Reciprocity schemes in unemployment regulation policies: Towards a pluralistic citizenship of Marginalisation?

CATTACIN, Sandro, TATTINI, Veronique

Abstract
Recent developments in unemployment regulation policies indicate that universal treatment of social welfare recipients is increasingly being replaced by selective programmes which are characterised by lower subsidies and the introduction of reciprocity in social welfare. Such programmes generally introduce the condition that people who benefit from social assistance perform some kind of work in return. These tendencies have important consequences on the organisation of our welfare society. We believe that the application of schemes based on selectivity and reciprocity to a significant portion of the population undermines the basic characteristics of the Welfare State, i.e. class stabilisation policies and the universal basis of treatment. This article will discuss these tendencies in the light of the workfare debate. It proposes to transform these measures into unconditional ones, sustained by universal basic income schemes.

Reference

DOI: 10.1080/13621029708420664
Reciprocity schemes in unemployment regulation policies: Towards a pluralistic citizenship of Marginalisation?

Sandro Cattacin a; Veronique Tattini b

a Maitre-assistant at the Department of Political Science, University of Geneva, Geneva 4, Switzerland
b Chargé de cours at the Institut for Social Work, University of Fribourg, Switzerland
c Research Assistant at the Department of Political Science, University of Geneva, Geneva 4, Switzerland

Online Publication Date: 01 November 1997

To cite this Article Cattacin, Sandro and Tattini, Veronique(1997)'Reciprocity schemes in unemployment regulation policies: Towards a pluralistic citizenship of Marginalisation?', Citizenship Studies,1:3,351 — 364

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/13621029708420664
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13621029708420664

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE
Reciprocity Schemes in Unemployment Regulation Policies: Towards a Pluralistic Citizenship of Marginalisation?

SANDRO CATTACIN and VÉRONIQUE TATTINI

Recent developments in unemployment regulation policies indicate that universal treatment of social welfare recipients is increasingly being replaced by selective programmes which are characterised by lower subsidies and the introduction of reciprocity in social welfare. Such programmes generally introduce the condition that people who benefit from social assistance perform some kind of work in return. These tendencies have important consequences on the organisation of our welfare society. We believe that the application of schemes based on selectivity and reciprocity to a significant portion of the population undermines the basic characteristics of the Welfare State, i.e. class stabilisation policies and the universal basis of treatment. This article will discuss these tendencies in the light of the workfare debate. It proposes to transform these measures into unconditional ones, sustained by universal basic income schemes.

Introduction

In the recent debates on the reorganisation of the Welfare State in many western countries and the division of tasks between public and private actors in a welfare society (or in welfare pluralism—see Evers, 1993), questions about citizenship frequently arise. They are most frequently put forward by left-wing critics who underline the dangerous consequences of increased restrictions on the possibility for individuals to act in a free society. Particular concern arises from a tendency which Ralf Dahrendorf describes as the Two-Thirds Society, where the excluded will systematically be placed in the minority within the political process by a majority which controls welfare and enjoys a stable social status. At the same time, right-wing parties—in particular conservatives—worry about the effects of
social entitlements on the ‘privileged class’ of recipients who are not interested in leaving a situation in which their material needs are provided for. This view criticises welfare programmes for creating social dependency in the care of a paternalistic Welfare State, and for breeding ‘demotivation’ (Mead, 1986). In this article we will analyse these arguments in the following manner. In the first step, we will try to illustrate the development of social entitlements and social citizenship as an extension of civic and political ones, through a focus on the treatment of the social consequences of unemployment. In particular, we will observe that recent developments in unemployment regulation policies indicate that the universal treatment of social welfare recipients is increasingly being replaced by selective programmes which are characterised, first, by lower subsidies compared to the 1970s and 1980s and, second, by the introduction of reciprocity schemes in social welfare. These require people who benefit from social assistance to perform some kind of work in return.

In a second step, we will discuss the consequences of such tendencies, and in particular the logic of ‘workfare’, on citizenship. More precisely, we will analyse the resulting transformation in the organisation of welfare. We consider the introduction of reciprocity schemes encompassing a significant part of the population to undermine the basic characteristics of the western Welfare State, that is class stabilisation policies and the universal basis of treatment, and hence social citizenship. Indeed, the generalisation of this type of social benefit programme introduces different forms of citizenship—a kind of pluralistic citizenship of marginalisation.

The Development of Social Citizenship in Modern Welfare States

It is not possible to speak about citizenship without addressing its history and evolution. For the purposes of this article, Thomas H. Marshall provides a good analysis which may be used as an opposed position compared to the arguments put forward to justify a more selective Welfare State and, in particular, workfare programmes. Marshall provides a universal position regarding citizenship that is opposed to the selectivity of access to social citizenship in new welfare programmes and reconstructs its development. We will briefly follow Marshall’s steps and then, in the second part of the article, present his position compared to a particularistic vision of citizenship.

Civil and Political Right as Prior to Social Rights

Citizenship, in Marshall’s sense, is divided into three parts which he calls civil, political and social. In the economic sphere, the basic civil right to work, that is to say, the right to follow the occupation of one’s choice in the place of one’s choice, had been denied by both statute and custom; this premise was replaced by the new assumption that such restrictions were an offence against the agent’s liberty and a menace to the prosperity of the nation (Marshall, 1965, p. 82). In this sense, forcing a person to work violates his or her civil rights. An obligation can only be integrated into a system of slavery or a simple system of obligations
which requires a personal contribution in return for a social benefit, as was the case in Renaissance Europe. As Robert Castel points out:

*Du point de vue institutionnel, il [l’enfermement] s’inscrit dans le prolongement des formes précédentes d’intervention assistancielle. Par exemple, à Lyon, l’Aumônerie générale, une des réalisation les plus accomplies des politiques municipales de la Renaissance, enferme dès la fin du xvième siècle des ‘mendians incorrigible’ dans une tour, et la ville fonde dès 1614 l’hôpital Saint-Laurent, dont le règlement combine le travail et les prières pour l’amendement des mendians. Même évolution en Angleterre, où le Bridewell de Londres, modèle des *workhouses*, est fondé en 1547. À Amsterdam, le Rasphaus, à la même époque, obéit aux mêmes principes. Le fait que la fondation des Hôpitaux généraux soit commandée par le pouvoir royal ne marque pas non plus une rupture significative par rapport aux politiques antérieures. C’est aux villes et ‘gros bourgs’ qu’il appartient de mettre en œuvre ces mesures, version différente mais homologue de la relation central-local du xvième siècle, lorsque le pouvoir royal s’appuie sur les initiatives municipales pour en commander la généralisation. (Castel, 1995, p. 56)*

In other words, the abolition of the system of workhouses in the case of England represented a step towards a respectful conception of civil rights allowing each person to choose their own occupation without *formal coercion*.

The introduction of *political citizenship* is analysed in empirical studies as the process of ‘democratisation’ (Flora and Alber, 1981). The logic of this process is related to the possibility, through participation rights, to promote majority positions. In this sense, it is one of the most important engines for the formulation of social demands and the institutionalisation of welfare programmes.

By *social dimension*, Marshall means:

*...the whole range 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 life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society. (Marshall, 1965, p. 80)*

Educational systems and social services are closely connected with such a dimension. These entitlements lie at the core of our welfare society and are to be interpreted as a consequence of the granting of civic and political rights. Bernhard Peters argues for the development logic of the Welfare Model:

*Das liberale Modell wird Schritt für Schritt um jeweils zusätzliche Funktionen, Typen von Rechtsbeziehungen und Formen rechtlicher Regelungen erweitert. Das ist, wie erwähnt, keine *historische* oder genetische Reihenfolge, sondern eine logische Abfolge von in gewissem Sinn zunehmend problem trächtigeren Erweiterungen des liberalen Modells. Dabei wird zu bedenken*
Sandro Cattacin and Véronique Tattini

sein, wie diese Erweiterungen auf die Ausgangsstruktur zurückwirken. Es wird sich zeigen, daß die Erweiterung zugleich eine Transformation ist—eine Transformation des Charakters der rechtlichen Assoziation vor allem—welche die ursprüngliche libera le Grundstruktur zwar nicht völlig aufhebt, aber doch berührt. Dies Verhältnis zwischen den liberalen und den neuen sozialstaat lichen Elementen hat möglicherweise problematische Aspekte. (Peters, 1991, p. 74)

Social Rights and Citizenship Before the Twentieth Century

Social measures on a large scale are recent. Until the end of the Middle Ages, the organisation of solidarity was confined to the family or the small community (often depending on a local church).

Beyond this primary solidarity, new elements such as charity, imprisonment for social rehabilitation, followed by the first Poor Laws, group and class solidarities (with the extension of the rules of mediaeval corporations) were introduced well before modern state social programemes (Cattacin, 1997b, p. 3). In England, with the Act of 1834, the Poor Laws were accessible only to those who were not capable of continuing the 'struggle' (because of age or sickness), and to those who gave up and resorted to charity (Marshall, 1965, p. 87). As regards the unemployed, they were treated in the same way as the poor in general, that is, enjoined to resort to charity and forms of self-help.

The minimal social rights that remained from the Poor Laws were detached from the status of citizenship:

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. (Marshall, 1965, p. 87)

This approach persisted up until 1918. Only the claims of the poorest persons were addressed by the first state measures in which social reintegration was linked to the performance of some form of work or another. In this sense, they are the predecessors of workfare programmes as we know them now. As a consequence, we may concur with Marshall that the 19th century was a period in which the foundations of social rights were present, but the principle of social rights was either not definitively recognised or denied to be an integral part of the status of citizenship (Marshall, 1965, p. 87).

A new period began at the end of the nineteenth century. New social rights were gaining ground but other forces were at work as well (a rise in money incomes, direct taxation and mass production for the home market—Marshall, 1965, p. 105).

The Development of Social Rights and the Welfare State

With the spread of social problems a corresponding development in organisational structures is to be seen. Thus we move towards a complex organisation
of solidarity with the state for the most part in Europe turning into a Welfare State (with some differences between countries). The development process of the Welfare State may be described in terms of a substitution of civil society by the state in the production of responses to social problems. Concerning the unemployment regulation, the transformation of the liberal or absolutist state into a Welfare State develops in parallel with the changing status of unemployed persons. This category of material risks was introduced into the social security system by means of insurance schemes against unemployment which were either universalistic or particularistic (Ferrar, 1993). In other words, the poor as a category were divided into two groups: those who would like to work but do not find employment, and all the others, who are relegated to the social assistance system (Alber, 1978).

With this development, the former state in which only the poorest were taken in charge was replaced by a state providing welfare to the middle class (assistance was substituted by a planning policy which took into account the whole population). To be more precise, the usual client of modern day welfare programmes is now, due to the dynamics of democratisation, the working middle class (Cattacin, 1996a, p. 73). Instead of a particularistic treatment of the poor, we find social policies in which the treatment of social welfare recipients is universal. Citizenship now has a single, uniform status providing the foundations of equality. The development of the Welfare State provided solutions to such problems as old age pensions, medical care and unemployment. Such problems mainly concern users who are for the majority of their lives integrated into the economic production process and who contribute to the financing of social security. In other words, we can observe that these measures are primarily geared to those who are integrated into the sphere of work and production. Although the poorest persons have also been beneficiaries of these programmes, the logic of support is geared to a homogeneous population which is socially integrated through family networks, and economically through the work process (Cattacin, 1996a, p. 71; Rosanvallon, 1994). The status of social citizenship, although manifested in the universal treatment of the users, occurs through this integration.

**The Reorganisation of the Welfare State**

At the beginning of the 1970s, the ‘crisis’ of the Welfare State affected both the instruments of the Welfare State and the environment in which it is placed (Cattacin, 1997b, p. 16; Vobruba, 1990). Economic production, which contributed to the welfare of society, began to exclude an ever larger proportion of the population from the sphere of work (Cattacin, 1996a, p. 74). With the crisis symptoms of the Welfare State, the middle class comes under attack: the poorest and richest groups are growing at the expense of the middle class—a fact that destabilises the project of a social policy benefiting the majority. National solidarity, but also the legitimacy of the redistributive project of the Welfare State, are now negatively affected and the growing evolution of the state is increasingly criticised (Cattacin, 1996a, p. 73; Dufourcq, 1994).

As a consequence, the reorganisation of the Welfare State involves a reconsid-
eration, but often also a reduction of social rights. This reorganisation, whereby some people are excluded from the productive sector, often leads to a reduction in social and educational rights, but has more dramatic consequences where the third stage of citizenship has only been parsimoniously applied (Birnbaum, 1996, p. 61) or where Welfare State traditions permit the return to neoliberal models of regulation through a reduction in social benefits (Ferrera, 1996).

In this sense, Marshall's interpretation seems to be too optimistic because he thinks that access to citizenship can prevent growing inequality. Dahrendorf (1988) warns against the 'collapse' of the Welfare State by describing a division between the majority and those who are excluded from the status of citizenship: he distinguishes between non-citizens (immigrants), the persons who are no longer citizens (old people) or not yet citizens (young people), which altogether form an unorganised and unprotected underclass. Even if these categories are problematic, they indicate nevertheless that the rights of social citizenship are, to varying degrees, affected by the restructuring of the market with its consequences on labour supply (Birnbaum, 1996, p. 61).

There are two vanguards in this attack against the universal basis of social citizenship: the United States (Artigot, 1997) and Britain (Pierson, 1994, p. 105f), for example, illustrate the tendency to reduce social benefits in the case of unemployment. This means that people without work are put under additional pressure by insufficient economic support from the state or insurance schemes. France, with the latest revisions of the RMI-instrument (Revenu Minimum d'Insertion; see Wuhl, 1996) or certain Swiss cantons (Fattebert and Mach, 1996) illustrate the second tendency of a reinforced selectivity in a context of regulation based on reciprocity schemes. In fact, in these contexts, new forms of social benefits were introduced in connection with an 'insertion contract'. This contract defines a set of obligations in the form of work or requalification efforts to be undertaken by the recipient of social benefits, under the supervision of the responsible state agency. With this system, a form of 'workfare'3 is introduced, inducing unemployed people to work in return for social benefits. In the next section we will discuss, in the light of the transformation of social citizenship, the consequences of the introduction of such forms of Welfare State programmes, in particular 'workfare' programmes.

Towards a Pluralistic Citizenship of Marginalisation?

Marshall (1965) argued that social entitlements contribute to the construction of a comprehensive political citizenship. He analysed the process of political integration of the working class in England and concluded that the existing profound class demarcation risked producing not only significant inequalities with respect to the possibility of consuming common cultural goods, but also that, in the long term, it undermined the ability to participate in the destiny of England as a whole. The class factor explained inequality of access to important political and social positions thereby reinforcing the power of the powerholder, and the powerlessness of the working class. In Marshall's view, the limited availability of resources and the limited access to education for the working class was responsible for this situation. As a remedy, Marshall proposed to
extend the system of social entitlements by reinforcing the Welfare State, and especially the provision of material benefits to the working class, but also through increased access to education, health care, and social security programmes. In other words, the extension of social entitlements on a universalistic basis would create the conditions of political and social citizenship which would allow for the full integration of the working class in England. For Will Kymlicka (quoting Marshall):

[b]ased on this example of the English working class, Marshall developed a theory about the integrative function of citizenship rights. He believed that the equal rights of citizenship would help promote national integration for previously excluded groups. These rights would generate a 'direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession'. (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 180)

Indeed, the development of our welfare society justifies this position. For at least 100 years they have underpinned a project aimed at the integration of the working class. As Bismarck's reforms exemplify in a paradigmatic way, the Welfare State was even conceived of as a political project whose goal was the integration of the working class in order to prevent revolutionary movements (Alber, 1982).

Lawrence Mead (1986), in a very different context such as that of the United States, replies to these arguments in a very stimulating way. He holds that a universalistic conception of social entitlements yields, on the contrary, social exclusion. His argument is a simple one and deals with the fact that social programmes are geared to status maintenance. This implies that, for example, unemployment does not result in a drop in status, because social benefit programmes have the means to stabilise the economic situation of the unemployed. Under Marshall's logic, it is precisely this economic support that guarantees not only material survival, but the possibility of a full citizenship as well. Within Mead's perspective, economic stabilisation creates, on the contrary, social dependence—first among welfare recipients, then in society as a whole. Social maintenance programmes generate spheres of society which are in some sense protected, but are also detached from the economic and social sphere. This 'trap' (Van Parijs, 1996) does not stimulate people to look for work—because of its limited advantages compared to that derived from benefits—and creates a ghetto. It is a trap because the longer a person lives in this 'sphere of exclusion' the greater is the difficulty in successfully emerging from it. Skills become obsolete and motivation dwindles. These arguments lead Mead to suggest, in the place of maintenance programmes, measures which connect the granting of benefits to some effort in return, in the form of work for the benefit of the community as a whole. Such measures force people into reinsertion, and powerfully enhance the possibility to pursue a normal working life. Skills are preserved or new skills are learned, and it is possible to think, as Mead does, that within a short period, the unemployed will, through work, find their way out of the sphere of exclusion.

These 'workfare' programmes, which have been experimented in different
countries, build on a philosophical conception of human beings which differs from the Marshallian vision. In the first case, it is assumed that the agents' goal is to survive economically without undue exertions. Mead considers many people make little effort to reintegrate into the sphere of work and production precisely because social programmes guarantee their means of existence. In his view, people will not develop autonomous strategies to reconstruct their social base unless they are strongly induced to do so. In this light, Mead described the context of the United States:

These criticisms have weight, but mainly in ways their makers do not intend. Washington does give too much to the poor—in the sense of benefits given as entitlements. It also gives too little—in the sense of meaningful obligations to go along with the benefits. What undermines the economy is not so much the burden on the private sector as the message government programs have given that hard work in available jobs is no longer required of Americans. The main problem with the Welfare State is not its size but its permissiveness, a characteristic that both liberals and conservatives seem to take for granted. The challenge to Welfare Statesmanship is not so much to change the extent of benefits as to couple them with serious work and other obligations that would encourage functioning and thus promote the integration of recipients. The goal must be to create for recipients inside the Welfare State the same balance of support and expectation that other Americans face outside it, as they work to support themselves and meet the other demands of society. (Mead, 1986, p. 3f)

In contrast, under Marshall's conception, individuals must be liberated from the problem of economic survival as a precondition for achieving full citizenship. These two visions conceal two conceptions of a welfare society. Mead's conception is built on a construction of welfare assuming individualistic behaviour. Marshall constructs his vision of a welfare society on the basis of universal entitlements.

The only starting point Marshall and Mead have in common is related to the role of the Welfare State, which constrains or liberates. In this sense both perspectives are removed from the minimal state programme as put forward, for example, by Nozick (1974), but also from the communitarian point of view which holds that the state only has to guarantee the realisation of community-based welfare (for example MacIntyre, 1981). In fact, the state has a role to play in both visions. However, it is paternalistic in Mead's model and although certainly more open, heavily tutorial in that of Marshall.

The limits to the argument, found in both versions are obvious: in reality, citizens are neither parasites nor saints. As regards the problem of exclusion, they are also multifaceted. In Marshall's view, the problem of exclusion concerns not a plurality of ways of life, but the numerically dominant one, namely that of the working class. In this sense, he identifies important hurdles preventing this social class from participating and having weight in the political process. But the problem of exclusion is not only a matter of social class. It is a problem
Reciprocity Schemes in Unemployment Regulation Policies

linked to the transformation of the labour market, which creates a classless group of people that cannot be identified with the working class (Cattacin, 1997b). The chance of finding work in the competitive labour market is, in other words, independent of the social entitlements delivered for the excluded. In this sense, we can argue that a universalistic citizenship does not resolve the problem of social integration (Cattacin, 1996a) when it is not related to active programmes of reinsertion which allow for the self-realisation of the individual and, consequently, his or her political expression.

In Mead’s vision, political participation is not really the problem. The problem is the exclusion of a part of society from the chance to be reintegrated into the market. But his argument fails when he connects this observation with the necessity of workfare. The compulsory character of the measure actually risks undermining the basis of a society built, in the course of over a century, on the idea of undiscriminated assistance to the disenfranchised. If we can, with Mauss (1950, p. 260f), interpret the creation of modern welfare society as an institutionalisation of the ‘reciprocity of the gift exchange’ on a liberal and democratically controlled level (Offe and Heinze, 1986, p. 488), then we are confronted, in the spread of workfare, with nothing less than the deinstitutionalisation of the Welfare State. To be clear, the Welfare State and its programmes were not only an answer to a growing awareness of the equality principle (Pellicani, 1976) framed in terms of social rights, but were also a response to the consequences of industrialisation and urbanisation. Such processes have profoundly altered social equilibria through a change in social structures and solidarity based on the extended family basis. In their place we find, first, an eradication of traditions and, second, a recomposition of the family on a smaller scale (the industrial family) thereby replacing the extended family. The social construction of solidarity, based on primary reciprocity, faced a crisis induced by the sheer proliferation of problems to be addressed. The family structure was too weak to afford sufficient support, while no other social institution was properly prepared to offer solutions to alleviate this growing social burden.

It was principally due to a dramatic increase in social problems during the nineteenth century that the labour movement’s self-help organisations, along with the first forms of the Welfare State, began to construct a serious societal alternative to the family, in the form of insurance schemes and welfare programmes. The institutionalisation of solidarity in a (private or public) system of social insurance was, in other words, an answer to the social complexity that had caused the collapse of the old solidarity structure based on the extended peasant family. Solidarity based on personal reciprocity schemes was recreated in an abstract form through the institutions of welfare society. This led to an enlargement of the chances and options of people living in systems regulated by an institutionalised and legitimised solidarity.

The recent changes in the social structure of our own societies reflect—in the dramatic fractures it creates—a crisis akin to the pauperisation process of the nineteenth century. In this sense, Mead’s question of how to reconstruct a new solidarity is well taken. The pluralisation and atomisation of our society, as well as the growing breakdowns in social structure, have led to a radical questioning
of the Welfare State and its redistributive functions. It is in particular the middle class who is paying, in relative terms, most of the cost of this economic restructuring; hence, it no longer agrees with the redistributive goals of the state. In contrast to Mead's opinion, we consider that a return to primary reciprocity concepts (as found in families, for example) through workfare programmes, reinforces, rather than curbs, tendencies towards desolidarisation. They create a twofold impression—among the general public, that the persons included in reciprocity schemes are potential 'parasites' and, among the recipients, that they are being punished for not finding work. The two social interpretations lead to the creation, on the one hand, of a boundary line between the integrated and the people who should be integrated. On the other hand, more than the material burden itself, it intensifies the psychological pressure on people doing something compulsory in return for social benefits.

The reintroduction of compulsory workfare, along the lines of the English workhouses, appears to be more than a mere integration measure but rather the creation of a symbolic social act. The compensation is not linked materially to society as a whole and is perceived as unfair. Only the acknowledgement that in a society based on competition and market exchange, subsidies are not simply handed out for free, will create a legitimacy for social benefits. This Maussian act is, in this sense, a deinstitutionalisation of the Welfare State as it returns to a symbolism which has been secularised in unconditional social entitlements. But the consequences are not solely symbolic. The introduction of compulsory workfare society as a whole and reinforces fractures between classes and social groups. Contrary to the exchange of gifts in the Maussian view, working in return for social benefits cannot create society—in the sense of solidarity in a nation—because it is personal in an impersonal context. Personal, because the individual is directly affected and is denied an exit option. Impersonal, because the controllers of the exchange are not themselves interested in the transaction and do not need to perform a reciprocal act, because their actions are dictated by bureaucratic rules which may be enforced, for example, by the director of a state agency. The controller reacts to, or contracts with, the claimant who may be willing to work in return for social benefits. The symbolic act is constructed in a systemic environment of social control and cannot be interpreted by the participants of workfare programmes as an exchange constructed on solidarity principles (Offe and Heinze, 1986, p. 486), but only as a form of punishment. As for prisons, programmes based on reciprocity schemes create forms of material returns in a non-personal, symbolic context—in other words it is the exact opposite of an exchange of gifts which creates a symbolic act between persons in a personal context. And yet it is precisely this act, absent from workfare programmes, which would create social bonds through mutual dependency. Reciprocity remains abstract and cannot create a new solidarity.

This is why the introduction of reciprocity schemes must be interpreted as an act conflicting with civil and, in part, political rights, because these rights are undermined by the social inequality introduced by this system. As a result of the obligation to work which is built into workfare programmes, agents return to a dependency situation that does not respect their autonomy as free members of a nation (Forst 1994, p. 227). In this manner, the possibility of recognising
Reciprocity Schemes in Unemployment Regulation Policies

oneself as a full member of society—both from a personal and societal point of view—is violated, or, in Michael Walzer's words, the 'moral band' constructed on unconditional social entitlements (Walzer, 1983) risks being breached.

In Marshall's as well as Mead's view, we have two aspects of integration: a political and an economic one, each of which have different implications. This is not unimportant, as it goes a long way in explaining the different proposals. From our point of view, the two objectives are in contradiction with each other, as clearly exemplified by the positions of the two authors. If we suppose that the social entitlement guarantees political integration, but that social entitlements without compensation generate social exclusion, each option has only a limited capacity to ensure full citizenship. But how might it be possible to overcome the limitations of these analyses? Or, put in other terms, is there a construction of welfare that does not create dependency or diminished responsibility?

We consider that a way out can be found through the combination, at a 'lower' level, of liberty argument presented by Marshall and of the reciprocity claim put forward by Mead. It is important that the means to survive in a modern society are granted in an unconditional way. Only this unconditionally allows for both the fair treatment of people and for the possibility for individuals to establish their personal means of self-realisation in society. By taking this for granted—through, for example, a universal basic income as defended by Ferry (1995) or Van Parijs (1995)—our society may request concrete efforts at integration on the part of the people it subsidises. However, given the impossibility of integrating all the disenfranchised into the competitive market, this must also be conceived as including the non-market sphere (Cattacin and Vitali, 1997). Such an approach allows for more fluid boundaries between salaried work and voluntary action, between profit-oriented activities and non-profit ones. In this sense, all activities are of interest to society—from child care to the management of firms—and it is not the market value of an activity which determines their social utility, but its general contribution to the reproduction of society.

Clearly, not everyone is capable of developing autonomous initiatives. Hence, it is important that state agencies or non-profit organisations provide integration programmes—but they have to operate on a voluntary basis, because this is the only element which guarantees the motivation to integrate. If motivation is missing, all integration efforts are in vain. And motivation is only sincere when people can choose between an integration programme and other activities, secure in the knowledge that their basic needs will be met.

As we have argued here, we believe that the current tendency to introduce forms of compulsory programmes in order to fight unemployment and exclusion seems a poor answer to the real problem of a certain overtaxing of universalistic entitlements in welfare societies. With reciprocity schemes, we risk introducing nothing other than a differentiation between groups of citizens: on the one hand, employees with stable contracts; on the other hand, a multiplicity of precarious situations oscillating between unemployment and forms of flexible and unstable employment. We perceive in this tendency the introduction of a multifaceted social citizenship, with the separate treatment of people living on the edges of the market and welfare. This results in the reinforcement of inequalities in a given society, thereby creating a pluralism of citizenships, including all forms of
marginalisation (such as those faced by immigrants, those excluded from the labour market or, simply, people in assistance programmes) each with its specific set of entitlements. If this tendency is confirmed in the coming years, this will be much more a reflection of the growing individualism in our societies (Castel, 1995, p. 462), a feature which requires a different response, than an answer to our social problems.

This analysis had led us to an intermediate position between universalistic claims to liberty and workfare programmes. As we have argued, the modernisation of our welfare society, if it is to be achieved, will not be accomplished by a deinstitutionalisation of the Welfare State, but by looking for more intelligent ways to cope with social problems. Only on the basis of a universal guarantee of survival is it possible to develop specific integration programmes—and to modernise our social security system without throwing away the foundations of modernity.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Giuliano Bonoli, Antonella Ferrari, François Grin, Bruno Palier and the anonymous reviewer of this article for their comments.

Notes


2. A description which is quintessentially political and often expressed with scant regard for its moral implications by such as the Italian neoliberal right.


5. For Mauss (1950), the gift creates an indissoluble link between two persons. The one who receives the gift is constrained to give it back. The gift in precontractual societies is a process in which antagonist situations are transformed in compulsory cooperation. The obligation to give back the gift is explained by the belief that there exists a spirit in the objects.

Reciprocity Schemes in Unemployment Regulation Policies

8. This pluralism includes not only an ethnic dimension, but also a social one (Young, 1990).
9. The philosophical rediscovery of the notion of 'desert' is in this sense a good indicator of these tendencies (see Sher, 1987).

References


363
Sandro Cattacin and Véronique Tattini