New Citizenship by New Ways of Economic Integration

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Introduction - the theoretical context
I

For some years now we have spoken of the crisis of the state. And we say intentionally that we are talking of such a crisis, meaning we as scholars in the field of the social sciences. Notwithstanding the great variety of approaches, opinions and issues focused upon during this time, what has come to the fore is that, in one way or another, we are primarily concerned with the idea of dysfunctions and dysfunctionality of the state. Exemplifying this, the theory of state failure is notable in non-governmental organisations (NGO) research. Alternative theorisations on the creation and development of NGOs are also to some extent divined from the idea of the crisis of the state (for a broad and topical overview, cf. Muukkonen, 1999).

In this paper, we look briefly at the reasons behind this crisis, and from there we go on to elaborate on how new forms of citizenship are being constructed through new ways of economic integration, and how this relates to the crisis. To exemplify the argument, we introduce two case studies that summarise the results of research on 'projects' working with people who are on the margins of accepted citizenship. The first case study focuses on the activities of several Russian NGOs working with vulnerable (primarily disabled) groups; the second case study looks at work by and with Travellers in Ireland and the clash of different and competing understandings of citizenship that this work epitomises and engenders. In particular, these case studies introduce the idea that the activities of NGOs - whilst having introduced a pro-active, forward thinking approach to expanding the experience of citizenship - may now be reaching their limits. Underpinning our argument, we also lay out our conceptual understanding of citizenship itself, arguing - in contrast to some of the canonical literature - for a static concept of citizenship (in the sense of its conceptual quality), but which in terms

of the subjective experience of social actors is characterised by the constant ebb and flow of three intertwining component parts. Whilst obviously therefore suggesting that social action is an element of an experience of citizenship, we argue that how citizenship is defined and, critically, how it is conferred, is *not* defined by the actions of those on the margins of accepted citizenship, but rather emerges out of the mainstream of societal structuration i.e. systems, which marginalise and sideline those whose felt human needs run contrary to those of dominant economic, political and cultural actors.

A theoretical and practical consequence of this argument is that, in order to 'push back' against such systemic forces, people must construct different, alternative - *other* - modes of social integration. This said, the challenge is not (or, at least, should not) be to simply or solely integrate the marginalised into accepted, pre-existing *a priori* conceptualisations of citizenship, but rather to integrate socially marginalised actors into the process of defining citizenship itself.
Our theses are as follows:

q The enormous changes brought about by the shift from organised to disorganised capitalism (mainly since the 1960s) has brought about the demise of dominant state-controlled economic and political system(s) which cannot be re-gained simply by the state adapting to the new 'global' conditions. Moreover, these new conditions therefore render it impossible for marginalised 'non-citizens' to adapt to the new economy. The socio-economic fissures that have opened up because of these new conditions, however, may provide the space in which new forms of economic activity, based on felt human needs, are emerging.

q NGOs are - at (the very) least according to their own rhetoric - a forum of versatility, flexibility,

adaptability and as well a specific mode of (group) self-help. Furthermore they can be characterised as historical and permanently fluctuating social entities. In this sense they can be taken as a model of new citizenship, as they constantly reach beyond the current incarnation of themselves in order to become more than what they are.

II

In addition to the crisis of the state noted above, a second crisis has emerged: that of citizenship itself, which - after Chomsky - is being 'rolled back' in order to exclude those superfluous to the global economic project. Whilst neither crisis is cataclysmic enough to put overall societal integration under severe strain, their simultaneous occurrence[1] has more potentially far-reaching consequences. What we would like to argue is that the unique social spaces that have opened up through this confluence of crises are allowing felt human needs to find a new way of expressing themselves, and that this form of agency - centred around economic activity - is creating new forms of citizenship.

This also might potentially change our view of the welfare state: that new forms of citizenship emerge from a dialectic process of being defined by, and participating in the definition of, citizenship of that welfare state - therefore a citizenship not based solely or primarily on preserving the status quo, but of a dynamic sense of change and empowerment. This said, we should take care neither to overstretch nor underestimate this thesis - the current situation (in Western democracies, at any rate) is not marked by major upheavals, or the apparent imminent possibility of such (notwithstanding the emergence of the 'anti-capitalist movement', which may have such potential); nor should the changes that are taking place be regarded solely as merely single, isolated mechanisms of organisational or institutional change (most obviously exemplified by EU social programmes). Furthermore, it might be useful to suspend our assent to the dominant theoretical proclivity that sees NGOs as acclamatory of the state and its institutions, but rather as actors that actively define citizenship or at least influence and interstitially change given definitions.

III

Whilst the 'general crisis' alluded to above[2] is a complex phenomenon, it does not completely defy observation and description. It is possible to provide a thumbnail sketch of several factors that exemplify its existence and composition:

1.   In general, there is a widespread crisis of severely constrained public budgets. Whilst a reduction in such expenditure is obviously influenced by different factors in different states (e.g. an absence of resources, as in Bulgaria; the dominance of the ideology of the market, as in the United Kingdom; populist political strategies that stress a low fiscal burden on the citizenry, as in the Republic of Ireland), the common thread is the marginalisation of the left in Western parliamentary democracies.

2.   Globalisation. Even if one were to argue that the power of (nation) states is not necessarily declining, it is - at the very least - being redefined (e.g. Fligstein, 1999; Pierson, 1999).

3.   The power of nation-states also needs to be redefined in light of what might be conceptualised as the 'new self-esteem of citizens': a concept that embraces the identity revolution of recent years, including individualisation, decentralisation, and the emergence of new social movements (see Melucci, 1985, 1989).

4.   It is also interesting to look beyond the purely ideological aspect of these developments and elaborate on the material factors that have influenced the shift in values towards this 'new self-esteem of citizens'. Paradoxically, both emerging wealth (for part of the world's population) and, on the other hand, increasing unemployment (for the larger part) deserve consideration. In a tensional field of the production of private wealth and statutorily provided material security, what has emerged is more time that is not immediately subordinated to working life. However, this is far from being the oft-mooted 'leisure society' as the then German chancellor Helmut Kohl called it, and as is reflected in sociological theory by the notion of the 'society of events' (Schulz, 1992/1997). Rather, the character of work

in its private/public dimension has changed. To exemplify this argument, let us look at education and training: whilst still a highly socialised activity, the responsibility for locating and obtaining it is largely privatised in the sense that it is a matter for an individual to decide on how much and what kind they want (and can) access[3]. Securing private health care (including self-help) and engaging in political activities are other examples. To an extent we might even speak of the re-socialisation of the private and the re-privatisation of the social.

5. In addition to the phenomena of increasing wealth and the reduction of time immediately subordinated to work, there are several other associated issues:

q the gap between those living in wealth and those living in poverty is growing ever wider. Furthermore, this gap appears to be not only growing, but also accelerating in its speed of growth;

q in an era characterised by the need - nay the necessity - for flexible life-long learning, the consequences of the high transfer-time of knowledge are manifest in the high levels of insecurity in employment, moral standards, values, modes of communication, interpersonal contacts etc., in short: social skills;

q social security has, in many respects, become social insecurity, as it fails to supply necessary material means.

6. We have long been used to the predominance of production as the primary organising rationale in economic life. However, what has characterised recent economic development is the relative decline of the importance of production and the contemporaneous shift to service provision. In relation to the crisis of the state, what is of importance here is not solely the objective change in economic structure that such a change engenders - moving from organised to disorganised capitalism (this, after all, is just the end product of a deeper, more significant shift) - but that the predominant mode of organising economic life has changed. This new organising rationale can be best characterised as the ever-increasing dominance of exchange as a means of

shaping not only economic, but social life. This, however, is not an entirely new development - after all, exchange has been a central element of economic and social life since time immemorial - but what is new is that exchange now also dominates our subjective being, encompassing not just economic transactions, but also our values and the manner in which we participate in society as citizens. This becomes even more clear when we think not just of the positive side of this development, but of its negative manifestations: whilst political lobbying and suchlike have been a matter of some suspicion (cf. Eschenburg, 1995) because of the potential to translate economic power into social power (its conversion made possible through the intermediary of the polity), what is now emerging is crude fraud and corruption by high-ranking politicians and ordinary administrators alike. Politics and political convictions are now, more than ever, commodities i.e. a matter of exchange values (e.g. the ease with which public representatives talk openly of changing value-based policies in exchange for votes, for which we can read power). In more general terms, (i.e. in relation to the everyday life of ordinary people) social life is evermore governed by symbols and regulations, where the 'fetishisation' of commodities, as already recognised by Marx, holds perverse sway.

In conclusion then, the crisis of the state has been caused by its attempt at an all-encompassing role i.e. the emergence of the state as 'the society', a role that it could never hope to fulfil.

IV

If we develop this latter point more fully, we can see that the inability of the nation-state to fulfil its historical ambition of being all-encompassing is due to imbalances in a triangular field:
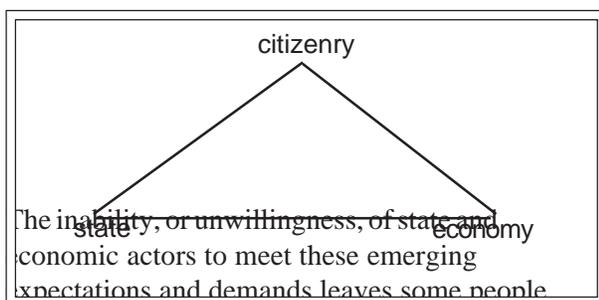
q The position the state holds is ideologically hegemonic, but acting on its own it can neither fulfil the hegemonic claims that it makes of itself, nor can it fulfil the claims levied upon it by the citizenry or the economy.

q The economy holds a *de facto* hegemonic position in the sense that it is the dominant actor in the shaping of societies and 'the social' i.e. it is the economy, via productive relationships

(whether these be traditional 'organised' productive relationships, or the recently emerged 'disorganised' productive relationships that characterise service economies), that determines the ways in which people live together, whether this be in institutional, associational or inter-personal terms. However, there is no acknowledged, democratically legitimised system of transforming economic power to social power via the polity; and as there is no legitimate avenue for this transference and transformation of power, 'non-institutionalised power' holds sway, accomplished by *inter alia* a constant implicit threat on reserve labour and the commodification of politics. However, this type and use of power undermines its own foundations, with excessively high rates of unemployment, political fraud and the burnout of employees, to name but a few adverse symptoms.

q The citizenry is threatened by a loss of its status by arising threats on what Marshall called civil, political and social rights. Paradoxically, it is the consequent necessity of 'dependence on oneself' - which enforces a rising self-consciousness - that asks for strengthened citizens' rights.

The following graph summarises this view on citizenship and the relation to the state.

The inability, or unwillingness, of state and economic actors to meet these emerging expectations and demands leaves some people behind in resignation, but is also one of the primary structural strains that give rise to the 'new social movements'. In Offe's (1985) terms, the 'decommodified', through their resistance to the neo-conservative project of the reconstitution (i.e. the limitation) of the responsibilities of the state, attempt - through the politicisation of civil society - to make rights claims. Whilst many of these claims went (and continue to go) unheard, there can equally be no doubt that in some cases expectations

and demands are being answered - citizen hotlines, strategic management initiatives and support structures for NGOs are just a few examples. Of course, the debate rages as to the extent to which these initiatives are truly geared towards the development of a socially inclusive society, or whether they are tokenistic in content and manipulatory in intent. For the purposes of this paper, we must leave this complex debate to one side. However, what we can state with some certainty is that many NGOs act as mediating institutions through which political and economic demands 'from above' are translated into schemes and programmes in which those operating 'from below' recognise some opportunities for realising their own interests and ideas, even in the midst of the potentially controlling effects of the policies.

In reviewing the process of social partnership in Ireland it had been critically stated that:

   "Acceptance [of organisations of the voluntary sector organisations; the authors] of the invitation to participation in the national negotiations means agreeing to work within the shared understanding or consensus of the economic analysis and priorities developed in the NESW Strategy for the 21st Century. The consensus was based on a predominantly economic model of development... This obviously set limits on what could be achieved." (CWC, 1999)

We would like to argue that a new way of understanding these programmes is to view them as the building of new citizenship by new ways of economic integration. If we look at initiatives such as those in the case studies, what is common to them is an effort to 're-link' the corners of the aforementioned triangular field, building up complements of the two 'outer' corners in each of the corners - and of course turning the triangle as a whole around, if not even upside down.

What we would like to argue is that felt human needs are asserting themselves in a socio-ecological form. Simply put, these activities are
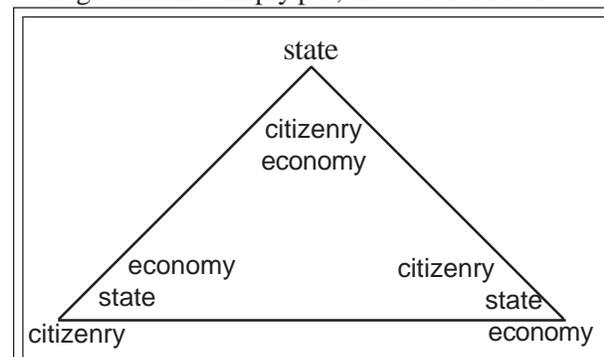
articulated as actors 'from below' attempt to re-establish themselves in their natural and social environment in a more holistic sense than provided by systemic limits. This they achieve through new forms of economic activity. In many ways this parallels, and harks back to, ancient socio-economic systems, in particular the Greek *oikos*.

In this perspective, citizenship is not solely - or even primarily - concerned with rights and obligations. Rather, it is a set of complementary features that are concerned with the individual as a social being and as such is underscored by a view of the individual social agent as subjectively experiencing their objective location within a collective experience, as opposed to the individualised conceptualisation of citizenry that stresses the rights and obligations of individuals. Moving away from this individualised conceptualisation allows us to do something quite important, namely to avoid any collusion with the logic of capital that would have us view individuals as originally isolated and self-seeking. What Marshall conceptualises in a historical perspective as the evolution of a progressively inclusive scheme is in our perspective a more static conceptualisation of a 'civic setting'. This said, whilst our conceptualisation is static insofar as it is a bounded model, we would not wish this argument to be taken as meaning that the experience of the quality of citizenship is itself static. This is clearly not the case, as citizenship remains highly dynamic because it is, at all temporal points, constituted by action. Thus - paradoxically - our 'static' conceptualisation is actually a dynamisation of the standard understanding. By action, we refer to:

q the right of the individual to act i.e. to participate on equal terms;

q the right of the individual to be recognised as a unique personality, who is seen as a contributor to the development and structuration of society;

q the right of the individual to develop their own capacities in accordance with own needs, starting from their own aptitudes;

q the obligation of the individual to shape their own needs, capacities, ambitions and, in general, action in accordance with the given natural and social surrounding, its needs and available opportunities. One important element is to overcome - at least in part - the difference of practical and exchange value.

V

Citizenship, thus far argued, is different from a general approach to human or social rights. Even if it is indivisible (as fundamental rights are) and even if any kind of fundamental rights are, similar to citizenship, not static in an experiential manner, citizenship is genuinely dynamic in that - for practical purposes - we can say citizenship is ideal-typically concerned with the right to participate while fundamental rights are concerned with the right of being. We will now look at the significant emphasis placed on participation by citizens who are constructing citizenship for themselves. As mentioned in the introduction, the examples relate to people who are excluded from mainstream society. They attempt to combat this exclusion through constructing new forms of citizenship by combining non-governmental organisational structures with the structuration of the existing society which contributes for the further debate on the role, meaning and potential of NGOs in general.

Case studies

NGOs in Russia - participation versus paternalism

The Russian voluntary sector is struggling to find its role in supporting socially excluded groups and promoting an inclusive concept of citizenship. Among the groups with the longest history of discrimination, and correspondingly the longest tradition of civic activism, are people with disabilities. By definition, 'non-toilers', people with disabilities had no legitimate place in the socialist system. As much of life centred on the workplace, 'non-toilers' were not regarded as citizens. If people lost their capacity to work, their status fell sharply. They would be placed in a social arena where they would be excluded from the usual roles, and become 'non-people'. No facilities existed for people with disabilities to access buildings and transport; opportunities for employment were very limited, and disability pensions barely provided for a minimum subsistence. Even today young people with disabilities can expect only a limited state education that prepares them - notwithstanding their intellectual capabilities - for the most mundane occupations such as making paper boxes or strings, which of course do not require formal qualifications.

The remarkable struggle mounted by people with disabilities and their parents has been documented

by White (1999). This struggle was pursued by means of petitioning, writing to the newspapers, creating *samizdat* publications and attempting to establish their own union[4]. They were, in essence, fighting for their social rights and rights to participate in society. Their struggle however was invisible to the general public and not supported in any way by the liberal intelligentsia. Since the start of Gorbachev reforms at the end of the 1980s, public attention began to focus on the fate of people with disabilities as well as other marginalized groups such as those experiencing homelessness, drug-users and people with mental illness. The nascent voluntary sector, which even created umbrella organisations such as *Miloserdiye*, tried to assist those most in need. People with disabilities and their parents established hundreds of organisations dedicated to providing medical support, social help, leisure facilities and education. Disability was the sole or partial focus of two-thirds to three quarters of organizations established before the coup [of August 1991], according to one Moscow survey (White, 1999: p.139).

The overarching concern of people with disabilities' organisations has been with regard to citizenship. Organisations of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups were concerned with claiming recognition by the state. As one of the activists explained in an interview, "the disabled people's organisations were formed by people forgotten by the state". As White argued:

> "self-help group members would often have agreed ... that their most serious handicap was that they were not part of the working population and therefore denied full citizenship. Creating jobs for unemployed members was the aspiration of many organisations: a difficult objective, despite the creation of a number of cooperatives. In the circumstances, mutual emotional support plus energetic lobbying of local authorities for extra benefits were more common and successful activities" (White, 1999: pp.138-9).

Since 1992 the voluntary sector has developed significantly, both numerically and institutionally. There are now approximately 50,000 NGOs registered in Russia. Many of the organisations of and for people with disabilities are still in existence, although there are indications that their numbers have decreased in comparison to the *perestroika* years.

The co-operative movement generally was extremely prominent in the Gorbachev *perestroika*

year, after the adoption of the Law on Cooperatives in 1988. In 1990, for example, co-operatives employed 4,851,500 people either as full-time workers or as 'second jobs'. People with disabilities' organisations, war veterans and women's groups established many of them. However, the harsh economic climate, high taxes and low consumer demand meant that, from the beginning of 1990s, the co-operative movement subsided. Attempts to establish other types of business were equally difficult. Groups that hoped to provide jobs with good working conditions and reasonable wages to its members found this extremely difficult, particularly due to the cheap import of consumer goods before the devaluation of the rouble in 1998.

Subsequently, 'altruistic' volunteerism has significantly declined. Reports from groups that were actively engaged in recruiting volunteers during perestroika (such as *Miloserdiye*) show that most of their members are now paid staff (see also White: p.189). According to a 1995 postal survey (Stephenson, 1995), only about half of the NGOs reported that local residents were taking part in their activities. The survey of the institutional development of NGOs conducted in 1997 by the Charities Aid Foundation, established that four out of five of NGOs had volunteers. However, the report identified a peculiar type of volunteerism: those activists that were not paid were considered to be members of staff, with the aspirational aim of paying them if and when money became available. Almost all of the volunteers had a direct personal interest in the explicit cause of their organisation, or were relatives of those with such a cause. (Effectivnost, 1997). In recent years there has been an expansion of charitable activities to care for the homeless, migrants and refugees, street children and prisoners.

Professionals (in the sociological meaning of the word - teachers, doctors, lawyers, computer programmers etc.) who are able to make an independent living and/or to use the resources of Western foundations, have become a new driving force in the voluntary sector. One example of such an organisation is *Citizen's Assistance* (CCA). CCA was founded in 1990 when refugees first appeared in Moscow and when it became clear that the authorities were not ready to protect and help them. From the very beginning, CCA took on the task of legal consulting for refugees and forced migrants, and played an intermediary role between refugees and statutory agencies. Since the

beginning of the Chechen events, the influx of refugees has greatly increased, and this has made the activities of CCA even more important. Together with the human rights NGO *Memorial*, CCA has become a major voluntary organization providing help to refugees and migrants. They established the Network of Legal Assistance to migrants in Russia's regions, with financial support from UNHCR and the EU Tacis Fund, which has allowed it to expand further. The partner of *Memorial* is the *European Council for Refugees and Exiles* (ECRE), an United Nations' organisation. At present, the project unites twenty-five legal counselling points in Russia's regions. Lawyers working with the *Network* provide free legal advice to migrants in their regions, visit places of collective settlements, and take cases to courts. Hundreds of migrants have received legal assistance from the *Network* lawyers, and for many of them it meant obtaining a legal status and a registration permit, receiving pensions and child benefits, and the restoration of lost or destroyed documents. Through its Moscow-based centre, the *Network* challenges the Prosecutor's office, the state Duma and other bodies of central government on local regulations that infringe migrants' rights. This has proven to be very effective with several Moscow city regulations, as well as unconstitutional orders of the federal Migration Service, being declared invalid. In addition, lawyers visit collective centres for migrants and compact settlements, providing people who reside there with legal advice. The programme is also aimed at establishing better contacts in the regions and in Moscow between migrants and relevant NGOs, federal and regional migration services, local administration, and the Ministry of the Interior. With this aim, counselling agencies organise regional round tables with representatives from these bodies in order to discuss the migration policy of the region and potential solutions for problems therein.

Groups like CCA are an example of the effective mobilisation of middle class activists and representatives of excluded groups in demanding citizenship rights. Yet, in the classic liberal democratic tradition, many groups in the sector are paternalistic in their orientation and very rarely involve their 'clients' in helping themselves or assist in their self-organisation, let alone challenge the underpinning structural causality. This is partly a result of reliance on foreign funding, which has had unintended adverse consequences for their links

with their constituents. Sperling, who studied the role of Western funding in the development of the feminist movement in Russia, points out that:

"The most striking negative effect of foreign grants on the Russian women's movement is its divisiveness. In order for as many people to get funding, the incentive is for many people to form their own small groups ... Women's groups that succeed in obtaining foreign grants are often accused of trying to monopolise or hoard their Western contacts" (Sperling, 1998: p.3).

Among the other negative effects are shifting priorities of the groups' agenda to fit into the fundable priorities. The groups develop their own jargon and do not appear to be concerned about reaching the women whose rights they are supposed to defend.

"Activists are not driven to develop an idiom in which to discuss women's oppression and discrimination with the average Russian woman. Faced with the given economic opportunity structure, membership building is not their priority". (ibid.)

In many such organisations intellectuals, who have become the leaders of NGOs, chose to become incorporated into the state rather than encourage widespread democratic participation. Lomax even speaks about a "betrayal by intellectuals" in East and Central Europe who "have not openly rejected the concept of 'civil society', but ... have sought to appropriate it, redefining it to refer to their own activities and associations, and thus monopolizing its use to legitimise their own behaviour" (Lomax, 1997: p.1).

Some NGOs attempt to find institutional channels of influence on the state and to force it to delegate certain functions to the voluntary sector (for example, through the suggested legislation on 'Social Contracting-Out'). Much of the effort, however, is directed towards finding new roles as "experts" and service providers, without trying to encourage public participation and developing any new understanding of citizenship.

Travellers in Ireland - between parochial limitation and holistic understanding[5]

"Years ago there was no aluminium pots or kettles or anything like that. The farmin' people couldn't live without a tinker because they'd need big pots to get meal in, anyone feedin' calves, and buckets for milkin' their cows. And they'd have their

kettles to be mended. They'd be prayin' to see a tinker. "I wish to God there'd be a tinker around. They're around too many times when you don't want them!" The travellers made all the cans. But since this aluminium stuff came out, they don't want the tinker at all ... Oh, they couldn't do without the tinker and still they criticised him." (Connors in: Gmelch et al.: p. 8)

Though often equated with gypsies, there are good reasons to distinguish Travellers from them. Paramount amongst these is that their origin and living conditions have been particularly determined by Irish history. This observation is true both of their living circumstances and with regard to their social recognition as a social group.

Social recognition is of particular interest for two reasons: firstly, it would actually be more precise to speak of Travellers' *non-recognition*, in that it generally has negative connotations. Secondly, Travellers have always been seen as a classed social group and, moreover, closely associated with poverty. And unlike gypsies, Travellers form a distinct and coherent ethnic group, an aspect that is often neglected in considering their position.

In talking of Travellers' societal role and recognition MacLaughlin distinguishes:

"three important watersheds ... since the mid-nineteenth century. The first occurred during the nation building, latter half of the century and it witnessed the denigration of nomadism in bourgeois nationalist discourse. The latter insisted that the values of property owners, specifically those of the rural petty bourgeoisie, were to be hegemonic and that the Travellers had no place in modern Ireland. ...
The second watershed began around the 1960s when, like so many other rural Irish people, Travellers moved off the land and relocated in Cities. ... the move to the cities presented Travellers with more problems than opportunities. Travellers, and the long-term urban unemployed, now became increasingly dependent upon the welfare state in this period. ...
The third watershed in the evolution of Irish Traveller society began with the late 1980s. This is the period Travellers are still struggling through." (MacLaughlin, 1995: p.1)

This latter period is characterised by a tensional field marked by ongoing discrimination and disadvantage on the one hand, and a rights-based approach on the other: integration rather than assimilation, accompanied by the increasing self-esteem of Travellers themselves. (cf. for a general, brief insight see EHTS [Exchange House Travellers Service], 2000).

When we look more closely, it becomes clear that the role of Travellers expresses - one might even say mirrors - the broader development of Irish society. The discrimination against them has evolved within the context of a society that, during its journey to partial independence of Great Britain (via what Hobsbawm [1962; 1977 orig. 1975] has argued was the only truly mass, popular nationalist movement of the nineteenth century) institutionalised the values of the land-owning bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and professional classes - the victors in the conservative revolution of nationalist Ireland. Those deemed outside of this social group became marginalised and excluded. This included not only Travellers, but also the landless rural poor and the urban working class. As Ireland, particularly from the late 1950s onwards, stepped slowly but surely away from being a peasant society (a period that, whilst economically and socially turbulent, was marked by a 'catching up' with developed countries) its development was characterised by several contradictions (e.g. the economic legacy of being an ex-colony [its over-reliance on Britain as a trading partner] and its policy of autarchy [finally overturned at the imploration of the (1958) Whitaker Report]), one of the most important of which was the simultaneous and contemporaneous existence of highly developed methods of production and persisting elements of the existing subsistence economy. Consequently, a social system began to emerge that was characterised in some of its structured social relations by economic and social patterns based on the previous modes of social integration, as well as newer patterns encouraged by the economic development process. Travellers clearly fell into the prior situation.

So whilst marginalised from mainstream society, and thus being extremely disintegrated and isolated, Travellers are highly cohesive and integrated at a different level - within their own community[6]. Even though it tends to be based on highly centralised and hierarchic social relationships, its cohesiveness is based on the idea and practice of community solidarity and a holistic approach that sees them attempting to integrate work and life. Thus, their economy is "based on self-employment, on mobility of labour and transport and of the integration of home space and work space." (Harvey, 1994: p.34)

Two features of note in particular emerge here:

First, there is a contradiction between this understanding of a distinct Traveller economy and the fact that "the Traveller economy has traditionally appeared to outside observers as chaotic and disorganised." (ibid.) Second, many features that characterise this economy are actually the very same pattern of economic behaviour that is currently being promoted as an alternative to traditional employment structures. The idea mentioned earlier of the 'modernised *oikos'* is of some importance here. Indeed, the merging crises of the state and of citizenship are, in part, an expression of the fact that different modes of modernisation are falling apart. In other words: movements of integration and disintegration and of differentiation and de-differentiation are clashing with one another.

Whilst aware of the potential for inappropriate labelling, projection and clichés in this discussion, we would like to agree with Ní Shúinéar (1994: 54 ff.) who refers to the "shared fundamental cultural values [within the Travelling community] and ... concomitant cultural difference [vis a vis the settled community]." (55) Further characterising the Travelling community and its relationship with the settled community, she mentions:

> "self-employment, occupational flexibility, priority of social obligations based on kinship over everything else, nomadism as a functional corollary of the above and as a value in itself, strict segregation of pure and impure, versatility, adaptability, and skill in the delicate art of living among and supplying the market demands of the non-Traveller majority, without losing their Traveller identity."
>
> (ibid.; cf.: DTEDG, 1991: p. 5)

These arguments suggest the following:

q Although the broader social 'climate' in which Travellers live is extremely hostile to them, and that their life circumstances are as a consequence severely impinged upon, they maintain a strong and clear sense of community self-esteem (see e.g. Gmelch et.al., 1975/1979: 118; cf. Gmelch, 1977: 82 f.).

q In what might be seen as oxymoronic, the flexibility of their way of life is embedded in the objective setting of their environment, being especially true of their economic activities (e.g. ibid., 1977: p.157). Rather than being 'outcasts' and inadaptable, Travellers are characterised by an extremely high degree of adaptability.

q Notwithstanding the significant change in the life circumstances of Travellers as a result of urbanisation, their ability to maintain this

(economic) flexibility was undiminished. The maintenance of this 'traditional' economic activity (which largely centres around the recycling of various materials, notably scrap metal; and the small scale retailing of goods) - made possible by the gaps that opened up in the dominant economic system by the breakdown of organised capitalism - has been characterised thus:

"the Travellers' scavenging serves a valuable economic and ecological function in Irish society. Tons of steel, iron, copper, lead, and other metals would be wasted if not reclaimed in this way: the Travellers also recycle used clothing, appliances, and furniture from the middle class to the poor." (ibid.: p. 70)

However, this 'valuable function' often goes unrecognised by the settled community, and is occasionally demonised e.g.:

"a spokesperson for the Radio and Television Manufacturers' Association claimed that the industry had lost half a million pounds in one year because of the Tinkers' roadside selling and threatened that unless it was stopped hundreds of workers would be laid off." (ibid.: p. 72).

One suspects that the premise of such an argument - that of Travellers' economic strength - is somewhat spurious and disingenuous (not to mention incorrect), and exemplifies the degree to which they are marginalised in Irish society.

Let us now use this as background information to contextualise a project entitled the Dublin Travellers' Education and Development Group (DTEDG), established in the mid-1980s and later supported under the EU programme Poverty 3. Whilst in many senses the DTEDG has been a success story (not least in the significant role it has played in making the Travelling community visible; in advocating and lobbying their cause; in modelling the empowerment of marginalised people to take charge of their own situation), it is, at the same time, an example of the degree to which mainstream economics and politics cannot - indeed, will not - accept alternative forms of economic activities. Any redefinition of citizenship not completely in line with dominant systems is rejected.

Where the DTEDG has been successful has been a shift in the recognition of Travellers. Up to the mid-1980s Travellers had been recognised - stigmatised - in terms of being a 'problem', as 'people needing help'. "Interventions were viewed as being 'for' rather than 'with' Travellers. Travellers were frequently referred to as being in need of charity rather than rights." (EHTS, 2000-

06-10 [a]: p.2). A report of the Commission on Itinerancy (Walsh, 1963), had "the starting point ... that itinerancy was a problem to be eliminated, and rehabilitation, settlement and assimilation were the means for achieving this." (ibid.) The shift away from this understanding was led by a rights-based approach and the recognition of the distinct ethnic culture of Travellers. Rather than assimilation, the aim was to overcome segregation and discrimination by building up a support structure that would promote Travellers' rights to the maintenance of their distinct identity.
The specific objectives were:

q "[to] support the rights of Travellers to self-determination and equality;
q build recognition of Travellers' self-identity;
q develop anti-discrimination policies and practices; and
q achieve dialogue between the Travellers and the sedentary population." (Harvey; op.cit.: p. 9)

Thus, several features were part of the project, e.g.

q "Training programmes for Travellers and professionals working with Travellers
q Educational events, information days, seminars and workshops
q Development of national and regional fora for Travellers (e.g. youth forum, women's forum)
q Health awareness programme
q Scheme for the improvement of standards in Traveller accommodation
q Traveller heritage centre
q National religious pilgrimage for Travellers."
(ibid.: p.11)

Part of the work undertaken by DTEDG (DTEDG meanwhile became known as *Pavee Point*, synonymous with the building in which many of their activities took place) came under the name Travellers' Resource Warehouse, initially part-funded by the Government Department of the Environment in the form of a start-up grant as part of a recycling scheme.
> "TRW recycles paper, cardboard, wool, lace, timber and plastic, all of which are collected from business around Dublin. The TRW recycles these materials to provide creative arts materials for schools and community groups in the Dublin area." (ibid.: p.34)

What is relevant to our argument here is that this is an approach that combines economic activity which complements dominant, mainstream economic systems, whilst maintaining the traditional activities of Travellers. Additionally, such an approach facilitates the intertwining of economic and social activities of Travellers, vital to their orientation of 'reconciling work and life'. Furthermore, such an approach finds favour from the settled community, contributing to the battle to overcome prejudices.

The inter-cultural learning facilitated by such an approach is further exemplified in *Pavee Point*'s policy of providing courses for schools where children can learn how to re-cycle and re-use items which are declared as waste in other contexts. Such strategies open up a potentially rich two-way street where the settled community learns from and about the Travelling community; where Travellers and their knowledge are socially valued (a boon to a sometimes battered self-image and esteem), and where trust between the two communities can be engendered and nurtured.

There is perhaps some metaphoric significance in that Travellers, so often stigmatised and treated as the outcasts of Irish society, demonstrate the inherent value of their culture to settled society through recycling the waste of the very society that seeks to exclude them.

What needs to be stressed is that the successful approach adopted within the DTEDG is rights-based, and operationalised through a community development approach which places primacy on Travellers' own values and self-understanding, in marked contrast to the state's latter policies of assimilation. This though is paradoxical - what might be characterised as a variant of what Wolfgang Seibel called functional dilettantism (Seibel, 1992) - in that the state, through its failure to assimilate the needs and conditions of the Traveller economy, has given rise to the systemic structural conditions under which groups like the DTEDG engage in innovative work.

Lorenz has pointed out the structured mechanisms that prevent the full success of a project like the Travellers Resource Warehouse:
> "In this action field we are confronted with fundamental tensions which make it difficult to expand the concept of partnership. It was hard to put insurance companies off disapproving Travellers as haulers; working in a family setting was difficult for social welfare officers because they did not know how to calculate social security benefit for family members who had been only indirectly involved in the business; local governments regulate housing, who also forbid the collection of scrap; some regulations are in existence which prohibit searching public landfills

for recyclable material etc."
                    (Lorenz, 1995: p.208; translation: P.H.)

Thus the current system, i.e. the state, has nothing to lose. Only a fundamental change in the understanding and practice of citizenship could alter the structural situation. However, such a redefinition is actively undermined by the state. NGOs working as advocates of minority groups have no real chance of altering the system 'from within' - the best they can achieve is to carve out a space from which they can more closely observe society and government and, in turn, ameliorate the experience of socially excluded groups. In Ireland's current climate it can be said to be easing the bite of the Celtic tiger.

Whilst currently refuted by systemic limits, the following recommendations - literally in the case of DTEDG, and metaphorically for other groups - accurately represent what would be indicative of fundamental success:
q "access by Travellers to landfill sites to obtain scrap;
q financial packages which reflect operating rather than start-up costs;
q an end to discrimination against Travellers by insurance companies;
q facilities for recycling, sorting and storage at halting sites (at present some local authorities prohibit this); and
q legalization and regularization of Traveller recycling within the social welfare and employment code." (Harvey, op.cit.: p.35)

Whilst noting that the TRW meets its current limits prior to fundamental structural change, this is not an unmitigated criticism. Rather what needs to be stressed is the failure of the political and economic system (itself stemming from the actions of the Irish service class) to cope with such an initiative. The willingness of Travellers to integrate without giving up their own identity has not been answered in similarly generous terms by the economic and political system. The constraint of exclusionary thought by dominant élites - in a word, assimilation - binds the systems' flexibility, and successfully excludes those outside the mainstream cultural framework.

Conclusion

The discussion of the theoretical background and the two case studies raises two significant issues,

namely (a) on the political level, the role played by NGOs in partnerships with statutory organisations and the limits of such endeavours, and (b) of the prospect and potential of NGOs being capable of 'generating' citizenship. In the context of European integration, both of these questions are important. From an academic perspective, these questions are also central, as they are key to third sector research (or should be).

In looking at these issues, let us begin by painting some broad brush-strokes. Even in situations where NGOs play an important part in a society, their role should not be overestimated: their economic importance (and in particular their role in job creation) is not nearly as important as has been suggested in many policy statements, nor as it is presented in some of the academic literature (e.g. Salamon & Anheier, 1999). Nor are they a generic part of the political system and, as such, constitutive for citizenship. Rather, in our perspective, we see them as important opponents of dominant systemic actors, and advocates for those experiencing marginalisation. In this sense, they work outside both the policy-making and service-provision mainstream.

In this context, let us look at the question of 'partnership'[7]. Currently, 'partnership' enjoys considerable sway in social policy initiatives. In addition to the general acknowledgement of the positive role that NGOs play by the EU and national governments, they are also feted as significant economic agents - in particular as creators of jobs. This observation is compounded and legitimised by NGOs themselves, who also make such claims, sometimes at the cost of promoting their wider (and more significant) societal and social roles. This coincidence with the perspective of the state whilst denouncing the state in private (see Geoghegan, 2000 for how Irish community development activists understand their agency) might in an unsympathetic light be seen as a tactic of ingratiating themselves with statutory funding bodies, or, more sympathetically, as how state hegemony grinds down otherwise radical actors (see Robson, 2000). In either interpretation, this is a promising strategy in the short run. However, it is only a short-lived success. In economic and social terms we have to be aware that:
    "as long as integration is only understood in a negative sense, as the elimination of barriers in order to facilitate common interaction in the market, newly-built partnerships will be partnerships of the better-offs. Thus the 'winners

of integration' will produce again losers, they will cause new exclusion." (Lorenz; op.cit.: p.210)

Therefore, it becomes an important, if vexed, question whether it may be in the best interests of NGOs to value their identity and independence above securing short-lived state-appreciation. Such appreciation is likely to be maintained only as long as they complement the *a priori* mainstream system, where they "emerge as a principal agent of the dominant ideological hegemony" (Robson, 2000: p.9) and thus contribute to a legitimation of exclusion.

Furthermore, Russian experiences suggest that NGOs undermine their own original legitimacy if they shift from one sub-sector of work to another. As NGOs diversify, they come under increasingly severe strain, not least because the role and meaning they claim in their original field cannot (easily) be transferred to another. A potential criticism of such a move might be that they become self-serving organisations, being particularly true of NGOs involved in welfare actions (rather than those involved in developing and securing civil rights). In this context, and with view to further debate in the EU context, the question of external funding is vital.[8]

However, there is a further challenge: what are the implications of staying outside of the mainstream? Would this prove ultimately counterproductive in that the development of a wider understanding of citizenship would be constrained? By delimiting their work in this manner, do NGOs not leave the mainstream of society - i.e. social and societal development - untouched?

This is in line with (so-called) theories on modernisation and modernity that sees the process of modernisation depending on the ongoing function of supposed pre-modern elements - and NGOs are just such elements. In this line of argument, NGOs are specific 'modes of outsourcing': soci(et)al functions of integration, which cannot be provided by the political and economic mainstream, are carried out by NGOs. Such outsourcing:

q facilitates the integration of the 'reconciliation of labour and life';
q allows 'social usefulness' rather than being solely concerned with the realisation of exchange value;
q promotes socio-ecological modes of production;
q integrates 'semi-productive' and 'non-productive work'.

Other similar factors could be added. As Marx once wrote about the industrial reserve army with regard to the unemployed, NGOs can similarly be seen as a reserve army of soci(et)al integration. They act as buffer of soci(et)al integration. In the case studies we mentioned the paradox of the state's role in relation to the Travellers' project, which we characterised as a variant of what Seibel once called functional dilettantism, stressing that the NGOs *fail successfully*. The state succeeds by not adapting to the needs and conditions of the NGOs. In other words - and placing our interpretation outside of the standard dichotomous argument - NGOs are integrated by guaranteeing them a reserved space outside of the mainstream. Only by working in such niches are they accepted by dominant systemic actors. Thus, their capability of generating alternative modes of citizenship, of generating changes in the mode of the economic systems, is extremely limited.

What does this mean with regard to the crisis of the state, which was our starting point? One element of the crisis that we particularly mentioned is the growing gap between wealth and poverty. Clearly, NGOs do not and cannot fill this gap, but might, in a best case scenario, bridge the gap, so that some people have the opportunity to change their soci(et)al position. They can, of a fashion, redistribute means through 'donations' from the rich to the poor (an example of this would be the notion of 'making the state sit up and take notice of', for instance, people with disabilities). However, this is far behind the catalogue that we developed as a template for active citizenship, which mentioned:
q the right of the individual to act;
q the right of the individual to be recognised in its personality;
q the right of the individual to develop their own capacities in accordance with their own needs;
q the obligation of the individual to shape their own needs, capacities, ambitions and - in general - action in accordance with the given natural and social surrounding, its needs and opportunities.

These mechanisms are widely destroyed by processes of 'successful failure'. As presented in the case studies, success is - at best - a double-edged sword. The basic problem is that these organisations cannot produce the means of production. Thus, economic and political activities are limited to circulating and reproducing pre-existing modes of action.

Of course, at first glance this is a considerably pessimistic perspective. However, it is questionable as to whether this does, in fact, constitute a shortcoming of strategy of NGOs or an illustration of the petering out of modernisation and modernity. To at least some extent NGOs may provide a backdrop against which dominant systemic actors may be compared. Whilst a somewhat regressive notion, this is addition to the positive potential for their developing interstitial effects in economic, political and social terms: achieved through the development of original and new features, or - or as well as - reintegrating traditional aspects of life in a so-called modern setting.

And this is a useful point for us to conclude with: that many of the current debates on NGO management strategies, views on the organisation of work, and on community development are just this: taking previously-existing and widely-used societal systems and bringing them to the fore under changed conditions. Conservatism and progressiveness can be closely linked.

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Notes:

1. 'Occurrence' refers to an emerging consciousness about this development and the subsequent recognition of a need for action.

2. In many cases we find a confirmation of critical positions brought forward by Marxist theorists in particular throughout the late 60s/early 70s. It is striking that many of the factors elaborated in those days by communists and socialists are now being brought to the fore from completely different ideological positions.

3. Coinciding with more popular uses of the terms, it is incumbent upon us to define 'socialised' and 'privatised' as they are used here. By 'socialised' we mean action that is spatially and temporally located in the public sphere; by 'privatised', action that is spatially and temporally located in the private.

4. Another category of 'non-toilers' - homeless people - were subject to criminal prosecution and had no opportunity to collectively defend their interests.

5. It is important to note that this section is not primarily directed at the question of Travellers in Ireland. Thus, points made in relation to them are only briefly sketched. We mention this because the issue is heavily laden with prejudices and incorrect information. Often, the language used in connection with Travellers is an expression of attitudes. This means that any reproduction of quotes - especially from older texts - can mirror the *Zeitgeist*, i.e. the spirit of the times, and therefore are potentially erroneous and/or offensive. Furthermore, as this section is not based on an in-depth analysis and discussion of the Traveller issue per se, it is in particular danger of presenting shortcomings, misunderstandings and even unintentional prejudices (e.g. in the form of clichés). We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause to the reader.

6. This said, we must be wary of romanticising the life of the Travelling Community.

7. For Irish readers, the term 'partnership' may need some elucidation due the several uses it enjoys in current social policy discourse; for non-Irish readers, a short exposition of the manner in which we use it here may be of use for obvious matters of clarity. 'Partnership', as it is invoked here is taken to refer to the neo-corporatist approach to socio-economic policy currently in vogue in several states, and notably in Ireland (this is distinct from 'partnerships' as taken to refer to local development companies responsible for spatially delineated development work in officially sanctioned areas of disadvantage), the principle of which underpins the national wage, tax and social policy agreements that have characterised the Irish socio-political landscape since the late 1980s, which now pervades nearly all aspects and social policy interventions and projects.

8. External funding because this issue transcends simply state funding, even if the two are closely related.