

CITIZENSHIP - THE REAL DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?

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Abstract

Given the pressures of globalisation, the nation state is limited in its control over public policy agendas, particularly in the field of social policy. The response of domestic governments to the heat of international competition has been to create more flexible, post-welfare state economies. A significant consequence of this development is the removal of social rights and the acceleration of social exclusion. This gap which has opened up could be filled by the European Union, but it has so far failed to take a leading role in this regard.

So, as European citizens we should be concerned that the forces which operate to balance the harsher effects of the free market have been lost at the European, supranational level. There are three central reasons why this is the case: (i) the European Union consists of fifteen member states with competing, historically rooted understandings of social protection and, therefore, social rights; (ii) defining social rights is traditionally a state derived function and as such, the absence of an EU state means the absence of comprehensive citizen protection; (iii) these two factors are magnified by the relative weakness of the supranational institutions and democratic deficit between the key EU institutions (weak vis-à-vis member state governments and with regard to the supremacy of the market).

The combination of these problems has meant that the European Union has not taken the primary role in providing the kind of social protection that we used to enjoy in the domestic context. The result of this is a situation in which the market is determining both the level and even the kind of rights that we are entitled to, thus *we are citizens of a European market and not of a European state*.

As a state derived function, and without a European state, social and citizen rights are being neglected. As a consequence, unless citizen protection is developed through an intergovernmental or supranational framework, it is difficult to see how governments can honour their responsibility to safeguard their people.

PART I

Identification: WHY WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED

1.1 Introduction : Cause - The capabilities-expectations gap

“Social citizenship” refers to those rights and duties of citizens concerned with the welfare of people as citizens, taking “welfare” in a broad sense to include such things as work, education, health and quality of life.’
(Maurice Roche in Paul Close, p. 194).

As European citizens (as accorded by the Maastricht Treaty [1993]), we should be concerned that the forces which operate to balance the harsher effects of the free market

are lost at the European, supranational level. There are three central reasons why this is the case. Firstly, the European Union consists of fifteen member states with competing, historically rooted understandings of social protection and, therefore, social rights. There are different approaches to filling the welfare gap in European systems, from social insurance and social assistance to the Beveridge model of social protection. The important aspect of the differences between these systems lies in, most particularly, answering the question of, 'who is poor'? Responses to this question within society, have significant policy consequences in terms of locating the poverty line, methods of reintegration and the ever important budgetary issue of 'who pays'?

The evolution of the welfare state within West European nations then, has produced various, often opposing, economic arrangements for protecting the weak from the most severe consequences of the operation of the market.

Through establishing the great pillars of welfare - such as, health, education and a minimum income- governments were honouring a commitment to their citizens to an agreed minimum quality of life. In so doing government accorded citizens their social rights.

*... the concept of citizenship is important, for it connects the ideas of legal status, identity, rights and duties
(Michael Newman, p. 146)*

This highlights the second point pertinent to the current discussion, which is that defining social rights is traditionally a state derived function. As noted by Newman, citizenship necessarily involves notions of rights and duties: rights of individuals to certain goods and services as defined and provided by the state, and duties of those same individuals to the state. In other words, this is a reciprocal relationship which requires certain actions on the part of both the people and the state in order to be coherent. The argument forwarded in the following section of this paper, is that this reciprocal relationship has broken down as a result of the globalising pressures on nation states. Nation states are withdrawing from the social sphere, and there has been no satisfactory replacement. Private agencies cannot assume this role as they cannot provide social rights and access to services on a universalistic basis. Their *raison d'être* is to exploit the profit-making gap opened up by the state's withdrawal. The argument here forwarded is that meaningful social rights can *only* be supplied by a state. As such, the absence of an EU state in the contemporary setting means the absence of comprehensive social citizen protection.

As the proposition is that, as a state derived function, and given the reduced salience of the nation state in this arena, the EU is the only viable social rights provider, two further factors need to be considered. The difficulties in finding a solution to social rights provision at the supranational level, are magnified by the relative weakness of the supranational institutions as well as the democratic deficit between the key EU institutions (weak vis-à-vis member state governments and with regard to the supremacy of the market).

*no pluralists
of
service
provision*

One key issue which needs to be addressed in the first instance then, is the fact that certain things are fundamentally incompatible with a free market based system - notably access/social rights. These core rights and freedoms have to be enshrined in a state-led constitution (or similar), rather than governed by market forces. In allowing the free and unrestricted interplay of market forces, the market becomes the determiner of both the level and the kind of rights we are entitled to as citizens - as we become citizens of a *market* rather than of a state. The pressures of globalisation have not only constrained the nation state's ability to act, but have forced a reshaping of policy priorities which has resulted in the withdrawal of the nation state from the welfare state. Without it, welfare becomes inoperable. To maintain social citizenship requires a new state form to fill the gap left at the national level. To do otherwise is to end the social contract and to end meaningful social citizenship. The only state form which can take on this role is the EU. The key problem for both nation states and the EU is that the usual forces which operate to balance the harsher effects of the market are lost at the EU level, precisely because a) it is not a state and b) it consists of 15 competing ideologies and historical definitions/understandings of social rights.

1.2 One market - No social rights

In the evolution of the international economy since the first discussions of globalisation in the early 1970s, much has been written about the impact such significant economic developments have had on public policy within nation states. These discussions often concerned the fate of domestic economic control and thus the knock-on effects which would be felt in other policy areas, in particular social policy.

In light of the arguments proposed in the introductory section of this paper, this particular issue is of key concern. However, rather than stop at the policy implications of globalisation, the argument should be taken further, to its natural conclusion. In so delimiting the scope of national governments in respect of domestic public expenditure and emphasising the kind of economic flexibility which is incompatible with comprehensive welfare policies, the forces of globalisation have had an even more fundamental impact on nation states. The net result of the political and economic pressures to compete globally, has moved the international market to centre stage. This has resulted in two significant outcomes. Firstly, nation states are no longer such significant actors, particularly if operating in isolation. Rather it is transnational business and supranational regulators which hold the key to economic governance. Secondly, and of major significance within the current debate is that precisely because of the policy expenditure and action restrictions placed on the national governments, there has been a loss of social rights for the citizens of those nation states. The only kind of rights which deliver rewards are those supplied by the market. What we have at the national level then is both a set of distorted market rights (distorted in the sense that they are neither universalistic nor based on a real relationship between the individual and the market) and a simultaneous curtailing of social - and in fact for some groups additionally, political and legal - rights, where that delimiting of scope and realisation of rights falls disproportionately on the poor.

1.3 The end of the social contract?

As alluded to at the outset of this paper, debates about social citizenship necessarily make reference to some understanding of a social contract between government and the people governed. To discuss rights and duties of the individual within society, often neglects the duties and responsibilities of government to the individual and the wider community. Notions of a social contract are very important for this present debate for two central reasons. It is understood that in the 1980s and 1990s we have witnessed an attack on the welfare society from incumbent governments across Western Europe - with perhaps the most significant examples being the UK for the extent to which the state has been 'rolled back' and Sweden as it was maybe the most comprehensive welfare society (rather than welfare state) being forced to make changes in the last ten to fifteen years. The neo-liberal attack on the welfare state has sought to undo the social contract by solely emphasising duties of individuals in exchange for social rights, and to justify the removal of all state responsibility by arguing that the welfare state creates a culture of dependency which undermines individualism:

'... [I]n this way the liberal analysis of social c rights is stood on its head: the obligations of membership must be reasserted, to 'balance' the entitlements given by the welfare state. In the American debate, this view is now part of a 'new consensus' on family, work and welfare - that the very existence of social rights for the poor entails responsibilities, and that the obligations of c should be enforced by welfare agencies, as part of a programme of social integration.'
(Bill Jordan, p. 105)

Neo-liberal analysis sees no contradiction in profit maximising private agencies providing these services in the stead of government. However, the position here is that without a state as provider there can be no meaningful social rights. Universalism, which is necessary for real social citizenship, can only be supplied by the state, which does not seek to make gains through difference. So, the withdrawal of the state from the social contract effectively ends the compact, and thus undermines the provision of an essential aspect of citizenship: social rights. In addition, all other rights which form further crucial elements of citizenship - political rights (access to decision making and the public sphere in general) and legal rights (justice, fair trials etc.) - are undermined, once the social contract is called into question.

1.4 Social exclusion

'A case may be made for suggesting that all victims of inequality are denied full citizenship. In this sense, all the 'socially excluded' may be regarded as having their full rights denied and it has, for example, been argued that EU citizenship should include the 'right to work' or at least a positive employment and welfare strategy ... It is debatable how far the remedies lie at the EU level. The extent to

which the EU itself should be held responsible for creating 'second class citizens' through the phenomenon of 'social exclusion' and economic insecurity is therefore also unclear.'

(Michael Newman, p. 158)

It seems obvious then that the people we should be most concerned about are the 'socially excluded'. The term social exclusion refers to the inability of certain groups within society to access key services as a result of individual, group or institutional barriers. By definition then these groups are marginalised in society and, often, having fallen through the net as the result of one factor, will accumulate other characteristics of the excluded. For example, unemployment can result in homelessness or ill health. In turn homelessness can accelerate problems of drug dependency and malnutrition. Another category of the 'new poor', single parents, will have greater problems in breaking into the labour market or accessing educational amenities. In all cases, poverty is the overwhelming concern and there is certainly a persuasive argument about poverty disenfranchising those it touches and further limiting a person or family's ability to make full use of, for example, the legal system. It is important to remain aware of the very complex nature of social exclusion, how it can impact on all aspects of a person's life, and in particular how becoming marginalised within society is not necessarily an overnight circumstance, nor is it likely to be only a unidimensional phenomenon.

The implications of this understanding of poverty and exclusion are significant in social policy terms. The clearest point it makes is that the categories of the poor and excluded cannot be targeted for reintegration into society simply through re-employment. The single strategy which has been adopted at both the national and the European level to deal with the recognised problems of marginalisation and exclusion in our societies has been through *employment* programmes, particularly targeted at the long-run and the young unemployed. Given the multidimensional nature of these phenomena, economic (re)integration will not necessarily result in the end of exclusion. In fact, if we were to consider the debates about the underclass, particularly those conducted in the American context, a level of marginalisation may even be functional for those who argue simply for economic reintegration.

1.5 Citizenship and social exclusion

It is hoped, in outlining the main arguments to be presented in the sections above, that it is clear that the focus of this paper is on one aspect of a diverse problem. As already noted, the processes of internationalisation of the market are having a constraining effect on the ability of nation states to act autonomously in the economic and, thus, the social sphere. This manifests itself through pressures for a particular kind of economic flexibility which will not allow significant public expenditure or continued support of the welfare state; and also the rise to dominance of neo-liberal economics has been accompanied by a similar neo-conservative political ideology which seeks to break the relationship between the individual (and community) and the state.

The consequence of the supremacy of these forces, has been to effectively remove social rights from certain groups within society. This undermining of the *essential* social element of citizenship (as social rights are a necessary but not sufficient condition for citizenship) not only has potential consequences for both political and legal rights as well but, more significantly, the 'socially excluded' (in this sense) do not have the full set of rights accorded to citizens. In other words, the socially excluded are not citizens.

The important element to take from this as researchers/academics in the field, is to ensure that discussions of citizenship address the issue of exclusion. Other issues related to the question of citizenship, particularly now in the context of the European Union, such as gender, race, overlapping citizenship and transnational citizenship are (rightly) very high on the agenda. Similarly, we should accept the fact that citizenship is a less useful/inappropriate term without dealing with the question of social rights head on.

What all these factors taken together represent is a flow of power away from the political to the economic sphere which is difficult to reverse - but not necessarily impossible. It is possible that the EU can have a positive role to play in rescuing citizens from markets.

PART II

Diagnosis: WHY WE HAVE THE PROBLEM

2.1 Limits to the nation state

The foregoing sections have already made reference to the problems which face nation states through not having the full range of policy options open to them in many spheres, as a result of the need and desire to be a more effective market player. The limits to the nation state can be broadly attributed to firstly, globalisation: international economic pressures; and secondly, to the lack of political will which results.

These two processes *are* interlinked, as indicated earlier in the discussion. Despite the many references to the erosion of the nation state accompanying the internationalisation of the market, the move towards a global market did not emerge in a hostile political context. On the contrary, much of West European domestic politics in the 1980s and 1990s has fostered the development of greater *free* market dominance of the economy. As already noted, the neo-liberal economics which espouses the virtues of ever-increasing market competition, has been matched by the politics of deregulation and privatisation in the economy and the quangoisation of public life¹. The economic strategy and the political vision of the major European nations has, in the past decade, converged around a set of core objectives. This convergence of policy priorities has reflected a post-Keynsian, apparently post-welfare state, era of political concern. On the face of it then, this would seem to indicate a much reduced role for the nation state in determining the

¹ Quango: Quasi Non-Governmental Organisation

domestic public policy agenda, particularly with regard to social policy objectives, in preference for strategies of presenting the nation state as a competitive economic unit².

However, nation states have found ways, it can be argued, to retain some significance in the face of globalising pressures. They have found ways of reorganising into regional trading blocs, to enhance their role and position in the international market³. In many respects this may be seen as the rescue of the nation state: the evolution of international organisations such as the European Union affords the nation state more control over policy than if it were attempting to operate in the global system alone. In this sense then, one could perceive the European Union playing a compensatory role vis-a-vis certain policy areas. For example, with such a key concept as citizenship, the European dimension could be considered as merely enhancing what already exists, and continues to exist, at the national level. So, if we accept this model of the relationship between the EU and member states, the conception of EU citizenship which results will tend to be a limited one. In other words, EU citizenship is restricted to a supplementary role or one whereby EU rights merely reinforce pre-existing national rights.

However, in light of the economic and political preferences which dominate the major EU member states, the social rights which have already been lost in the pursuit of economic competitiveness have not been restored by domestic officials nor through the structures of the European Union. It is not so much that there is anything inherently wrong with the conception of EU social citizenship as supplementing national citizenship, as that there is increasing little to supplement. The rolling back of the welfare state in the 1980s significantly undermined social rights within the major EU member states. If EU citizenship is to be meaningful, it needs to fill this gap. In other words, we need to expand the EU role in this regard to provide comprehensive social protection.

Newman has argued that the EU is fundamentally incapable of undertaking the redistributive measures necessary for such protection, claiming that:

' ... above all, it lacks the legitimacy which would be necessary to secure support for extensive redistribution '
(Newman, p. 100)

Whilst it is clear that there are institutional and political constraints to EU action, Newman overstates the extent to which redistribution is off the agenda. For instance, there is a commitment to creating equality between target groups (the poor, long-term unemployed etc.) and the rest of the EU population in those directorates general (DGs) which take actions in the social field. In addition, there is already an element of redistribution within existing EU policy: through the regional development funds.

² On the development of the welfare state to the competition state, see P. Cerny (1990) 'The Changing Architecture of Politics: Structure, Agency and the Future of the State'.

³ For discussion of the declining significance of the nation state in relation to international trading organisations, see K. Ohmae, 'The Rise of the Region State' in *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1993.

The current convergence in economic and political priorities simply reflects the same convergence of economic concerns for the original six member states in 1957. The resulting institutional arrangements, formalised in the Treaty of Rome, were thus designed to facilitate the operation of their economies in the face of increasing competition. Without having had any major reform of the institutions in forty years, the institutions still have economic competitiveness as their primary goal.

In light of the arguments made above, social rights are under attack at the national level and the EU does not seem ready to defend them. According to the argument presented here, the only agency which can provide social rights is a state and nation states are no longer capable nor willing to play this role. So, the difficulty is that there is not yet an international state to combat the harsher effects of what is unquestionably a globalised market.

2.2 Limits to current EU actions

It has been argued in the preceding sections that there now exists a gap for state action in the key area of social citizenship. It has also been suggested that, in the current economic and political context, the agency which is best placed to take on that role, is the European Union.

The tone of the debate about the role and direction of the European Union in general but with particular reference to the social policy field is, for maximisers, one of scepticism. The thrust of neo-functional theory, notions of functional 'spillover', has been used to explain the minimalist social policy output of the Union. In other words, the economic goals of a single internal market, economic and monetary union etc. remain the primary objectives of the EU, but in order to achieve these central aims policy in other areas becomes necessary. The explanation for the development of social action programmes since 1974 and the signing of the social chapter in 1989, according to this portrayal of policy making, lies in the need to harmonise working conditions to create a level economic playing field. This is exemplified in the re-focusing of the charter to only protect workers' rights (as opposed to citizen rights).

The first constraint on EU social action which we can identify then, is that of the continued primacy of economic legislation. Social policy is some way behind, resulting in more reactive, secondary legislation. Since the signing of the social charter, there have only been two significant 'daughter' directives concerning works councils and parental leave. This is surely some indication of policy priorities at the European level.

Magnifying this problem of policy limitations, are the organisational constraints on the supranational institutions of the EU. Despite some notable expansion of the role of the European Parliament (direct elections since 1979; co-operation and co-decision procedures) as well as an expansion of majority voting in the Council of Ministers, the 'democratic deficit' at the supranational level still exists. In short, the problem is that the supranational institutions which tend to favour both more integration and social policy competence for the EU, are held in check by the legislative system: a system which gives the significant decision making power to the member states. In practical policy terms,

there are important examples of maximalist proposals losing content by the time they are voted on and enacted by the Council of Ministers⁴.

So, the second constraint on EU activity in this field, in addition to the primacy of economic objectives, is an institutional one. Both of these barriers to progression are underpinned by the same legal restraint, which can thus be identified as the third obstacle to social policy progress. The Treaty of Rome provided no legal basis for the development of social policy within the EU. There are four consequences of this omission by the founding fathers. Firstly, having no separate title within the founding treaty nor any explicit reference to social policy objectives, there is no direct responsibility for social policy progression, conferred on any EU institution. Secondly, having established an institutional framework which favours intergovernmentalism, any potential role for the Commission and Parliament in this regard is limited. Thirdly, again as a result of the institutional features of the EU, it is unlikely that the member states will vote to surrender policy control. Social policy concerns, in particular, fall foul of this latter difficulty, as the member governments are neither keen to cede more sovereignty to the EU nor to have their competence undermined in this particular policy area. Finally, the problem with no treaty (legal) basis for progression is that the European Union has no agreed baseline norms from which to take decisions. In other words, we can never move away from the problems associated with having fifteen competing definitions of poverty.

Some other authors have pointed out more particular problems for the development of European social citizenship. These include lack of budgetary powers, lack of legitimacy of the EU as a political actor and an inability to build the kind of consensus necessary to establish welfarism within the EU. In addition to the problems cited above, there seems to be little reason to be optimistic about the role the EU could play in providing the kind of social protection lost at the national level.

However, all of these problems apply only if we discount the possibility of radical change to the structures of the EU. It is important not to stop short of the possibility of an alternative type of EU structure to the one which already exists. It is clear that what already exists at the EU level is not geared towards nor capable of filling the social citizenship gap identified at the national level. It is possible, and important, to consider the possibility of a changed set of institutional arrangements in a different political climate. To disregard the possibility of changed circumstances, leads to compromise positions with the current organisation of the European level, or a complete unpicking of the EU as a possible service provider in this respect. It is my contention that to do this is not to deal in 'reality', but in the politics of compromise and, worse, fails the very people that opening up this debate is aimed to help.

The current EU system was designed to forge a common market for the original six member countries. It was not designed as an embryonic state and if we accept the current political rhetoric, a truly supranational state will never emerge in the future. If we do not challenge this rhetoric, then we are accepting that we have lost an argument that we are yet to have: about the desirability of such a supranational state. In doing so, we are

⁴ An example of this is the 1983 Solemn Declaration which had its maximalist content diluted before emerging as the Single European Act (1986).

missing the opportunity of reclaiming the social rights we have lost as a result of pressures on the nation state. The EU through greater intergovernmentalism and supranational governance is the only potential future provider of these rights.

PART III

The answer? EMBRACING SUPRANATIONALISM

3.1 An institutional response

The answer to the problem must lie in enhancing supranationalism (or, at the very least, intergovernmentalism). This is because there needs to be an institutional-government response, not simply an economic response to reintegrate the excluded. As previously noted, this is true not only because rights need to be claimed from a state to be universalistic and non-discriminatory (as a necessary but not necessarily sufficient condition), but also because comprehensive social protection is incompatible with a free market system. This position would further undermine the only current strategy for improving the position of the poor: the employment strategies currently favoured by all major political parties, member states and the Commission. Such a strategy can only have a limited impact as it is unidimensional and thus will not necessarily bring an end to social exclusion.

Citizenship as a fundamental good, can only retain its significance if all the key sets of rights are in place. Any removal then of social rights, disables citizenship. In order for social rights to be meaningful, so that they progress from being an ideal or the fancy of a previous era, to delivering tangible goods to the both the individual and the community, they must be supplied by a state system/organisation. It is necessary to recognise that the EU is not currently geared up to perform this role. Having admitted this fact, the next step is one of two. The popular response is to admit the limits and argue that we accept a continuing limited role for the Union. The less popular, and far more radical or proactive response is to argue for a bigger role for the supranational institutions in a truly overhauled system. Arguably there may still be potential for the nation state to regain this role but, given the preceding argument, it is both more likely and more desirable that this vital service be provided at the supranational level.

The supranational level of governance, it is here argued, is the preferred provider of fundamental social rights, because an international state is needed to balance the forces of an international market.

3.2 An international market requires an international state

It has been argued so far that discussions about citizenship lose their significance if social citizenship is in any way undermined. Despite the current problems inherent in the current EU institutional arrangements, a fuller, comprehensive EU role is what is required in order to achieve meaningful social citizenship in the contemporary period.

This argument follows the logic that, as a state-derived function, social citizenship in the current economic climate requires the establishment of an international state to give it meaning. The global market has created the kind of pressures on public policy, which limit the scope of domestic governments in this regard. This means that the usual forces which exist, which emanate from the state, to balance the harsher effect of the interaction of market forces can no longer be relied upon at the national level. Only an international state formation can adequately regulate an international market and compensate international citizens. Without this kind of state formation, individuals will remain citizens of the market, rather than of a state. The consequence of this is that should they be market failures, there are no compensatory measures to protect citizens and prevent them from falling out of the system. In the current globalised economic climate then, if an individual is outside of the (labour) market as a result of economic, institutional or individual barriers, they also fall outside of society. In other words, they are marginalised or socially excluded. It is in this sense that we can no longer talk in terms other than those such as 'market citizenship'.

The argument, quite clearly made here, is that it must be a priority to have an internationalisation of the state in order to regain social rights provision. In other words, to reconstitute the social contract which gives meaning to the term 'society' and which is such a vital buffer between the individual or community and the ravages of the free market. This provision cannot be obtained within the current European institutional arrangements, but must come through increased intergovernmentalism or - preferably - supranationalism: from a radically different EU than the one we have currently. As a state derived function, and without a European state, social and citizen rights are being neglected. Unless citizen protection is developed through an intergovernmental or supranational framework, it is difficult to see how governments can honour their responsibility to safeguard their people.

3.3 Conclusion:

To reiterate: to stop short of calling for this kind of solution, is not to deal in reality, but in compromise, and will continue to fail those it seeks to help. Talking about citizenship and social rights has to go beyond a debate/exchange of definitions and concepts, because we are talking about fundamental democratic principles and people's quality of life. It is not an impossibility to achieve this kind of Union, and it should be a model that, as morally concerned democrats, we should be advocating. Admittedly, supranationalism will not necessarily guarantee our social rights, but it is the best way of seeking to achieve this aim. It is crucial that we have *proactive* social policy and strong welfarism to overcome the economic and institutional barriers to inclusion, and this is precisely what is lacking. The socially excluded are not citizens, and the proposals put forward for reform of the current institutional arrangements or retaining a limited role for the EU do nothing to right this wrong. We need positive integration of the excluded into *society* and not just into the labour market. To believe that labour market reintegration alone is the solution, is to accept that there is 'no such thing as society', or to conflate the two terms.

Much of the debate about European citizenship is concerned with defining and redefining citizenship as an abstract concept, and does not overlap with discussions of social exclusion. Addressing the problem of the socially excluded within our societies should be the priority, as any notion of citizenship loses its relevance if it does not include social rights. No matter what the fine detail of our conception of citizenship, being a citizen is incompatible with being socially excluded. Debates about citizenship should not remain purely academic. In concentrating on the constraints which exist in creating European social citizenship, discussions tend to de-emphasise the fact that fundamental social rights are being denied.

There is no guarantee that supranational governance would deliver us our rights. But the argument being forwarded here is that in the latter part of the twentieth century, heading for the new millennium, it is not enough to say we are in a post-welfare state society and that private provision is the future and that market failures cannot be corrected. The problem with describing people as market failures rather than as being failed by the state, is that this removes the argument that the state should provide a safety net. There is still a need for a safety net, because poverty is a multidimensional and cumulative phenomenon which thus cannot simply be resolved by reintegrating the unemployed into the labour market. Employment strategies are not a solution to the socially excluded or the new categories of the poor.

Judgements about what is possible are inescapably ideological - much of what we say is impossible, is impossible only if we are not prepared to pay the price. So, in particular, judgements about possibility are not independent of our moral commitments. This is not to say that we should not make these judgements, but just to remember that more radical alternatives may be available. After all, deciding what to do is not the same thing as predicting what will happen.

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