

Making up the Welsh Citizen: Wales and the Citizens' Advice Bureau

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The Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) Service¹ was formed at the outbreak of the Second World War as a means of providing advice and information to the citizens of Britain's cities, which would enable them to deal with the large-scale disruption associated with war. Since this period, it has acted as an independent, membership-based organization, which has provided support and guidance to British citizens facing all manner of welfare, financial or consumer difficulties.

The CAB Service, and individual bureaux, have in many ways enabled a British citizenship; it has encouraged British citizens to access their welfare rights. At the same time, it has encouraged them to be more active in their citizenship by volunteering to act as CAB advisers. I want to argue in this paper that the CAB Service – and most specifically the way in which it has manifested itself in Wales – has much to say about the changing place of Wales within the broader UK as well as more conceptual issues relating to the character of citizen identities more generally.

The identity 'citizen' has traditionally signified the membership of a bounded political unit, such as a nation-state.² For instance, Marshall's account of the development of citizenship noted how the nation-state increasingly from the eighteenth century onwards became a guarantor of certain civil, political and social rights.³ Recent work on citizen identities has noted a shift away from this kind of citizenship. Many academics now argue that the citizen identities that were traditionally associated with the nation-

¹ The CAB Service possesses a complex organizational structure and, thus, some terminological explanation is required at the outset. I follow the template provided in J. Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: Fifty Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge, 1989), ix-x: a single bureau will be referred to as a Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB); a group of bureaux will be described as Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CABx); the Citizens' Advice Bureau as a whole will be referred to as the Citizens' Advice Bureau Service (CAB Service).

² E. Isin, *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship* (Minneapolis, 2002); E. Isin and P. Wood, *Citizenship and Identity* (London, 1999); J. Painter and C. Philo, 'Spaces of citizenship: an introduction', *Political Geography* 14 (1995), 107-120.

³ T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge, 1950).

state were largely passive in character.⁴ In other words, individuals were guaranteed a series of citizen rights merely by being born or living within a state's territory. This passive form of citizenship has been complemented by a shift to the practice of responsibilities by 'active citizens', whether in the form of 'neighbourhood watch' schemes to guard against crime, community initiatives to provide or support education, social housing and welfare provision, or the promotion of community-led action for economic regeneration.⁵ At the same time, there has also been a rescaling of the geographies of citizenship. Recent social trends have begun to undermine the nature of national citizenship associated with the nation-state. For instance, in the list of active forms of citizenship given above, there is an emphasis on the significance of localities as the most appropriate scale through which citizens can express their citizen identities. Citizenship is also being rescaled upwards. In Europe, the European Union has sought to foster a European citizenship.⁶ An increasingly cosmopolitan and globalized world is also leading to the emergence of transnational citizenships, which are promoted by diasporic communities or faith groups.⁷ Moreover, the notion of 'global citizenship' has been nurtured within civil society, particularly by aid agencies and environmental and human rights groups seeking to extend global rights responsibilities.⁸

⁴ M. Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London, 1999); N. Rose, 'Governing "advanced liberal democracies"', in A. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose (eds), *Foucault and Political Reason* (London, 1996), 37-64.

⁵ B. Edwards, 'Charting the discourse of community action: perspectives from practice in rural Wales', *Journal of Rural Studies* 14 (1998), 63-78; L. Herbert-Cheshire, 'Contemporary strategies for rural community development in Australia: a governmentality perspective', *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 (2000), 203-215; A. Kearns, 'Active citizenship and urban governance', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17 (1992), 20-34; A. Kearns, 'Active citizenship and local governance: political and geographical dimensions', *Political Geography* 14 (1995), 155-175.

⁶ K. Eder and B. Giesen, *European Citizenship: Between National Legacies and Postnational Projects* (Oxford, 2001); E.M. Meehan, *Citizenship and the European Community* (London, 1993).

⁷ R. Ball and N. Piper, 'Globalisation and the regulation of citizenship: Filipino migrant workers in Japan', *Political Geography* 21 (2002), 1013-1034; R. Baubock, *Transnational Citizenship: Membership and Rights in International Migration* (London, 1994); A. Carruthers, 'The accumulation of national belonging in transnational fields: ways of being at home in Vietnam', *Identities* 9 (2002), 423-444; S. Sassen, 'Towards post-national and denationalized citizenship', in E. Isin and B. Turner (eds), *The Handbook of Citizenship Studies* (London, 2002), 277-291.

⁸ L. Desforges, 'The formation of global citizenship: international non-governmental organisations in Britain', *Political Geography* 23 (2004), 549-569; E. Jelin, 'Towards a global environmental citizenship?', *Citizenship Studies* 4 (2000), 47-63; M. Muetzelfeldt and G. Smith, 'Civil society and global governance: the possibilities for global citizenship', *Citizenship Studies* 6 (2002), 55-75; M. Roche, 'The Olympics and global citizenship', *Citizenship Studies* 6 (2002), 165-181.

Rather than seeking to reaffirm the lines of separation between these different kinds of citizenship, I would argue that we need to examine the connections between them. Instead of focusing on the marked differences between passive citizenship and active forms of citizenship, we need to examine the important connections between them. As Brown has shown with regard to AIDS organizations in Vancouver, voluntary organizations involved in the reproduction of sexual citizenship lie within and without the influence of a more state-orientated citizenship.⁹ The line of separation between passive and active kinds of citizenship is thus blurred. Neither has the evolution of new scales of citizenship diminished the significance or potency of national citizenship. The scales of citizenship are fluid and inter-dependent. Members of diasporic communities, for example, frequently adhere to ideas of both national and transnational citizenship.¹⁰ Yuval-Davis and Painter have developed notions of 'multi-layered' or 'multi-level' citizenship in order to portray the way in which citizenship is defined by an engagement with different scales of political authority.¹¹

This paper uses this conceptual middle ground to examine the role of the CAB Service in enabling citizen identities within Wales. In general terms, it can be argued that the CAB Service has always occupied a twilight zone between the state and civil society and thus between passive and active forms of citizenship. Since its formation in 1939 'as an emergency service of free and unbiased information and advice *for* citizens and *by* citizens,' individual CABs have been staffed by volunteers, with each bureau existing as a semi-autonomous charity.¹² Similarly, the National Committee of CAB and subsequently the National Association of CAB, which have guided the actions of the various bureaux, have existed as independent charitable bodies. The CAB Service reflects an active form of citizenship that exists beyond the orbit of state control. Conversely, there are strong links between the CAB Service and the state. Apart from a brief period during the 1950s, the majority of the grant received by the central CAB Service has come from the UK state, with

⁹ M. Brown, *RePlacing Citizenship: AIDS Activism and Radical Democracy* (New York, 1997).

¹⁰ S. Carter, 'The geopolitics of diaspora', *Area* 37 (2005), 54-63; C. Nagel and L. Staeheli, "'We're just like the Irish": narratives of assimilation, belonging and citizenship amongst Arab-American activists', *Citizenship Studies* 9 (2005), 485-498.

¹¹ J. Painter, 'Multilevel citizenship, identity and regions in contemporary Europe', in J. Anderson (ed.), *Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings* (London, 2000); N. Yuval-Davis, 'The multi-layered citizen: citizenship at the Age of "Glocalization"', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1 (1999), 119-136.

¹² M.E. Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London, 1964), 7, original emphases; J. Citron, *The Citizens' Advice Bureaux: For the Community by the Community* (London, 1989), 1; Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support*, 1-2.

its largest current contributor being the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (formerly the Department of Trade and Industry).¹³ Similarly, individual bureaux have conventionally received most of their grant aid from local authorities of different kinds.

We also need to appreciate the way in which the CAB Service has enabled a 'multi-level' or 'multi-layered' citizenship. The CAB Service's main goal has been to enable the citizens of the *whole* of the UK to access their citizen rights. While the national scale has informed the CAB Service's policies and practices, it is also clear that other scales are implicated within its activities, most importantly the local scale. Citron's history of the CAB Service gives an account of the localized character of the organization:

Several official CAB directives are intended to ensure that the CAB is a service for the community by the community. The managers' handbook reminds managers that their bureau management committee members are 'your link with the community you serve.' Members should be 'well-informed about the needs of the community' and...an equal opportunity recruitment policy confirms that CAB staff should reflect the community.¹⁴

My specific interest lies in the way in which the CAB Service has shaped, and been shaped by, a Welsh identity. It is significant that the CAB Service has emphasized the need for a regional structure, within which Welshness has been recognized. The CAB Service introduced a regional structure to its operations from the very outset and this was emphasized during the expansion of the CAB Service that took place during the 1960s.¹⁵ The regional structure acted as a link between the central CAB Service and individual bureaux. An Advisory Officer was employed in each region, whose roles included promoting the activities of the CAB Service through the expansion of bureaux

¹³ Citron, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux*, 175-85; Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support*, 6, 7. In 2005-06, the income of the national Citizens Advice charity was £37.5 million. For the same year, bureau income was estimated at £133.1 million.

See <<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>>, accessed on 6 September 2007.

¹⁴ Citron, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux*, 15.

¹⁵ The Ministry of Housing and Local Government resumed their financial support of the CAB Service's central office in 1960, following nine years of benign neglect. At approximately the same time, the Molony Committee on Consumer Protection had argued about the need for consumers of all kinds to receive free and impartial advice and information concerning goods and services. CABs were viewed as the most effective means of delivering this advice; see National Consumer Council, *The Fourth Right of Citizenship: A Review of Local Advice Services* (London, 1977), 10.

and providing specialized guidance to workers.¹⁶ The existence of such a regional structure has meant that there has been institutional space within the CAB Service to recognize the distinctiveness of Wales. And yet, the commitment of the CAB Service to Wales, Welshness and the Welsh language has varied considerably. The following section examines three contexts within which a Welsh citizen identity has been implicated in the CAB Service over the long term, drawing on a range of empirical sources.¹⁷

Wales, CAB and the geographies of citizenship

I want to argue that three overlapping themes have helped to articulate the place of Welsh citizen identities within the CAB Service. The first relates to the notion of the appropriate governance of Wales as a territory within the UK. The second issue revolves around the need to pay heed to the existence of Welsh-speaking citizen identities, while the third is related to a perception of the existence of a Welsh citizen possessing distinctive needs. I deal with each issue in turn although I stress that they are interrelated and self-reinforcing.

1 Citizenship and governance

Much of the work conducted on the notion of citizenship has examined the connection between forms of governance and citizenship. Underpinning much of this work is a normative assumption concerning the need to ensure an appropriate connection between governance and citizenship.¹⁸ Such normative concerns have informed the governance structures of the CAB Service. The CAB service, especially from the 1960s onwards, sought to increase the role played by regions. Wales was one such 'region' within the CAB Service's structure of governance. Wales' existence as a region within the CAB Service had always been a slightly complicated affair. An effort to resolve some long-standing geographical tensions came in 1968/9 when the North and South Wales Standing Committees of CAB demanded the creation of a new

¹⁶ See, for instance, National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Council, 'CAB memorandum for NCSS review committee' (London, 1969), 6-8.

¹⁷ The empirical discussion is based upon oral histories and interviews conducted with individuals involved in the CAB Service in Wales since the 1960s, and documents produced by the CAB Service and individual bureaux. Interviewees were identified from official sources and a process of snowballing.

¹⁸ For instance, see M. Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change* (Cheltenham, 1998). There is another normative argument in which attempts are made to ensure that the geographies of citizenship equate more closely with forms of governance: such is the rationale that underpins the nation-building process and more recent attempts, for instance, to promote European forms of citizenship that would reflect the existence of European forms of governance, e.g., Eder and Giesen, *European Citizenship*; Meehan, *Citizenship and the European Community*.

Committee of CAB for Wales that would coordinate the activities of the CAB Service in Wales. The new Committee would assume the role of a governing body for CABx in Wales and would register CABx, as well as being 'responsible for CAB policy' within Wales.¹⁹ The Committee was constituted and assumed its functions on 7 January 1969. It had begun to register bureaux in Wales by September 1969 and had issued its own certificate as a way of demonstrating its independence from the National Association of CAB (NACAB).

The growing autonomy being demonstrated by CABx in Wales through the Committee of CAB for Wales led to a degree of consternation within the NACAB. The first source of tension was the issue of voting rights of CABx on the National Standing Conference of CAB. The voting rights of CAB organizers in Scotland and Wales within the National Standing Conference of CAB were rescinded in 1969 and they were invited to attend the National Standing Conference merely as observers. Their demotion led to correspondence between CABx in Wales and the Committee of CAB for Wales, in which requests were made to reinstate the voting rights of CABx in Wales on the National Standing Conference of CAB.²⁰ The second issue concerned the threat made by the Chair of the NACAB Council, John Wallis, to withdraw the right of CABx in Wales to benefit from the NACAB Information and Advisory Services. The loss of this service would have undermined a CAB's ability to 'inform, support and advise' its clientele.

John Wallis' letter also posed two significant questions: first, 'whether the CAB Committee for Wales speaks for all Bureaux in Wales, and whether it wishes to remain completely independent of the NACAB Council or, on the contrary, wishes to remain in the United Kingdom context?'²¹ Not surprisingly, given the drastic nature of these threats, Welsh CABx soon buckled and decided, more or less unanimously, to 'request the dissolution of the CAB Committee for Wales' following a meeting held on 13 July 1972.²² The resolution of the dispute, however, was to have further repercussions. The Council of Social Service for Wales, which had, until that point, provided administrative support for CABx in Wales – and some degree of administrative structure at a Welsh scale – chose to 'withdraw the secretarial services that it provide[d] for the North and South Wales Standing

¹⁹ D/CAB/AB/36, 'Committee of Citizens Advice Bureaux for Wales and Monmouthshire' (Constitution File of the Aberystwyth Citizens' Advice Bureau, Ceredigion Archives, Aberystwyth), 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, passim.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²² Council of Social Service for Wales and Monmouthshire, *Annual Report 1971-72* (Cardiff, 1972), 37.

Conferences for CAB' and for individual bureaux in Wales.²³ The responsibility for administering CABx in Wales was formally transferred to the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) in London. The limited degree of organizational devolution that had existed within the CAB service in Wales, and which had been augmented considerably in the period between 1968 and 1972, had all but disappeared.

I am interested in this paper in the motivations for forming the CAB Committee for Wales. What encouraged CABx in Wales to create a new Committee to represent the perceived needs of CABx in Wales? Unfortunately, sources of evidence that would provide answers for this kind of question are thin on the ground. It may be that the demand to create a Committee of CAB for Wales came about as a result of a sense of localism that has always existed within the CAB Service. This was especially prevalent during the 1960s due to the efforts made to impose a greater degree of uniformity and professionalism on CABx through the imposition of a registration scheme. An individual who was familiar with the CAB Service in Wales at that time argued as follows:

[The demand for a Committee of CAB for Wales] would have come from North Wales because they seemed to be anti-registration completely... So yes, the north Wales bureaux always resented the registration scheme.

And yet, the demand for a greater organizational coherence for Wales within the CAB Service derived from more than an inherent sense of localism. Some indications of the broader political and cultural reasons given to substantiate demands for the creation of a Committee of CAB for Wales appear in notes produced by the Director of the NCSS as a background to discussions with the NACAB Council in 1970:

The Council of Social Service for Wales and Monmouthshire has set up a national committee for Wales. It should be reported that the NCABC [National Citizens' Advice Bureau Council] practice of including reference to Scotland and Wales as part of the National CAB *regional* system has caused considerable offence in both countries and the NCSS representatives would be unwise to ignore or minimise this feeling.²⁴

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ LMA/4016/IS/A/04/077, 'National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Council: relationship with the National Council of Social Service, notes by the Director of NCSS' representatives in preparation for discussions between NCSS and NCABC', 9 January 1970 (London Metropolitan Archives, London), emphasis added.

The wording of the above memo suggests that members of the CABx in Wales were increasingly taking offence at the designation of Wales as a region, rather than a distinct country. If these individuals were beginning to question the nomenclature being used to describe Wales, then they may well have also been questioning the way in which Wales was being governed. Further light is shed on this issue in a letter distributed by the Council of Social Service for Wales (CSSW) to CABx in Wales prior to the vote in 1972, which was used to decide the future status of the Committee of CAB for Wales. The overall tenor of the letter gives the impression of a Committee for CAB for Wales and of a CSSW that is seeking to assert its right to a degree of autonomy from NACAB on normative grounds:

The Council [CSSW] claims that the CAB Committee in Wales is in the best position to know what conditions can apply to the Principality, both in registration and policy...we, too, in Wales have pride in our standards and are perfectly capable of interpreting the needs of the Bureaux according to our own conditions... Only Welsh people can be fully aware of local conditions.²⁵

Much of the rhetoric in this statement articulates the need for a Welsh organization to listen to and determine the needs of bureaux within Wales and, by implication, of Welsh citizens.²⁶

This narrative provides an interesting counterpoint to the more contemporary period when there has been an effort to forge new connections between Welsh forms of citizenship and Welsh forms of governance within the CAB Service. In broad terms, many UK voluntary bodies have had to think through the changing character of their relationship with the devolved administration in Cardiff that came into being in 1999.²⁷ Many voluntary organizations, including the CAB Service, have reconfigured their organizational structures in order to respond to the challenges of devolution

²⁵ D/CAB/AB/36, 'CAB Service in Wales: a statement of the issues involved' (Constitution File of the Aberystwyth Citizens' Advice Bureau, Ceredigion Archives, Aberystwyth), 3.

²⁶ The 1960s, of course, was a decade during which extensive nationalist and linguistic agitation was taking place within Wales. Although one individual familiar with the CAB Service in Wales at this time has suggested that it was somewhat 'isolated' from these protests and campaigns, it may well be that they provided an indirect context for the debates occurring within the CAB Service in Wales at this time.

²⁷ P. Chaney, T. Hall and A. Pithouse (eds), *New Governance, New Democracy? Post-Devolution Wales* (Cardiff, 2001); B. Jones and J. Osmond (eds), *Building a Civic Culture: Institutional Change, Policy Development and Political Dynamics in the National Assembly for Wales* (Welsh Governance Centre and the Institute of Welsh Affairs, Cardiff, 2002); K. Morgan and G. Mungham, *Redesigning Democracy* (Bridgend, 2000); E. Royles, *Revitalising Democracy? Devolution and Civil Society in Wales* (Cardiff, 2007).

or, as one organization has put it, of 'dancing with the dragon.'²⁸ As one worker within the CAB Service in Wales put it:

Well, I think we have an Assembly, that we have devolved and that there are so many governmental responsibilities now having been devolved to Wales...and therefore that needs to be recognised, and if we were to have an influence in Wales as an organisation, the national body in England and Wales had to recognise that.

Another individual within the CAB Service confirmed such a view by arguing that 'in a way, the politics that were happening in Wales in terms of devolution were the arguments that we used' within the organization. The discourses of devolution and subsidiarity that had been used to good effect as a means of creating the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) have also been utilized to sediment a firmer governmental structure for the CAB Service in Wales.

Two key themes help to illustrate the way in which the current CAB Service has sought to institutionalize Wales and Welshness. The first signifier of the distinctiveness of Wales is the Wales Committee. The Committee's functions were defined in 2002 and drew attention to the distinctiveness of the Wales Committee when compared with other regional committees within the CAB Service. The Wales Committee should:

- Represent the CAB Service in Wales to the Welsh Assembly and its regional fora;
- Advise the Trustee Board on service needs and membership requirements arising from changes in policy and legislation specific to Wales;
- Maintain an awareness of key developments in Wales;
- Develop and keep under review a strategy for Wales;
- Promote the CAB Service in Wales;
- Provide feedback to the Trustee Board on the effectiveness of NACAB Services to bureaux in Wales;
- Oversee all social policy work arising from changes in policy and legislation specific to Wales;
- Oversee the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme, including in the conduct of its own affairs.²⁹

²⁸ Wales Council for Voluntary Action, *Dance with the Dragon: A Guide to Devolution for Voluntary Organisations* (Cardiff, 1999).

²⁹ National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Cymru, *Wales Committee Terms of Reference: Developing the Policy to Fit the Practice* (Llanelwy, 1999), 2.

The embeddedness of the Wales Committee within the distinct policy and linguistic infrastructure created by the NAFW and its attendant organizations is plain: Wales is now different from English regions.

A second institutional change has been the appointment of a Director Wales to oversee the work of the CAB Service in Wales. In response to the CAB Service's consultation process on the prospective re-organization of its senior management structure in 1999, the Wales Management Team lobbied for the appointment of a Director to act as the head of the CAB Service in Wales. It argued that 'it is no coincidence that many of the major service providers in Wales have...implemented structural change...to be spearheaded strategically by a Director' and that 'there is a recognition of the need for a Director for Wales to provide vision, direction and to act as an ambassador for the Association with the Assembly and throughout Wales.' They further maintained that 'it is our view that it would be a retrograde step simply to apply the title of "General Manager". Wales needs a Director.'³⁰ The case for a Director for Wales was accepted in a meeting convened at the NACAB Head Office in November 1999.³¹ The status of the Director Wales, since its inception as a post, has been elevated when compared with the status of the Managers of Regions in England, although the differences are not clear cut as the following quote makes clear: 'there was the establishment of a Director for Wales but Managers of the Regions in England, although the Director for Wales has never been directly managed by the Chief Executive and has been managed as part of our regional networks.' The Director Wales possesses certain staffing and financial responsibilities over and above those exercised by the Managers of Regions in England, but s/he is still a third-tier post.³² Despite this relative lack of official status, there is some evidence to suggest that the Director's unofficial status may be higher. One member of the CAB Service in Wales suggested that the Chief Executive of the CAB Service considers the Director Wales to be, to all intents and purposes, 'the Chief Executive for Wales.'

As is oft-quoted, it is evident that 'devolution is a process, not an event,'³³ and this has the potential to affect the trajectories taken by both the NAFW and

³⁰ National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux Wales, *Director of Services Proposals for Services Division Senior Management Structure: Response From the Wales Management Team* (Llanelwy, 1999), 2.

³¹ National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, 'Notes of meeting on 11 November 1999 at Myddleton House' (London, 1999).

³² NACAB Cymru, *NACAB Cymru: Future Developments* (Llanelwy, 2002), 4. Members of NACAB Cymru have lobbied NACAB in order to re-assign the Director Wales position as a second-tier post that would be line managed directly by the Chief Executive of NACAB but this has not yet come to fruition; see National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux Wales, 'Notes of interview with David Harker, Chief Executive' (Llanelwy, 2002).

³³ R. Davies, 'Devolution: a process not an event', *Gregynog Papers* 2 (Institute of Welsh Affairs, Cardiff, 1999), 2.

the CAB Service in Wales. The increase in the scope of executive devolution in Wales, which came about with the Government of Wales Act 2006,³⁴ has the potential to lead to changes in the CAB Service's structures of governance within Wales. There was a widespread feeling among those interviewed, for instance, that there was considerable potential for further devolution of power in Wales and that this would necessitate the CAB Service to re-think its organizational structure in Wales. A discussion paper was produced and circulated by the National Association of CAB Cymru in March 2002, which elaborated on the potential costs and benefits of the further devolution of responsibilities to NACAB Cymru.³⁵ Although the results of this consultation have not been made public, it seems as if there is some disquiet at the prospect of promoting a further degree of autonomy for the CAB Service in Wales. One individual within the CAB Service in Wales, for instance, argued that:

I think if we get to a point where there is full devolution to a Welsh parliament we would probably have to very carefully look at that...I still think that there are questions about whether that is a good or a bad thing.

The reasons given for maintaining a close link with the central CAB Service were numerous, including issues relating to the viability of an autonomous CAB Service for Wales, along with its ability to influence important policy agendas at an English and Welsh scale and to source adequate funding. In addition, it was argued that many of the policy spheres that affect CABx's clients in Wales still derive from Westminster, which warrants the maintenance of a strong association between NACAB Cymru and its parent organization.

Furthermore, many in the organization believed that the creation of an independent CAB Service for Wales would imperil the quality of advice that would be given to the Service's clients, thus undermining its whole reason for existence. One individual who has long campaigned for a greater organizational awareness within CAB of the distinctiveness of Wales, still maintained that demands for an independent CAB Service for Wales be approached with caution: 'I certainly think we need to maintain standards. In the final reckoning, it's the people that need the help that are important; that's more important than anything else. That's the point of the organisation.'

2 Wales, CAB and linguistic citizenship

For much of its period in existence, the CAB Service has not recognized the significance of the Welsh language as a marker of Welsh citizen identity. An individual familiar with the workings of the CAB Service in Wales during the

³⁴ HM Government, *Government of Wales Act* (HMSO, London, 2006).

³⁵ NACAB Cymru, *NACAB Cymru: Future Developments*.

1960s and 1970s maintained that the CAB Service at that time did not consider the implications of the Welsh language for the way in which it worked. By the late 1980s, however, some within the CAB Service in Wales were beginning to question the way in which the organization was failing to attune itself to the Welsh language. A report compiled at the behest of the North Wales Area Office of the NACAB examined the degree to which the CAB Service could be perceived as a 'powerful anglicising influence, particularly in North Wales.'³⁶ The main causes of concern were the lack of Welsh-speaking volunteers working within CABx and the lack of Welsh-speaking clients seeking advice from CABx. The linguistic make-up of CABx in north-west Wales failed to match the organization's stated aim to 'broadly reflect the communities they serve' and the fact that 'individuals should not suffer through an inability to express their needs effectively.'³⁷ The research concluded that 'the Welsh language does not appear to be a major factor affecting the willingness of potential or actual clients to use the service.'³⁸ Nonetheless, the fact that the research was commissioned illustrates how certain individuals within the CAB Service in Wales believed that there was a potential for the lack of Welsh-speaking staff within CABx to affect the organization's ability to fulfil its stated goals.

The implementation of the Welsh Language Act in 1993 has led to a re-assessment of the place of the Welsh language within the organization. The goal of the Act, as is well known, has been to 'promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in Wales, and in particular its use in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice on the basis of equality with English.'³⁹ While the terms of the Act have meant that it has been more concerned with increasing the use of the Welsh language within the public sphere, its influence has also extended into the voluntary sector. A paper prepared for the NACAB Council in London in 1999, for instance, stated that 'all bodies which, whilst not themselves under a duty, but which provide a public service as part of a contract or service level agreement with a public body have responsibilities [under the Act], by implication.'⁴⁰ The CAB Service has deemed it necessary to adopt a Welsh Language Scheme itself, which affects the policies and practices of the organization in Wales and, indeed, further afield. NACAB views their commitment to the Welsh language as something that is part of its role as an enabler of the linguistic citizenship of the people of Wales. It states that 'NACAB should be preparing for a new generation of users who will not only need a service in the medium of Welsh,

³⁶ J. McAllister, *Provision and Participation: the Citizens Advice Bureau Service in Wales* (London, 1988), 1.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 4.

³⁹ Quoted in G. Williams and D. Morris, *Language Planning and Language Use: Wales in a Global Age* (Cardiff, 1999), 172.

⁴⁰ NACAB Council, *Discussion Paper on the Welsh Language Scheme* (London, 1999).

but will regard it as one of their rights of citizenship.’⁴¹ The actual content of the Scheme itself is not particularly controversial and echoes similar language policies adopted by a variety of public and quasi-public bodies in Wales in recent years.⁴²

I want to focus briefly on two significant geographical issues that inform the CAB Service's Welsh Language Scheme. The first point is that the Welsh Language Scheme applies to the activities of the CAB Service in both England and Wales. Particular tensions have arisen in this regard. While it has been maintained by certain members of NACAB Wales that the central NACAB organization was seeking to promote a ‘cultural shift in attitudes’ towards the Welsh language, others within NACAB Wales were more critical.⁴³ One individual stated, for instance, that ‘“Welsh-proofing” should be something that exists at the beginning of the policy process and not some sort of add-on at the end.’ Another individual, when quizzed on the impact of the Welsh Language Scheme on the central NACAB structures, joked that ‘well, they’ve got it on the shelf somewhere!’ Part of the problem derives from staffing changes within the central NACAB organization, which means that new staff have to be periodically ‘re-educated’ concerning the significance of the Welsh language. The efforts made by members of NACAB Cymru to remind their English colleagues of the significance of the Welsh Language Act also had the potential to lead to tensions between staff in the two organizations: ‘it causes problems with our relation [with CAB centrally] because we’re always complaining that the Welsh language is being left out.’

The other geographical issue concerns the existence of a varying commitment within Wales to the Scheme. In a document prepared by the NACAB Cymru Committee in 2000, it was noted that there were significant differences in the attitudes of the North Wales and South Wales Area Committees to the draft Welsh Language Scheme, with the latter arguing that the Scheme should be re-designed in order to take account ‘of different Welsh language requirements across Wales.’⁴⁴ Evidence of the lack of sympathy expressed towards the Welsh Language Scheme among certain CABx in Wales can be found in the feedback provided on presentations made by NACAB Cymru to the four regional CABx forums in September 2003. It is noticeable that by far the most critical responses to the Welsh Language

⁴¹ Ibid, 7.

⁴² NACAB, *A Welsh Language Scheme for the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and the CAB Service* (London, 1999).

⁴³ For instance, see NACAB Cymru, ‘Minutes of the Welsh Language Implementation Group meeting held on 30 June 2003’ (2003).

⁴⁴ NACAB Cymru, *Welsh Language Scheme Implementation Programme: Discussion Paper* (Llanelwyl, 2000), 2.

Scheme emerged from the South-East Wales CABx forum. Comments here included: 'Newport CAB do not use Welsh at all as there is no need'; 'Bilingualism diverts resources from other areas and creates an additional barrier for Black and Ethnic Minority people'; 'Bureaux should have the ability to opt out of receiving Welsh language materials.'⁴⁵ Possibly as a result of comments such as these, one worker within NACAB Cymru maintained that 'we come across anti-Welsh attitudes in some areas because of the perception of what the point of the Welsh language is as a national language and as a language of citizenship.' Difficulties arise when trying to change these attitudes. The same individual argued that 'it's difficult because on the one hand you're acting as someone who provides a service for the organization but also trying to lead the organization.' NACAB Cymru's main tactic has been to refer to the CAB Service's commitment to social justice: 'we are an organization that aims to deal with cases of racism and social exclusion so it fits into that.' It remains to be seen whether such tactics will avail in facilitating the CAB Service's goal of promoting the linguistic rights of Welsh citizens.

3 The needs of the Welsh citizen

In this final section I want to examine the relationship between the CAB Service in Wales and a Welsh citizen, who is said to possess certain attributes and needs. I consider two themes. The first is the degree to which the identity of the Welsh citizen has influenced the activities of the CAB Service and CABx in Wales, while the second focuses on how the broader governmental structures existing in contemporary Wales have enabled the CAB Service to meet the distinctive needs of the Welsh citizen.

Although it remains largely unstated in official contexts, many of the individuals interviewed maintained that there was something that was distinct about the Welsh culture that impacted on the work of the CAB Service in Wales. It was argued that the socialist communitarian tradition, which has been prevalent in Wales over the long term, has chimed well with the ethos of the CAB Service.⁴⁶ One individual argued as such:

There are lots of those things that are very embedded in the Welsh culture about people having to work together to make sure that everybody gets the right thing and what they need is quite embedded in Wales...Because there isn't a right-wing

⁴⁵ NACAB Cymru, 'Minutes of the Welsh Language Implementation Group meeting held on 27 October 2003' (2003).

⁴⁶ On the broader issue of the Welsh socialist and communitarian tradition, see L. Abse, *Margaret, Daughter of Beatrice: A Politician's Psycho-biography of Margaret Thatcher* (London, 1989), 173; D. Smith, *Out of the People: A Century in Labour* (Aberystwyth, 2001); G.A. Williams, *When was Wales?* (Harmondsworth, 1982).

politics in Wales and that, in a way, fits with the culture of the organization.

The existence of certain commonalities between a Welsh culture and the CAB Service meant that the latter has worked more effectively in Wales than it has in some other regions of the UK. It was suggested by another individual that the emphasis placed within Wales on a grass-roots democracy deriving from the non-conformist tradition had also enabled the CAB Service to work more effectively and democratically than it has elsewhere:

[Wales] is some sort of model in many ways...for instance with our forums that represent a far more democratic model...and that is more consistent with our tradition, well the chapel tradition where everyone more or less was on the same level.

Conversely, it was argued that certain facets of Welsh culture may also have limited its potential. When discussing the relative lack of use made of CABx by Welsh-speakers in north-west Wales, one individual suggested that this was less to do with the perceived anglicized character of the organization than it was a reflection of the existence of alternative networks of support amongst Welsh speakers: the chapel, the school and so on. While the role played by these organizations has decreased markedly in recent years, there was still a belief that 'psychologically there was still something remaining in the Welsh psyche, that you didn't go to an office to ask for help.' These statements were not based on any empirical research but they are suggestive of a different kind of association between the CAB Service and Welsh society, which is based upon the particular qualities associated with Welsh identity.

The second theme is the way in which the governmental distinctiveness of Wales has enabled the CAB Service to meet more effectively the needs of the Welsh citizen. A number of different issues were raised, which had gained widespread currency amongst those individuals involved in the CAB Service in Wales. A number of individuals within NACAB Cymru emphasized that they had been far more successful in influencing the social policy agenda in Wales than their counterparts in England:

Two or three policy sectors have been introduced and I think our colleagues in England have been a bit jealous of them. One of them is the policy to cancel prescription charges in Wales and that was

an argument that was based on evidence by CAB.⁴⁷

NACAB Cymru produced a manifesto prior to the NafW elections in 2007, which it hoped would inform the policy debates taking place within the various political parties.⁴⁸ It is significant that many within NACAB Cymru emphasized that their manifesto had had a measurable impact on the manifestos of some of the political parties contesting the election and, more significantly, on the 'One Wales'⁴⁹ document produced by the Labour/Plaid Cymru coalition government. One worker within CAB argued that 'in "One Wales", where we have tried to influence the parties' manifestos before the election...we have seen that in the policy documents.'

A number of reasons explain the CAB Service's ability to influence the policy agenda in Wales. Additional resources and posts have been conferred on NACAB Cymru. Two important posts stand out, namely the National Assembly for Wales' Liaison Officer and the Social Policy Development Officer. The former's role is to communicate the needs of clients in Wales to policy-makers within the NafW, while the latter facilitates individual bureaux to contribute to social policy. Both roles are testament to the existence of an alternative set of social policies within Wales and the perceived need for the CAB Service to influence them. The fact that the CAB Service possesses a good source of evidence was also said to have contributed to its effectiveness within Wales. Citizens Advice Wales makes much of the fact that it 'has access to a body of evidence from around 300,000 cases a year in Wales and over 5 million across England and Wales' and that 'this unrivalled evidence base allows us to campaign for policy change nationally and throughout the UK.'⁵⁰ Citizens Advice Wales, according to one influential worker, 'knows what it's talking about.' In addition, the relatively intimate nature of the government and policy machine in Cardiff, when compared with London, made gaining access to ministers far easier. One individual within Citizens Advice Wales argued as such: 'Because we're a small nation you can get to meet people in the Assembly. The Westminster lobby is a much more structured and a much

⁴⁷ <<http://new.wales.gov.uk/716960/716965/1316247/freeprescriptions?lang=en>>, accessed on 13 September 2007. Another notable success for the CAB in Wales was the introduction of a national grant scheme for school uniforms for those families without the funds to buy them; <<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/archivepress/educationpress/edpress2005/706670/?lang=en>> accessed on 13 September 2007; see also Citizens Advice Wales, *Manifesto for the 2007 Elections to the National Assembly for Wales* (Cardiff, 2007), 2.

⁴⁸ Citizens Advice Wales, *Campaigning for Change: Citizens Advice Cymru Manifesto for 2007 Elections* (Cardiff, 2007).

⁴⁹ Labour and Plaid NafW Groups, *'One Wales': A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales* (Cardiff, 2007).

⁵⁰ Citizens Advice Cymru, *Manifesto for the 2007 Elections*, 2.

more complex sort of thing because it's so big.' At the same time, the relatively small scale of Citizens Advice Wales meant that it was sometimes difficult to develop the same level of policy expertise as was possible in Citizens Advice in England. One individual argued that 'it's difficult for us in Wales to provide expertise on a specific topic...and yet the expectation is that we're all-knowing.'

Yet, on the whole, there is a positive relationship between Citizens Advice Wales and policy-makers within the NAFW. It is likely that Citizens Advice Wales' attempt to influence policy development in a proactive manner, as well as its ability to enable particular kinds of Welsh citizen identities to develop, will be self-reinforcing.

Conclusion

My aim in this paper has been to illustrate the way in which the CAB Service has reflected and constituted Welsh citizen identities over the long term. Although ostensibly a national organization that has brought together independent local bureaux, it has also made use of a regional structure: as part of this regional emphasis, the CAB Service has had to take heed of the distinctiveness of Wales. Four themes emerge out of the above discussion. The first is a theme of change over time. The difference between the response of the central CAB service in the late 1960s and early 1970s to demands for a greater autonomy for the CAB Service in Wales and its response in recent years to demands for greater devolution is stark. And yet, this is not a wholly positive story of change. Some of the individuals who were interviewed stated their belief that the central CAB Service has not fully grasped what the new devolved structures actually entail and the way in which these then impinge on the working of CAB.

Secondly, the above discussion has demonstrated that the CAB Service within Wales is, and always has been, a highly variegated organization. During the struggle to create and maintain a Committee of CAB for Wales, there was some suggestion of a lack of unanimity amongst the various CABx. In recent years, too, the support of bureaux for Citizens Advice Wales' Welsh Language Scheme, in particular, has varied considerably. These variations are linked in large measure to geographical variations in the identity politics of the inhabitants of Wales.⁵¹

⁵¹ J. Osmond, 'Welsh civil identity in the twenty-first century', in D. C. Harvey, R. Jones, N. McInroy and C. Milligan (eds), *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times* (London, 2002), 69-70.

Thirdly, the above discussion has highlighted the way in which the CAB Service's project of reflecting and making up a Welsh, as opposed to a British or English, citizen, has impacted on the CAB Service beyond Wales. Respondents highlighted how Wales was viewed, in many regards, as a model of good practice. We witness this most clearly in the context of the proactiveness of Citizens Advice Wales in shaping the policy agenda within a devolved Wales. And yet, it is clear that the CAB Service's efforts to recognize the distinctiveness of Wales has also led to certain tensions within the organization as a whole. One witnesses this most clearly in the context of the Welsh Language Scheme adopted by the CAB Service. It is clear that it has posed considerable challenges for the central CAB Service in terms of the ways in which it seeks to fulfil its roles.

Finally, the empirical discussion reinforces and questions aspects of the conceptual themes introduced at the beginning of the paper. The discussion affirms the complex relationship between the active and passive processes that help to make up citizens. Despite being an organization that is dependent upon an active sense of voluntarism, it is clear that the CAB Service has been embedded within the multiple structures of the state. The Welsh case study also affirms the complex scalar processes that reflect and make up citizens: ideas of Welshness and Britishness, as well as local identities, have co-existed – sometimes peacefully and sometimes in conflict – within the CAB Service. These different scalar configurations of citizen identities have not existed in isolation but have impacted on each other in various ways.

And yet, the empirical discussion questions some of the assumptions contained within the conceptual ideas introduced at the outset of the paper. Specifically, it suggests that the more complex articulations of citizen identities, rather than merely being a feature of contemporary identity politics, have always existed, at least in the case of the CAB Service. The CAB Service has always occupied that twilight zone between the state and civil society, or, alternatively, between passive and active citizenship. In addition, the scales over which citizen identities have been promoted by the CAB have always been multiple and interrelated. It may be that citizen identities have always been more complex than our academic portrayals of them would suggest.