fundamental importance in Britain's recent past, from the enormous changes enshrined in, and arising from, the post-war political settlement, to the complex attitudes individuals had towards society. Accounting for such changes gets to the heart of the methodological task confronting any attempt to historicize citizenship: the relationship between discourse and experience. As has been seen, the operation of citizenship discourse within popular culture is crucial to how individuals formed their own ideas of citizenship, and how they acted on them. Yet we must break from the idea that symbolic representations determined experiences. Bill Schwarz has stressed that Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech 'marked the creation of a

[89] For an explicitly feminist take, see Lister, *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*; for a radical left wing examination of the issue, see the essays collected in Geoff Andrews, ed., *Citizenship* (London, 1991).

[90] Bernard Crick, 'A subject at last!', in his *Essays on citizenship* (London, 2000), p. 3.

[91] Thomas Dixon, *The invention of altruism: making moral meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 37–8.

charged circuit of political rhetoric', but obviously did not create the ideas concerning race which erupted from his supporters in the aftermath of the speech. They existed previously, in 'the informalities of gossip or chat' deeply rooted in ideas of nation and race with long antecedents. Powell may have created the political space in which they could be articulated, the furore over his speech may have allowed the transition from the 'unspeakable to the speakable', but it did not – and could not – create the fears, concerns, and ideas which made up popular racism in 1960s Britain.[92] These were embedded in the memory of empire and war, but also in myriad economic and social anxieties. Citizenship discourse, the ideas circulating within popular culture, whether received from those with political or expert authority, or emerging from an incipient moral panic, is important. But individuals formed their own conceptions of citizenship within this discourse through their own lived experience and interactions with state and society, which co-existed with assumptions about the proper nature of citizenship deriving from the legacy of the Second World War and earlier. The meaning and content of citizenship existed within the symbolic frame of discourse, which limited but did not determine citizenship experience. Discourse is also dynamic and subject to change through social and political action: by the very practice of citizenship. People remained agents, and citizens were able to define their own concepts and practices of citizenship.

To research citizenship in this way requires a rich seam of source material. There is a mass of popular cultural forms, the vast pile of books, newspapers, magazines, films, television shows, and radio programmes, which constituted the 'circuit' of ideas about citizenship. The administrative files, minutes, rule books, records of recruitment drives, of a vast array of voluntary groups, trade unions, schools, Women's Institute branches, and working men's clubs can tell us about the social world of citizenship: the spaces in which ideas and practices were formed and influenced. There are letters, diaries, and oral history transcripts in which people explain how they interacted with state and society, their values and their opinions on other citizens. From this mass of sources it will be possible to chart citizenship across its three registers, including press and parliament, committee room and protest march, and the home. Such an approach will allow us to account for the swirl of different ideas about citizenship as a status, and the different social experiences of it as a practice. It will allow us to acknowledge the structuring effects of discourse while emphasizing change and agency. In short, it will allow us to study what citizenship was.

Historicizing citizenship in post-war Britain, then, is a complex proposition. We must take as our starting point a definitional core of citizenship. From here, however, we must seek how citizenship was represented and experienced within its specific historical contexts. Normative theories, though useful for conceptualizing citizenship, must not crowd out actual historical understandings of

[92] Schwarz, *The white man's world*, p. 38.

citizenship. Approaching the topic in this way makes clear how embedded the three registers of citizenship were within political discussion, popular culture, and the social experience of the people. British citizenship after 1945 cannot be contained in one of these areas; it spilled over into all three. Researching how people used those three registers will naturally bring to the fore questions of change and agency, providing us with a better understanding of citizenship in this period. The relationship people had with the state, the hazy realm of assumptions and expectations about politics, underpinned both the post-war settlement and its unravelling. The belief in individuals shaping society through action drove the rise of the voluntary sector but also the Women's Liberation Movement.[93] The belief that people could be excluded for reasons of behaviour or for belonging to certain sections of the community drove racism and helped entrench positions of cultural, social, and economic privilege. We need a new history of citizenship – for within it is the history of modern Britain.

[93] Lynn Segal, 'Jam today: feminist impacts and transformations in the 1970s', in Lawrence Black, Hugh Pemberton, and Pat Thane, eds. *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 149–66.