Wither social citizenship? Lived experiences of citizenship in/exclusion for out-of-work benefit claimants

Abstract

Drawing on a qualitative longitudinal study that examined experiences of welfare reform among a small group of benefit claimants between 2011 and 2013, this paper considers how claimants’ social citizenship rights, responsibilities and status are all affected by poverty and welfare reform. It discusses the ways in which welfare conditionality impacts upon targeted individuals’ citizenship status, noting an increasing trend towards ‘conditioning’, where claimants seek to govern and manage their own behaviour(s) in ways which meet the demands of contemporary citizenship. The paper considers the extent to which even a ‘modicum of economic welfare and security’ is now denied to so many Britons, concluding with a discussion of what if any emancipatory potential social citizenship still holds.

Keywords: social citizenship, welfare reform, security, conditionality

Introduction

Setting out his UK Government’s ambitions to improve life chances, Prime Minister David Cameron declared:

this government is all about security…security is…what drives the social reform that I want this government to undertake in my second term. Individuals and families who are in poverty crave security – for them, it’s the most important value of all (Cameron, 2016).

Almost seventy years earlier, the classic liberal citizenship theorist, TH Marshall, described the importance of providing social rights to citizens such that they are able to enjoy at least a ‘modicum of economic welfare and security’ (Marshall, 1950, p 8). Whether and how far the welfare reforms undertaken by Cameron’s Governments from 2010 onwards are enabling or undermining such security is of course subject to much debate.

In the UK case, the most recent reforms undertaken by the Coalition and Conservative Governments build on successive reforms since the 1980s which have seen the social rights of citizenship change and gradually become ever more conditional and contingent on state-defined obligations, with the primary duty to engage with activities associated with the formal labour market (Dwyer, 2010; Dwyer and Wright, 2014; Lister, 2011). Against a context of ongoing welfare reform and changes to that which is offered by the social rights of citizenship, it becomes critical to explore how out-of-work benefit claimants themselves experience and respond to welfare reform, and how these experiences affect their citizenship status and sense of in/exclusion within the wider citizenry: the focus of this article. Building upon the existing literature on social citizenship and poverty (cf Dean and Melrose, 1999; Dwyer, 2000; Lister, 1990) and drawing on recent empirical research that charts the lived experiences of welfare reform (ref removed for peer review), this article seeks to contribute to our understanding of the evolving relationships between citizenship, poverty and welfare reform in Britain today.

Following a brief discussion of the value in employing social citizenship as a theoretical lens for exploring out-of-work benefit claimants’ experiences of welfare reform and an introduction to the research conducted, this paper explores how the social rights of citizenship are being fractured and undermined by poverty and welfare reform. The consequences of the policy emphasis on welfare conditionality and evidence of a shift towards ‘welfare conditioning’ are then considered. In concluding, this article outlines the implications of these findings for the state of social citizenship in the UK today, asking what if any emancipatory potential the concept still holds.

Social citizenship as a lens for understanding the impact(s) of welfare reforms

Social citizenship is fundamentally about inclusion and exclusion, about who is and who is not included in the citizenry and on what basis (Dwyer, 2010; Lister, 2003). It focuses attention on questions of membership and belonging, rights and responsibilities, what is expected for those granted the status of citizen, and what can be expected from them in return. In seeking to better understand experiences of welfare reform, social citizenship can serve as a valuable theoretical lens to direct attention to whether and how reforms affect both the citizenship in/exclusion of those directly affected and the level of security and protection provided by social rights.

While republican theories of citizenship focus on citizenship as a practice, which brings with it particular obligations and expectations concerning how to live the life of a ‘good citizen’, liberal theories conceive of citizenship as a status, to which is attached a bundle of rights and responsibilities (Dwyer, 2010). In this article, both liberal and republican understandings of citizenship are drawn upon in tandem, reflecting the ways in which recent governments’ articulations of citizenship adopt both approaches to describe not only the rights and responsibilities, but also the expected practice(s) of citizens. Political pronouncements frequently draw upon contractual, liberal ideas of citizenship as a status, which brings with it particular rights and responsibilities, with work-related conditionality a policy approach which explicitly ties the ‘right’ to state support to the responsibility to take steps to return to paid employment (cf. Cameron, 2011; Crabb, 2016). At the same time, there is often an associated and underlying emphasis on republican notions of citizenship as a practice, here narrowly conceived as engagement with and participation in the formal labour market (Patrick, 2015).

In theorising social citizenship, it is valuable to draw a distinction between citizenship as it is constructed and articulated from above, and citizenship as it is lived and experienced from below, a distinction which is also sometimes conceptualised as between top-down and bottom-up approaches to citizenship (Clarke et al., 2014; Lister, 2003). This directs analytical attention to how dominant political narratives conceptualise and operate ideas and ideals of social citizenship as well as to how this dominant narrative is experienced in the ‘everyday world’ of citizenship (Desforges et al., 2005, cited in Lister, 2007, p.58). There is particular scope to explore the extent of any disjuncture between conceptualisations from above and below, something which has been explored in relation to this particular study elsewhere (ref removed for peer review) . Throughout, it is helpful to remember that citizenship is always and inevitably ‘imparfaite’ or unfinished, constantly being re-worked and reimagined both in government narrative and discourse, and in experiences and responses to the state by citizens themselves (Balibar, 2001, cited in Clarke et al., 2014). In contrasting citizenship from above and below, it is first necessary to introduce dominant citizenship narratives emanating from above.

Social citizenship from above – valorising and enforcing paid employment

Since the 1980s, there has been a sustained emphasis in government accounts on the importance of engagement in paid employment as a marker of the dutiful, responsible citizen (Dwyer and Wright, 2014; Lister, 2011; Patrick, 2013). Both liberal and republican ideas of citizenship are applied in tandem to reify paid employment, which becomes critical to how individuals can achieve the status and/or meet the responsibilities of contemporary citizenship. Participating in the formal labour market has been consistently and repeatedly valorised and proclaimed, with other forms of socially valuable contribution neglected and sidelined (Lister, 2011; Patrick, 2013). In defending welfare reforms that make social welfare eligibility increasingly conditional on taking steps to prepare for and enter the labour market, successive governments have argued that such reforms will deliver ‘social inclusion’ by supporting targeted individuals to become responsible, hard working citizens (Levitas, 1998). Thus, a narrative of citizenship inclusion is used to justify reforms that delineate and fracture the social rights of citizenship. In what Lister (2011) describes as the ‘age of responsibility’, governments from the 1980s onwards have placed considerably more emphasis on the responsibilities rather than the rights of citizenship.

Under Cameron’s two governments, welfare reforms have also been justified on the basis of the need to deliver ‘fairness’ in the benefits system, and to reinvigorate social citizenship by ensuring that there is an equitable contract between those who receive social welfare support, and those who fund it through the taxation system (Osborne, 2010). Here, there is a shift from viewing the core relationship as between the state and its citizens to a crude focus on the obligations which the ‘hard working majority’ can reasonably demand from ‘welfare dependents’. In this account, we can begin to see the unpicking of an at least nominally equal relationship between a nation state and its citizen, and instead the construction of differentiated contractual relationships both between individuals and the state, but crucially also between sub-groups of citizens. In this way, benefit claimants start to be seen as owing responsibilities not just to the state, but also to their fellow citizens; those characterised as hard working taxpayers whose engagement in paid employment funds out-of-work benefit receipt. These differentiated contractual relationships can extend the exclusionary potential of social citizenship, as well as increasing the scope for tensions between and among citizens.

Overall, the dominant citizenship narrative from above is premised upon a narrow understanding of paid employment as demarcating the responsible, hard working citizen. Welfare reform is then understood as a tool of social inclusion, holding the promise of lifting ‘passive’ out-of-work benefit claimants out of ‘welfare dependency’ and into the ‘active’ world of paid employment. Before turning to how this dominant citizenship narrative is experienced from below, it is important to briefly introduce the research study on which this article is based.

The lived experiences of welfare reform study

This article draws upon a small-scale qualitative longitudinal study that explored the lived experiences of welfare reform of a small group of out-of-work benefit claimants between 2011 and 2013. In qualitative longitudinal research, time becomes both a vehicle and object of study (Henwood et al., 2012 ), and there was invaluable scope in this instance to track both the presence and absence of change as welfare reforms took effect. Working with two gatekeeper organisations and employing purposive sampling, an initial sample of 22 individuals were interviewed, all of whom were affected by welfare reforms introduced by the 2010-15 Westminster Coalition. The sample was selected to include disabled people being migrated from Incapacity Benefit onto Employment and Support Allowance, single parents affected by a lowering of the age of their youngest child at which point they were moved onto Jobseeker’s Allowance, and young jobseekers engaging with the reformed conditionality and sanctions regime. The study included both men and women, a range of ages, and representatives from minority ethnic communities.

The study was based in Leeds, a post-industrial city with areas of high deprivation as well as areas of considerable wealth. Of the 22 participants initially interviewed, a smaller sample of 15 was selected to follow longitudinally on the basis of those most likely to experience welfare reforms during the research period. These 15 were interviewed a further two times between 2011 and 2013. Of the 15 followed over time, contact was lost with just one participant between the second and third interviews. The interview data was analysed thematically and by cases, with cross-sectional analysis of overarching themes, and longitudinal analysis of individual participants, as well as an analysis of the iteration between the two. The research generated rich, thick description regarding lived experiences of welfare reform and it is to a discussion of these findings, as they relate to social citizenship, that this article now turns.

Social rights of citizenship re-examined

TH Marshall defined the social rights of citizenship in both maximalist and minimalist terms as

…the whole range [of social rights] from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security, to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the civilized life according to the standards prevailing in society (Marshall, 1950, p.8).

In this study, it was possible to explore what ‘getting by’ on benefits entailed and the contemporary social rights provided by the social security granted to out-of-work benefit claimants. What was particularly notable was the extent to which those living on out-of-work benefits were forced to actively manage on a very low-income, with going without or having to make difficult choices (such as to heat or eat) very common, something which is frequently found in the wider empirical research evidence (Daly and Kelly, 2015; Lansley and Mack, 2015). A narrative of going without and making do dominated (ref removed for peer review):

[earlier] this year I needed underwear so I didn’t pay my gas and electric that fortnight. And I spent it on underwear. (Cath, Disability Benefit(s) Claimant, (DBC), W1[[1]](#footnote-1)

 [looking after my son is] scary sometimes, especially when I can’t really afford to feed us

 Interviewer: And what do you do in those kinds of situations?

Just make the best of it that you can. Give him the food and make sure he’s all right first. (Karen, Single Parent (SP), W1[[2]](#footnote-2)

The parents in the study frequently spoke of going without so that their children could be well cared for, and there were also instances of participants shoplifting for basic necessities.

A few week ago, I only had six or eight pounds…I were in Asda just getting a couple of bits for the weekend, for when [daughter] come, and I spoke to her on the phone and she said ‘dad, oh will you get me some cheese?’ But cheese is like, it can be like £2 a block and that, so I pinched it because I thought she wanted it but I couldn’t afford to buy it. (James, Young Jobseeker (YJS), W1)

Following people longitudinally, as welfare reforms took effect, it was possible to track the struggle to get by over time, and to observe how a continued effort to manage on a very low-income sometimes had a negative effect on individuals’ mental health and capacity to cope with a day-to-day life in poverty. Cath, who was on benefits throughout the study, described how she struggled with her ongoing poverty and the constant need to seek out bargains and make difficult choices over how to spend her limited income:

I just don’t want to spend the rest of my life struggling. I’ve struggled all my life [crying]. (DBC, W2)

Individuals described a chronic state of insecurity and uncertainty linked to ongoing welfare reform, as well as an associated fear about what the future might bring in terms of further benefit changes and the consequences of chronic poverty. This was particularly marked for the disability benefit claimants in the study, who were often waiting for the outcomes of benefit reassessments, or anticipating a future reassessment, which often came soon after their eligibility had been decided.

It puts a lot of stress on [me]…I think about it all the time…And I’m not my own judge and jury, so what I’m eligible for…it’s in somebody else’s hands. So…you think what are you going to do? (Jim, DBC, W1)

[I’m] frightened. Frightened because if I’m going to be any worse off I might as well move onto a park bench. Where do you go from here? (Cath, DBC, W1)

The consequences of the extended welfare conditionality regime and the increased length and severity of sanctions also means that some individuals are having their social rights of citizenship completely curtailed, where they are assessed as failing to comply with the conditions of social welfare receipt. This was a common occurrence for Adrian, who was sanctioned numerous times during the course of the study. While often disputing the reasons for his sanctions, or being unclear as to why a sanction had been deemed appropriate, Adrian vividly illustrated the negative impacts of the loss of income. He described how being unable to eat properly left him ‘skinny and everything, [I] look proper ill’ (W1), and, in his second interview, after being on a sanction for three months explained:

I’ve lost a lot of weight because of it. That’s really put me down…I’m having like one, one and a half meals a day. (W2)

In an effort to manage while being sanctioned, Adrian would visit food banks, occasionally shoplift food and volunteered at a homeless hostel where he was provided with free meals. Reflecting on the impact of sanctions in his final interview, Adrian concluded:

Say my life in the last year and a half, everything that’s gone on. If I just take everything out that’s gone on apart from the benefits, the benefits issue and just leave that there. I’d call it hell. (W3)

The lived experiences of poverty and welfare reform in the UK today are a stark illustration of the extent to which so many of those whom poverty directly affects are being denied even Marshall’s more minimalist definition of social rights, a ‘modicum of economic welfare and security’ (1950, p. 8).

The consequences of chronic poverty inevitably negatively affect individuals’ capacity to participate in everyday life and society, with a lack of income serving as a direct barrier to various forms of engagement and participation (Dean and Melrose, 1999; Gaventa, 2002; Lister, 1990; Lister, 2004). Cath described how she felt unable to attend a mental health support group as it met at the local museum café:

I know I bang on about money but, with meeting in a place where a cup of tea’s £1.75. I want a hundred tea bags and two pints of milk for that. (DBC, W1)

Family occasions, meals out and Christmas were often associated with dread, anxiety and worry, given the extra expenditure they entailed. Participants often viewed Christmas and birthdays as particular flash points, when the pressure to buy presents and cook special meals became unmanageable:

It’s horrible [thinking about Christmas]. I’m not looking forward to Christmas this year at all. I’m really not because I haven’t got any money to get anyone anything…But I just don’t like the thought of it being Christmas and not [being able to] actually give them [gifts]. (Sharon, DBC, W2)

The dread participants commonly associated with Christmas signifies the citizenship exclusion of many of those living in poverty. The participants in this study felt excluded by their poverty and inability to fully participate in the material consumption which contemporary celebrations of Christmas entail.

The findings from this study suggest that the social rights of citizenship have become increasingly precarious and today provide relatively little in terms of financial security and resources to out-of-work benefit claimants, making it increasingly difficult for such individuals to obtain an ‘equality of status’ with their fellow citizens, reinforcing findings from earlier studies concerning the exclusion and second class citizenship status of those living in poverty (Dean and Melrose, 1999; Lister, 1990). The growth in voluntary, charitable forms of welfare provision, such as food banks, is indicative of the extent to which formal social rights today fail to provide the basic necessities for so many of Briton’s citizens. The social rights of citizenship are – of course – today also increasingly conditional on state-defined activities.

Welfare conditionality and conditioning

Over recent years, welfare conditionality has become *the* policy tool to encourage, enable and ultimately compel individuals to behave as responsible, hard working citizens, most often by engaging in the formal labour market. The participants in this study lived with the day-to-day consequences of ‘ubiquitous conditionality’ (Dwyer and Wright, 2014), and experienced the impact of particular welfare reforms designed to incorporate more and more of the ‘inactive welfare dependant’ population into the conditionality regime. While the full range of responses to conditionality cannot be reported here, it is vital to highlight some key themes and findings of particular relevance to social citizenship and questions of in/exclusion. Importantly, for many of the participants, conditionality was experienced as a controlling, paternalistic intervention, which left them feeling dehumanised, with their own societal contributions devalued and undermined.

Susan, a single parent, described how she felt the benefit system operated:

It’s not a good thing to see us [claimants]. It’s like if I gave you food and I had to keep on telling you; ‘you don’t eat it like that, I’ll just give you that amount’. I don’t like it. (SP, W2)

Her emphasis on the social control implicit in the conditionality regime was shared by James:

It’s like when you’re on benefits, they’re controlling what you do and when you do them. You haven’t got your own mind, you’ve got to do everything by what they say. And sometimes you don’t want to. (YJS, W1)

Commenting on the nineteenth century poor laws, T H Marshall observed:

the Poor Law treated the claims of the poor, not as an integral part of the rights of the citizen, but as an alternative to them – as claims which could be met only if the claimants ceased to be citizens in any true sense of the word. (1950, p. 15)

Susan and James’ association of benefit claiming with a dehumanising and alienating process suggest that TH Marshall’s description of the poor laws has a clear contemporary relevance. Under the poor laws and again today, accepting state support requires individuals to forgo their rights to full citizenship status. Whether explicitly under the poor laws or more tacitly and implicitly under the conditionality and sanctions regime today, state support is tied to a reduction in individual freedom and liberty, and the treatment of claimants as belonging to deficit populations whose behaviour is deemed to require paternalistic interventions, and social control and correction. Ironically, of course, these interventions are justified as tools of eventual social and citizenship inclusion (Levitas, 1998), drawing upon republican ideas of citizenship as a practice, in this case narrowly equated with participation in the formal labour market.

In this study, there were also occasions where the conditional obligations the government were seeking to impose on claimants interfered with and compromised the duty and obligations individuals felt as parents, with this a notable example of how conditionality can undermine individuals’ capacity to make their own choices about what being a ‘good citizen’ entails. James described being forced to attend Work Programme appointments, even when these clashed with legal appointments relating to his battle to become residential parent for his seven year old daughter:

I believe going to court for [my daughter], and fighting that case, that is really important to me and I need to go there before I go to [Work Programme], so they should take that sort of thing into consideration instead of just saying, ‘Listen, that’s your appointment, if you don’t turn up, skip’… That’s how they approach it. (YJS, W3)

However, at the same time as there was considerable resistance noted to conditionality, there were also instances where participants implicitly welcomed it, suggesting that the compulsion and support might help in their efforts to secure paid employment. Karen described how she felt both excited and frightened about being moved onto JSA and the extra conditions this would involve:

It’s good to get out of the house, not to be stuck at home all day, but at the same time I’m scared to get out there and do it all again…It’s going to push me to get a job, but at the same time it’s pushing me too fast. (SP, W2)

While conditionality was met with mixed reactions, what was often apparent was how far individuals were self-governing as they sought to secure paid employment, where it was a realistic objective. Indeed, participants frequently spoke about the efforts they were taking to find work, and how these efforts were framed by and partially driven by a desire to leave reliance on benefits behind, and the stigma with which this was associated. Participants often accepted exploitative and badly paid jobs, as they argued these were preferable to being on out-of-work benefits. Josh was employed at a corner shop on a fixed rate of pay of £80 per week for 35 hours work. He accepted this was substantially less than he was entitled to on the national minimum wage but reflected:

It’s all I can get at the minute. I can’t seem to find anywhere else. I keep applying and nowhere seems to want me so I’ll take what I can get really. (YJS, W3)

Showing an internalisation of the stigma of benefit receipt, Sam described how she was desperate to find a job so she could stop feeling like a ‘scrounger’ (ref removed for peer review). Sam described herself as a ‘scrounger’ in two of the three interviews, reflecting an internalisation of the dominant narrative that problematises ‘welfare’ and those who rely upon it. After the study had finished, Sam did manage to find a job in retail with just 12 hours work guaranteed per week. The income she received did not enable her to escape poverty, and she remained reliant on social welfare via Housing Benefit. When she spoke to the researcher in 2015, she was still in paid employment but considering going to a food bank as she was struggling on the income she received. She was trying to avoid using the food bank, however, as she felt ashamed at the prospect of having to rely on this form of charitable provision.

Arguably, there is emerging evidence of a shift from conditionality to conditioning (Dwyer and Ellison, 2009), such that individuals are self-governing, even engaging in DIY social policy (Klein and Millar, 1995) as they seek to fulfil the contemporary requirements of the dutiful citizen. Certainly, there was considerable evidence of individuals’ internalising the stigma of benefits receipt , and then actively seeking to leave benefits and find paid employment, with the threat of sanctions and conditionality a perhaps unnecessary additional spur. As Sophie, a single parent who was migrated from Income Support onto JSA, put it when reflecting on the transition:

 [It’s made] no difference because I were looking for work before anyway. (W3)

There is a need for more policy and academic attention directed towards the ways in which conditionality and conditioning mesh together, and there is particular scope to explore how far and in what ways benefits stigma is here actually operating as a tool of governance that promotes and encourages individuals to behave in ways that the state would like and has come to expect (Tyler, 2014a). In particular, there is a need to explore whether the rationale for conditionality is undermined by the signs of a ‘welfare conditioning’ in how individuals themselves live with and respond to their reliance on out-of-work benefits. There is also scope for new research which more fully engages with the ways in which conditionality can actually undermine individuals’ capacity to be self-governing individuals, given the narrow and strict conditions it so often imposes. Finally, it will be important to try and locate the root of any such ‘welfare conditioning’ more precisely: particularly over whether and how far individuals are orientating themselves towards paid employment because of the power and persuasiveness of government rhetoric and the stigma associated with benefits receipt, or whether instead this is simply reflective of their own work-related aspirations and the importance they themselves attach to engagement in the formal labour market.

Discussion and conclusion

This article has explored the ways in which social citizenship currently operates for those reliant on out-of-work benefits. In common with previous studies (Dean and Melrose, 1999; Dwyer, 2010; Lister, 1990), it has illustrated the extent to which poverty and benefit receipt are associated with a fractured citizenship status, with those not in paid employment seen as failing to fulfil the central responsibility of the dutiful citizen. There is a wealth of evidence of the ways in which poverty serves to exclude individuals from participating in society (Daly and Kelly, 2015; Dean and Melrose, 1999; Lister, 1990), and this has also been illustrated in this paper, which has further explored the extent to which the most recent reforms are creating pervasive insecurity, and denying to so many even a ‘modicum of economic welfare and security’ (Marshall, 1950).

The dominant citizenship narrative from above suggests that welfare reform and the expansion and intensification of conditionality will help deliver social inclusion (and thus full citizenship) for those currently reliant on out-of-work benefits, characterising compulsion and conditions as paternalistic tools which will help and support individuals to transform their own lives and become independent, dutiful, hardworking citizens. What Levitas (1998) describes as a social integrationist discourse here operates to suggest that welfare reform will bring social inclusion via measures to ensure individuals engage in the formal labour market. This discourse then allows David Cameron to suggest that the broader reform approach is part of steps to deliver security for all, an argument that completely neglects the extent to which the denial and fracturing of the social rights of citizenship are instead leading to a ‘normalization of social insecurity’ (Wacquant, 2010), with clear echoes between what is happening in the UK and what has occurred in the USA in recent years.

In the current context, citizenship is increasingly operating as a form of social control, a subversion of its original emancipatory intent (Clarke, 2005; Flint, 2009; Tyler, 2010). Conditionality, compulsion, and a pervasive benefits stigma work together to create a regime of governance which problematises, abjectifies and then seeks to correct the behaviours of certain groups within society, with out-of-work benefit claimants a particular target (Tyler, 2014b). This research found a particular predominance of individuals critiquing their own benefit claiming behaviours and actively seeking to correct this by seeking paid employment, where it was a realistic option (and not always with success) (ref removed for peer review) . There is therefore a need to more fully explore the extent to which conditionality now operates alongside a form of conditioning (Dwyer and Ellison, 2009), where a climate emerges from within which individuals themselves engage in DIY social policy (Klein and Millar, 1995) as they seek to fulfil the contemporary requirements of the dutiful citizen. The ways in which such a conditioning can be particularly difficult for those who are simply unable to participate in paid employment – for example, due to caring responsibilities or health issues and/or impairments – and the consequences of this for affected individuals would also merit further attention.

Finally, there is a pressing need to reconsider the role that social citizenship can play in calls for more meaningful societal inclusion, and in efforts to ensure that all of society is granted a degree of security, something which Cameron may himself proclaim to aspire to, but which his policies do not in fact seem to deliver. If social citizenship’s emancipatory potential is to be reclaimed, which effectively requires a challenge to its current operation as a form of governmental societal control, it will be vital to first reanimate and rethink what a more progressive and socially democratic conceptualisation of citizenship might entail. Fundamental to this would be an emphasis on social security, understood as a challenge and corrective to the pervasive insecurity that currently predominates for so many, alongside a focus on participation rights, which can be effectively added to TH Marshall’s social, political and civil rights (Gaventa, 2002; Lister, 1998; Marshall, 1950). Access to resources that enable individuals to feel able to participate in their community and in society are critical if citizenship is to deliver a meaningful status (Gaventa, 2002; Lister, 2003). Further, academics, campaigners and politicians all need to pay far more attention to the everyday worlds of citizenship, perhaps in an effort to develop what Duffy describes as a notion of ‘everyday citizenship’ (Duffy, 2016), which is grounded in real human experiences and aspirations, rather than empty rhetoric. Much of social citizenship’s conceptual power lies in the fact that it is ‘imparfaite’ and unfinished (Balibar, 2001 cited in Clarke et al., 2014). It is then the responsibility of academics to shine a critical lens on the ways in which it is being co-opted from above as a tool of governance, but also how it is lived and experienced from below, while also exploring how it might be revisioned in ways which could deliver greater social inclusion and solidarity for all.

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1. W1 denotes first wave of interviews, W2 second wave, and W3 third wave [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)