

# Urban Citizenship in a Sensor Rich Society

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**Abstract**—Urban public spaces are sutured with a range of surveillance and sensor technologies that claim to enable new forms of ‘data based citizen participation’, but also increase the tendency for ‘function-creep’, whereby vast amounts of data are gathered, stored and analysed in a broad application of urban surveillance. This kind of monitoring and capacity for surveillance connects with attempts by civic authorities to regulate, restrict, rebrand and reframe urban public spaces. A direct consequence of the increasingly security driven, policed, privatised and surveilled nature of public space is the exclusion or ‘unfavourable inclusion’ of those considered flawed and unwelcome in the ‘spectacular’ consumption spaces of many major urban centres. In the name of urban regeneration, programs of securitisation, ‘gentrification’ and ‘creative’ and ‘smart’ city initiatives refashion public space as sites of selective inclusion and exclusion. In this context of monitoring and control procedures, in particular, children and young people’s use of space in parks, neighbourhoods, shopping malls and streets is often viewed as a threat to the social order, requiring various forms of remedial action.

This paper suggests that cities, places and spaces and those who seek to use them, can be resilient in working to maintain and extend democratic freedoms and processes enshrined in Marshall’s concept of citizenship, calling sensor and surveillance systems to account. Such accountability could better inform the implementation of public policy around the design, build and governance of public space and also understandings of urban citizenship in the sensor saturated urban environment.

**Keywords**—Citizenship, Public Space, Surveillance, Young People.

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is clear from many current analyses that public space, especially with regard to children and young people, is under attack “Public space itself has come under attack from several directions—thematisation, enclosure into malls and other controlled spaces, and privatization, or from urban planning and design interventions to erase its uniqueness” [1:147].

In this way and in Australia, “positioned as aliens in the social and physical architecture of our cities, young people in Australia are portrayed through media and police campaigns as deviant, barbaric and unclean—a threat to social order” [2:87]. The discourse of threat is further exemplified in the separation of children from teenagers, where the treatment of younger children using public space is often dramatically different to that of older children and the most feared stage of all, ‘youth’ especially if “hoody wearers” [3:412].

Public space bears the imprint of the dominant order and this contested space also acts as a key site of resistance by subordinate groups. Reference [4:182] refers to a “spatial

politics” wherein Australian Indigenous people are constructed as a criminal and ‘untidy’ group to be removed where possible from public spaces and places of their choosing. There are important points for non-Indigenous people here also, if judged as not consuming goods and services in an appropriate, consumer-citizen manner, or simply being as [5:142] notes in relation to young people, “out of time and out of place”.

## II. CITIZENSHIP

The position of young people is one largely of constrained rights, where they frequently find themselves as the inferior party in respect of disputes within local communities over rights to use and occupy public space, which adults presume to exercise as a right of citizenship [6]. A useful starting point for a discussion about citizenship rights is [7]. An appreciation of Marshall’s approach to citizenship and personal rights is enhanced by knowing something of his background. By his own description, his home life was “typical of the higher professional classes of the period—intellectually and artistically cultured and financially well-endowed” [8:88]. His father was a successful architect in London, with homes ‘in town’ and country ‘retreats’ too [9:9]. Consequently, Marshall had little experience of what conditions were like for working people and their families. By his own account he “knew nothing of working-class life, and the great industrial north of England was a nightmare land of smoke and grime through which one had to travel to get from London to the Lake District” [8:88].

Educated at Rugby School, then in a seemingly inexorable train, Trinity College, Cambridge, a career in the Foreign Service beckoned. At the outbreak of World War One, Marshall, sent to Germany by the university to learn the language, spent the entire conflagration as a civilian prisoner of war in a camp at Ruhleben, near Berlin [10]. The German military authorities interned over 4,500 British citizens from 1914-1918. Ruhleben accommodated a mélange of artists, musicians, academics, merchant seamen, businessmen and tourists in a British enclave. While topics such as Greek and Byzantine art were lectured on, this enclave also displayed class distinctions of “a peculiarly British nature”. Living conditions for Jewish and black inmates from British Africa and the West Indies were marked by “systematic forms of discrimination”, rendering their situation vastly inferior to that of other inmates [10:10].

In the estimation of [11:93], life in the camp for Marshall amounted to a preparatory course in sociology. The young intellectual, who by his own admission, knew so little about the English working classes and perhaps a great deal about upper middle class privilege, spent four years in the company of captured merchant seaman, deckhands and fishermen, the

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“proletariat” of the Ruhleben camp [12:128]. This sudden immersion at close quarters with working people from Britain was a stark experience, as they gave life in the camp a particular edge, according to [12] himself a Ruhleben inmate, “without its seafarers Ruhleben would have been a very different camp, softer, less virile, top-heavy with intellectuals” [12:126].

Marshall was forced to confront the lived experiences of the seafarers with their moving accounts of harsh lives marked by entrenched poverty, disease and unemployment [12], [13]. The Ruhleben experience was cathartic for Marshall, in that it was “a temporary marginality thrust upon a most unmarginal young man” [11:96]. The sum of this “personal confrontation of an unexpected, uncharted, to-be-constructed world” was perhaps to be reflected in Marshall’s commitment to citizenship rights as a vehicle for moderating the inequalities of the class system and the welfare state, as a guarantor of civil, political and social rights for all [11:96].

Civil rights, emerging in the seventeenth century in England and developed further in the eighteenth century, are individual rights of “liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice” [7:11]. The legal system is pivotal in the recognition of the formal equality of all citizens before the law as a prerequisite to the acquisition of later political and social rights [14:220] “The existence of citizenship presupposes a number of political institutions such as the centralised state, a system of political participation, institutions of political education and a variety of institutions associated with the state that protect the individual from the loss of liberties”. The right to work is a major component within civil rights [7:249] “In the economic field the basic right is the right to work, that is to say the right to follow the occupation of one’s choice in the place of one’s choice, subject only to legitimate demands for preliminary technical training”.

Rights in the workplace, right to trial by judge and jury, rights on arrest by the police, all are part of a cluster of standards of civil life “Civil rights are the key to the modern world” for [15:37] who applauds Marshall’s formulation and considers the rule of law as constraining the powerful and providing those in a powerless position with a “haven of integrity”. While acknowledging that the system of law is open to abuse by the politically and economically powerful, [15:37] asserts that the principle of equality before the law “was the first definition of citizenship”.

Civil citizenship came about through struggle, sacrifice and conflict between the ruling and subordinate classes. The possibility that the accretion of civil rights was and still is, highly beneficial for the ruling class in its project of managing working class discontent and conduct is a central issue [16].

This remains a key question for analysis and debate, anticipated by [7:87] “If I am right in my contention that citizenship has been a developing institution in England at least since the latter part of the seventeenth century, then it is clear that its growth coincides with the rise of capitalism, which is a system, not of quality, but of inequality. Here is

something that needs explaining. How is it that these two opposing principles could grow and flourish side by side in the same soil? What made it possible for them to be reconciled with one another and to become, for a time at least, allies instead of antagonists? The question is a pertinent one, for it is clear that, in the twentieth century, citizenship and the class system have been at war”.

Civil citizenship comprises an assemblage of rights to personal freedom, speech, assembly, faith, ownership of property, equality before the law and legal process. These components conform to the classical liberal conception of largely negative freedoms, based on individual autonomy and protection from an overbearing state [17]. Individual and collective rights in the work place, the right to assembly, rights to privacy and the right to move freely around the sovereign territory of the state, are necessary contemporary additions to Marshall’s formulation, for [18], who suggests that citizenship rights turn to dust if they are denied for some or all persons residing within a society.

The fundamental civil rights contained within civil citizenship have largely been confined to Western (and Westernizing) nations and there are a number of countries where progress in gaining civil rights is fragile [16]. By the same token, civil rights obtaining in the West have constantly to be maintained, particularly after the events of September 11 2001 in New York, the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the passage of security legislation (in the current war against terrorism), in a number of states [19]. The security hyperbola following September 11 and the restriction of citizen’s access to public space are part of efforts to transform and secure public space with defensive fortifications and enhanced CCTV surveillance [20]. The impact of these and other measures has been to curtail rights to be in public space, in all its forms, and for any purpose, particularly if protesting [21]. Comparing the faces of pedestrians with known terrorists, particularly in the wake of the July 2005 London bombings, can appear to offer protection to a startled populace, but it can also lead to a denial or outright deletion of some civil rights [1], [21].

In Marshall’s formulation, citizenship rights mitigate many of the oppressive features of capitalism, offering a measure of equality, while not seeking to bring about capitalism’s demise [7]. Civil rights in a contemporary setting possess domestic and international facets. These include “the right to reside, to enter, to emigrate and to conduct an economic activity” and to move freely about on the territory of the state [18:33]. The rights to privacy and to enjoyment of life, with or without a family, also stand as basic civil rights. Citizenship as a set of claimable rights ceases to be viable if civil rights are curtailed or no longer available to all the citizenry of a particular state [18]. Civil rights are intimately connected to political rights and through parliamentary processes, rights are enshrined in legislation [16]. Civil rights however, are not sufficient alone for the protection and advancement of citizens, without the addition of political rights in the form of universal suffrage, freedom of association and freedom of speech [15].

Political citizenship, according to [7:42] emerged in Britain, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and is “the right

to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body". This is a formative statement of political rights fundamental to the experience of living and participating in a democratic society. There are however, considerable limitations to its scope for example, in the omission of children and young people. The absence of advocacy for children and young people as political citizens is a key area of deficit in Marshall's work and other citizenship theorizing [1], [22]. The lack of acknowledgement of the struggle for female suffrage and full citizenship rights is also a fundamental gap in the analysis [23] even if, when talking of "the adult male" as "the citizen par excellence" [7:250], he was doing much the same as his male social science contemporaries of the day [24].

Political citizenship is closely connected with parliamentary and other governmental processes, where citizens elect representatives at local and national levels of government. Participation in the political process is a central right and ingredient within political citizenship and can be divided into the categories of "*active, passive and truculent*" participation [25:47]. Active participation is marked by informed and critical engagement. Passive and truculent participation varies, from non-participation in voting (especially where there is no legal requirement so to do), and/or deep mistrust in politicians and the democratic process. This mistrust may be evidenced by the growing numbers of spoiled votes, particularly when attendance at the polling booth is a civic duty, as it is in Australia, unlike Britain [26].

Marshall was writing about political citizenship shortly after the euphoria of the Attlee Labour government's election in 1945. This triumph was a major departure in British political life, "For the first time in British history, a nominally socialist government had held office with an impregnable majority in the House of Commons" [27:49]. The enormity of this election win, in the face of the apparently unbeatable Churchill, promoted as "the man who won the war", is for [28:17], highly significant, "The 1945 voter was not so much casting his ballot in judgement of the past five years as in denunciation of the ten before that. The dole queue was more evocative than El Alamein, the lack of roofs at home more important than any 'national' non-party edifice, the peace that might be lost far more influential than the war that had been nearly won. And by refusing to come to grips with these problems at all the Conservatives signed and sealed their defeat.

Reference [7] did not anticipate at this time of such rich promise for the social democratic welfare state, the economic crises and widespread disillusionment at the political process to come in the 1970s/80s. Consequently, he was not detained by questions as to the quality and depth of political participation. However, both the quality and depth of political participation do require investigation [15]. Taking up this challenge [29], advocates the extension of the suffrage to young people aged 16. Such a development might foster a genuine sense of political and also, social, citizenship for the present and future [30].

This brief conceptualisation of rights conveys some of the major components of Marshall's schema of civil, political and social citizenship rights, requiring rights for citizens, underwritten and provided by the state and also responsibilities of citizens, in a complex symbiosis. This is demonstrated in his pronouncement on education, a key element of social citizenship [7:47] "Education is of such vital importance for the health and prosperity of a nation, that it is regarded as something of which the individual has a *duty* to avail himself, to the extent that his natural abilities warrant"

On the subject of health, again central to the enjoyment of full social citizenship, [7:49] notes that "It is just as important for a society to have a healthy population as to have an educated one, so the right to health, like the right to education, is blended with duties".

Citizenship is closely tied to the enjoyment of rights and may be understood at a quintessential level as "the right to have rights" [31:9]. In this sense, Marshall's treatment of citizenship refers to a complex, multi-layered entity that traverses legally based rights and obligations and also 'natural' or human rights. This is particularly the case for social citizenship, with its aspirations for participation, greater social equality and access to the benefits of health, education and a supportive and expansive welfare state. Civil and political rights to due legal process and to vote are written into established law conferring citizenship with a legal status [31:5] and are capable of recognition and definition "with some precision" [32:115]. Social citizenship rights however, are largely about access to opportunities and quality of life issues and where legislated on, are codified within the welfare state and social security law that is highly vulnerable to changes in policy direction aimed at targeting or reducing claims to this right.

Social citizenship as considered by Marshall, connects closely with elements of the United Nations Human Rights enactments of the 1940s, contemporaneous with and helping to shape the background to when he was writing *Citizenship and Social Class* [32]. Social citizenship, a creation of the twentieth century, is more amorphous (than civil and political citizenship), including economic security and equal access to health, education and employment opportunities. In Marshall's own words, social citizenship is [7:12] "The whole range from a right to a modicum of economic welfare and security, to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being, according to the standards prevailing in a civilized society".

Social citizenship is the key aspect of Marshall's 'holy trinity' for the purposes of this paper as it concerns areas of social life of major importance to young people. It is also a key site of their marginalisation [33]-[35]. Social citizenship involves participation in society in a variety of forms and while Marshall states that the systems of education and social services are institutions most closely connected with social rights, he did not detail how social citizenship might be achieved [7]. It falls then, to others, to illustrate this picture, with more contemporary analyses and ideas for social change [36].

Social rights differ from civil and political rights because they are provided by the state in order that a minimum standard of living is available. The level of and conditions governing accessibility to this standard of living, is a major and contemporary issue [37]. Civil and political rights have largely been (eventually) granted and enshrined in legislation across a range of democratic states. However, social rights as welfare rights have long been tied to participation in the labour market [38:3] “Social and economic citizenship is going through a period of bad health, and does not seem to be able to recover in the near future; it was always a conditional part of citizenship, but today that conditionality—especially work-conditionality—is being intensified, and workfare and welfare-to-work proposals are increasingly popular among governments and policy-makers—and among a growing part of public opinion”. Social citizenship is also about human dignity, to be guaranteed by the welfare state to ensure that individuals have the material and emotional wherewithal to take part in society. The centrality of a state guarantee of adequate resources is key to being human [38]. This perception of humanity is linked to concepts of liberty and freedom, notably in the work of [39]-[42].

Civil, political and social citizenship rights are all relevant to children and young people as users of public space and link to a form of ‘spatial citizenship’ in terms of liveability, social, spatial and emotional well-being and sustainability [43] and these are necessary elements of becoming ‘satisfactory’ citizens in the broadest sense, as indicated by [44:48] “The tolerance, the room for great difference among neighbours—differences that often go far deeper than differences in colour are possible and normal only when streets of great cities have built-in equipment allowing strangers to dwell in peace together on civilised but essentially dignified and reserved terms. Lowly unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city’s wealth of public life may grow”.

The perception by young people that they are excluded from participation in community life and decision making is supported by my own research undertaken with 1100 high school students in Brisbane and nearby Logan City, where a profound sense of wanting to be a valued part of their local communities was evident [45]. The importance of place, space and neighbourhood or “place-rootedness” [46:234] to the physical and emotional maturity and well-being of children and young people and development of a “place-bound identity” [47:440] is now strongly established [48]-[51]. However, the richness and complexity of their use of a range of public and semi-public spaces is often dismissed by those for whom public space is an adult territory [52].

Not merely “under catered for in public open spaces” [53:55] it can be said that children and young people (to varying extents due to age, location and socio-economic factors) are driven from “the street into their bedrooms” [54:9] where they are no longer “free-range more battery-reared” [55:3]. Not only is their marginalisation from public space exacerbated, but their marginalisation from citizenship, as mere “citizens- in- the- making” and their active role in

making and re-making public space or the “micro-spaces of citizenship” also goes largely unregarded, but not unwatched, through camera and other electronic surveillance [56:9], [57], [58], [45].

### III. SURVEILLANCE

The phenomenon of routine mass surveillance largely coincides with the emergence of the ‘risk society’. Which comes about when the ‘social, political, ecological, and individual risks created by the momentum of innovation elude increasingly the control and protective institutions of industrial society’ [59:27]. Importantly and as this paper suggests, the surveillance gaze (in all its forms) does not fall evenly on all citizens as [5] established in relation to the CCTV surveillance of urban poor young people.

Young people (along with a number of ‘out’ groups such as the homeless, poor and at times, older people) are “positioned as ‘other’ in the social and physical architecture of our cities” [60:26] and are at the receiving end of a multitude of ‘exclusionary practices’ [34], [35], [61]. Children and young people are highly visible users of urban public space as they have limited resources to effectively shield their presence from public view [6], [57], [62]-[65]. Public space hails them with the (often false) promise of inclusion and fulfilment through consumption [66]. Basing interventions on ideas about community and ‘good’ citizenship rooted in notions of fixed, bounded and largely unified places marked by desire for consensus, is to misplace the variegated nature of young people’s connections to local communities and further a field, to Australian and global society [34:92] “Young people are problematised within this discourse for taking up public space in inappropriate ways; and indeed, a mark of strong communities is their capacity to ‘deal with’ young people in the urban environment by corralling them into suitable activities while selecting some with leadership potential for consultation, and by imposing law and order regimes to delimit their use of public space (for example, curfews or harsh penalties for graffiti) under the imperative of keeping streets safe”.

This view is supported by my own research undertaken with high school students in Brisbane and Logan City, where a profound sense of wanting to be a valued part of their local communities was evident [45]. The research was carried out through a self-completion survey, designed by young people who were members of Logan City Youth Council.

The methodology included a modified Grounded Theory approach to data collection, coding and sorting, to excavate key themes emerging from the data for further, exhaustive analysis [67]. Respondents were female (594) and male (528) aged 13-18 from 6 state high schools and 1 independent school. The survey instrument contained 17 questions. The relevant ones for this paper asked respondents about negative stereotyping, security cameras, facilities for young people, involvement and personal safety in their local community and schools, the meaning of the word citizenship and feelings of belonging. Key findings from the data were as follows:

- Some communities are less concerned about young people, than others;
- Most schools are safe, but a number are not. Teachers contribute to student's feelings of safety at school. School *should* be about belonging and inclusiveness;
- The word citizenship carries important meanings for most young people around belonging, community and taking part in community and national life;
- Most young people feel negatively stereotyped by their community;
- Most local areas do not have enough youth facilities;
- Public spaces such as streets, parks and transport nodes should be clean, well maintained and well lit, should have more in the way of facilities, such as shaded areas and places and events for young people and need supervision by human agents- camera surveillance alone does not give confidence that personal safety is assured.

More generally, the marginalisation of children and young people from public space may be exacerbated, through camera and other electronic surveillance measures [68], [69:9], [70]. The installation of ever more sophisticated, extensive and costly CCTV systems in a form of "surveillance creep" [71:29] into "every village, parish and hamlet" [72:88] is seemingly a 'badge of honour' for civic authorities desperate to be seen as decisive and 'doing something' about crime and so called anti-social behaviour [73], often featuring in promotional documentation boasting of a 'safer' city or town because of CCTV [74].

This paper has charted the rise of a surveillance-sensor culture, now firmly, possibly irrevocably, sutured into the repertoire of governance and control strategies deployed by urban authorities in many jurisdictions [74]. For [75:5] the wired, smart city challenges and disrupts Marshallian inspired notions of civil, social and political citizenship completely "The computational technologies proposed and developed in smart-city projects are meant to inform urban environments and processes, along with the interactions and practices of urban citizens. Citizen sensing and participatory platforms are often promoted in smart-city plans and proposals as enabling urban dwellers to monitor environmental events in real time through mobile and sensing technologies. Yet proposals focused on enabling citizens to monitor their activities convert these citizens into unwitting gatherers and providers of data that may be used not just to balance energy use, for instance, but also to provide energy companies and governments with details about everyday living patterns. Monitoring and managing data in order to feedback information into urban systems are practices that become constitutive of citizenship. Citizenship transforms into citizen sensing, embodied through practices undertaken in response to (and communication with) computational environments and technologies".

Fundamental questions are raised here about the form and meaning of urban citizenship and participation in the face of increasingly militaristic, hostile and technologically advanced (if democratically questionable) exclusionary measures [76]-[79]. In current times, with the threat of health pandemics like

Ebola and conflicts in numerous parts of the globe, questions of urban citizenship may appear to be tangential, but it is in urban space that many of the conflicts and possibilities for a society are played out day to day with consequences, both intended and unintended.

In this way space is fought over and won for progressive urban citizenship to be expressed and the democratic ideals espoused by Marshall and others, as positive, expansive and supportive, may yet survive the entrails of the Global Financial Crisis, austerity measures in the financing of public services and the intertwining of increased military-security spending and the decline in social security expenditures. The notion of the 'smart city' poses both potential for positive change and a furthering of the security crackdown of the fortress city, "The intersection of smart and sustainable urbanisms is an area of study that has yet to be examined in detail, particularly in relation to what modalities of urban environmental citizenship are emphasized or even eliminated in the smart city" [75:9].

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