

A Big Idea for the Big Society? The Advent of National Citizen Service

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Introduction

The promotion of a 'Big Society' by the Conservative-led coalition is central to the aims of Cameronian conservatism—an idea which has transcended possible dilution via power sharing with the Liberal Democrats. The Big Society attempts to rebalance the relationship between individuals, society and state, encouraging the sharing of responsibility and placing trust in people. Cameron has stressed his belief in 'rolling forward the frontiers of society' through the promotion of social responsibility¹ and by reducing the scope of government. Under Cameron, this faith in a Big Society, rather than the state, to address social breakdown has led to a civic conservatism designed to promote 'pro-social behaviour'.² Its emphasis has shifted from initial concern for 'broken families' to more ambitious aims to repair the United Kingdom's 'broken society'.

The Big Society has been hailed as a guiding philosophy that draws on the values of progressive conservatism. It seeks a shift from state to social action by breaking state monopolies, allowing charities, social enterprises and companies to provide public services, devolving power down to neighbourhoods and making government more accountable. Through public sector reform and community empowerment, Cameron argues the Big Society will create a stronger civil society, more moral, considerate and polite, one which instils social and political values that reject selfishness and irresponsibility.

Criticisms of the Big Society have highlighted its amorphous, possibly contradictory aims and objectives whereby the state seeks to withdraw from service provision in the name of liberalism and citizen consumer choice whilst also seeking the development of cooperative social capital necessary for community empowerment. A common allegation is that it is a smokescreen for public service cuts through the promotion of volunteering as a cut-price alternative to state provision, whilst some suggest it is a step towards privatisation of the welfare state. There is concern over how volunteering organisations, many reliant upon government for much of their funding, will be able to develop the Big Society in the face of expenditure cuts. Moreover, it is uncertain whether charities and social enterprises will be on a level playing field with big private sector providers when competing for public service delivery contracts.

The Big Society assumes that citizens want to contribute more to the running of their communities, but some doubt that many citizens have the time or desire to run their local library, start a school or contribute to the provision of other roles provided by the state. Concerns over citizen overload highlight that an extensive civil framework across the United Kingdom already exists, whereby over 25 per cent of citizens volunteer regularly and six million or more unpaid home helpers provide social services that 'save' the taxpayer billions of pounds each year.³ The Big Society could weaken existing patterns of volunteering by over-

whelming those already engaged in such activity and could also push citizens who lack the time and resources into running public services in their communities, or risk seeing them disappear. Nonetheless, although the Big Society narrative may lack a clearly defined 'end vision', many citizens support the reduction of the 'Big State' and are keen to take greater responsibility for some public services.⁴

Cameron espouses an associational view of civil society, whereby social responsibility and participation revises local communities and a sense of belonging. The origins of the empowerment narrative of the Big Society can be traced back to John Major's 'citizens' charters', whilst some of the proposals outlined by Cameron were already being explored by the previous Labour government. New Labour's citizenship agenda promoting community cohesion, participation and engagement, volunteering and the building of social capital is evident in the Big Society narrative. The Big Society draws on similar philosophical foundations to those that informed 'Third Way' politics under New Labour, affirming the maxim of 'no rights without responsibilities', and shifting emphasis from the citizen as a recipient of rights to that of a bearer of duties.

National citizen service (NCS) has been identified by Cameron as being 'at the heart of my political philosophy'.⁵ This article assesses whether a NCS programme helps develop the Big Society as an idea. It considers how NCS has emerged on the political agenda; analyses whether the introduction of NCS is founded on evidence from pilot studies in the United Kingdom and explores evidence from two distinct models of citizen service: the privatised programme in the United States and the more statist German model. The article concludes by assessing how citizen service has philosophical underpinnings which enhance our understanding of Cameronian conservatism.

Debates about national citizen service: examples from abroad

Debates over the rationale and utility of citizen volunteering or conscription are evident throughout advanced democracies. There are three primary issues. First, beliefs in teenage apathy and supposed lack of civic engagement are omnipotent, fuelling a desire to direct the activities of this group. Second, there is a belief that philanthropy and altruism can be directed into public channels. And third, political elites wish to explore the contribution to good citizenship development made by community service.

Within the United Kingdom, there is evidence of public support for a national citizenship programme in which all young people would be required to undertake community service: a 2009 YouGov survey finding 64 per cent of the population in favour, with only 29 per cent opposed.⁶ Amongst the youngest age category (18–34 year olds), the majority in favour was narrow, however, at 51 to 41 per cent. Moreover, there are significant ethnic differences in the level of volunteering in England. Black African (31 per cent), White (29 per cent), Black Caribbean (28 per cent) and Indian groups (27 per cent) are all much more likely to offer regular voluntary service than Pakistani (14 per cent) and Bangladeshi (12 per cent) groups.⁷ Community building, through empowerment and enhanced voluntarism, has been a common theme transcending successive British governments, but with different conceptions of how the state facilitates this. Whilst the Conservatives' Big Society has attracted considerable attention, the beliefs of the Centre-Left on the value of community volunteering are not markedly different. Under Gordon Brown, the Labour Government established a Youth Citizenship Commission and asked it to consider a national scheme of volunteering.⁸

While community service is seen as desirable, compulsion has been associated with punishment, a mild form of societal retribution. Offenders are sentenced to community service, required to provide their labour for the local community as restorative justice. This association of community service with wrongdoing and as an alternative to prison provides negative antecedents which citizen service needs to cast aside in its promotion as a positive experience. Significantly, the Home Office now declines to use the term 'community service', instead referring to 'compulsory unpaid work' in judicial sentencing. Community work had additional stigma in the British case, being associated with the Community Programme schemes of the 1980s, widely derided for operating as cheap labour devices, designed to massage downwards the unemployment figures. These programmes appeared bereft of serious community or cerebral benefit.

The demobbing of the last British National Serviceman in 1963 ended a period in which the state conscripted 2.5 million young male civilians for a two-year period of military service. National Service was resented by many conscripts and by those in professional military service. It was phased out by Harold Macmillan's Conservative government due to concerns about its economic, social, political and strategic value.⁹ Public opinion turned against National Service, particularly as it became apparent that those who had the resources were able to 'dodge' call-up. Since its demise though, there have been occasional calls by politicians and other social commentators for its re-introduction, usually motivated by concerns about crime, anti-social behaviour or the perceived feckless of young people and garnering the support of a sizeable proportion of adults, although the military have been less enthused. Although compulsory military service is unlikely to be re-introduced in peacetime, concerns regarding the attitudes and be-

haviour of young people and their apparent lack of participation in civil and civic society have stimulated calls for the introduction of a non-military national service programme. The recent economic crisis has also seen anxieties linked to the social and economic impact of youth unemployment and the possibility of a 'lost' generation of young disaffected citizens.

There has not, however, been a tradition of voluntary or compulsory national citizen service in the United Kingdom. There are a number of important binaries that shape the structure and remit of a national citizen programme for young people. Should such a programme be compulsory or voluntary (though often with universal aspirations)? Should it be military or non-military? What is the role of the state in design and delivery? Are young people to be encouraged to simply volunteer or to become more politically engaged? Should participation be incentivised through payment or other benefits?

Experiences of programmes elsewhere provide some insight when considering such dilemmas. Germany and the United States offer two comparative, contrasting examples of citizen service, which the proposed British model could consider. It is important to use examples from two contrasting political and welfare systems, with the German maximalist state welfare model differing markedly from the private sector-backed United States case, to assess the utility of service and the values it may inculcate. In the United States, the state is a mere overseer of citizen volunteering, which takes on a quasi-privatised form encouraged by large businesses. In the German model, there is greater state direction of citizen service, given that national government determines its compulsory status.

In Germany, citizen service (*Zivildienst*) is offered as an alternative to military service. It is compulsory, for a six-month period, recently reduced from nine, with an option to remain for a further three

months. Yet military and civil modes of service are avoided by a significant number of potential conscripts. A *Schein* (certificate) from a doctor, outlining why the citizen is unfit for either form of service, is usually sufficient for avoidance. Some 18 per cent of Germans are found unfit for military service annually, whilst of the 82 per cent who are deemed fit, 36 per cent elect for *Zivildienst*—a proportion that has been rising.¹⁰ Only males are required to undertake military or civil service, although a majority of women choose to do community service between school and higher education.

Perceptions of civilian service in Germany have improved markedly in recent years, those involved having once been viewed as deviants and draft-dodgers. 'Zivis' (conscripted labour) are now seen as important contributors to German society.¹¹ Nonetheless, *Zivildienst* has been heavily criticised and may not continue. First, there is the avoidance issue highlighted above. Second, there is the impact upon pay and conditions of salaried workers in the sectors where civil service takes place, such as in health care and social welfare provision, which account for two-thirds of *Zivis*. The influx of *Zivis* depresses the wages of full-time employees. They are supposed to complement existing professional staff, but this is no longer perceived to be the case. The intake of cheap labour is considerable, with over 90,000 *Zivis* providing community service annually, each receiving only a very modest allowance from the state budget.¹² Regional government tends to factor in the recruitment of free labour into budgets. The conscription of *Zivis* has been used to prop up the German welfare state. Third, the policy of citizen service is seen as sexist, given that women are exempt. Fourth, undertaking citizen service delays the entry of German men into higher education by a year and adds to their financial pressures. Finally, the idea that military or citizenship skills can be satisfactorily inculcated over a six-

month period has been contested. Few *Zivis* remain in the sector in which they work as conscripts, meaning that skills acquisitions are not sustained.

In the United States, successive presidencies have promoted community service as a public good, increasing the opportunities for participation. Citizen service has been evident since the 1930s, when three million recruits entered the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created by Roosevelt, to plant forests and build bridges and parks.¹³ This historical example offers encouragement for advocates of citizen service as the scheme was set up quickly and was successful. Whilst its origins lay more in national reconstruction than the promotion of altruism or citizenship, it demonstrated that large-scale conscription projects could be developed for societal benefit. The demands of war absorbed the CCC. Kennedy revived civilian service via the 'Peace Corps' during the 1960s, and Bill Clinton created 'AmeriCorps' in 1993.

Barack Obama made the growth of citizen service part of his 2008 election campaign and has sought an extension of AmeriCorps, committing US\$6 billion to youth volunteering from 2009–14 to triple its current annual membership to 225,000. Since its establishment, AmeriCorps has attracted over 540,000 volunteers, based mainly in schools, hospitals and community service provision. Crucially, AmeriCorps has attracted more than US\$1 billion of private sector donations—a level of corporate assistance the British model will struggle to emulate. Aside from the linkage to corporate organisations, the attraction of AmeriCorps is its breadth. State and national programmes allow volunteers to tackle community needs in the environment, education, public health and safety. AmeriCorps VISTA addresses longer term projects designed to alleviate poverty, whilst the National Civilian Community Corp (NCCC) programme offers educational tutoring roles, housing reno-

vation or disaster relief. The length of service under AmeriCorps varies according to programme, ranging from summer only to ten months in residence with the NCCC, which is a full-time 'Peace Corps'. Upon completion of a programme, during which a modest living allowance is paid, volunteers (aged over 17) receive an award, which can be 'traded' at any time over the following seven years against college tuition fees or to help repay student loans.

Community service is also a requirement for graduation at 15 per cent of educational establishments, covering 1.2 million schoolchildren.¹⁴ Community service may be distinguished from service learning, which is closely allied to improving educational knowledge rather than 'merely' assisting local communities, although connectivity is evident between school, project and community and the distinction is not absolute. Taking part in service projects is associated with impressive school results (although participating schools tend to be drawn from non-disadvantaged areas anyway) and as such participation continues to grow in popularity. It is aided by much greater corporate involvement than in the United Kingdom and greater fiscal stimulus to companies, alongside and employee benefits (for example, flexible working for volunteers) are needed in the United Kingdom to grow volunteering. Large corporate firms are involved in the sponsorship and delivery of community programmes such as City Year in the United States, under which young mentors are placed in inner-city schools in deprived areas, with firms often then recruiting these volunteers. This aspect may provoke cynicism over the extent to which participants volunteer to ingratiate themselves with the corporations providing opportunities and there is an element of bridging social capital (self-advancement) evident, in addition to the bonding social capital.¹⁵ Nonetheless, altruism rather than potential pecuniary benefit

does appear to dominate. Moreover, the development of self, in addition to society, has always been part of civic service.

Community service assumes particular importance in the United States because it ensures that provision aids the minimal residual welfare safety net. Despite this, community service appears to be based more upon breadth than depth. Although two-thirds of senior schoolchildren claim to have undertaken voluntary service over the previous months, only one-in-five had performed more than twenty hours of such service over a full year. Only a minority of teenagers participate in local campaigns, with boys nearly twice as likely to participate compared to girls.

In both of the two external examples above, citizen service is seen as a 'bolt-on' to school, college or other activity. Integrating voluntary activities into curricula has been a piecemeal basis. In contrast, the Danish model provides the most coherent example of securely grounded voluntarism, with diplomas awarded upon satisfactory completion of a set number of hours of voluntary work. The German model has been criticised as an unsatisfactory 'time-filler' between school and higher education, a rite of passage to adulthood rather than a sustained inculcation of good citizenship.

Neither the United States nor the German models—volunteering in one, conscription in the other—offer strong evidence of better citizenship, although participation in service projects is popular and tends to be associated with good schools and better results. The German model of citizen service coincides with the acquisition of full political rights, yet the link is not promoted. Social or citizenship benefits beyond the completed programmes are unclear and there is an element of 'box-ticking' in completion of voluntary activity. In the United States, voluntary service programmes do not educate participants in terms of their

constitutional rights and responsibilities and AmeriCorps forbids members from engaging in political activity such as working for a political party.¹⁶ The utility of citizen service schemes lies in the possible personal and social capital benefits that arise from civil engagement during transition to adulthood. There may be benefits in terms of horizontal integration into society, through meeting other volunteers and conscripts from a range of backgrounds, although these might accrue in work or college environments. The involvement of corporate organisations may also provide vertical movement opportunities in the American model. The lessons from the German and United States models do not, however, suggest longer term benefits in terms of civic engagement, or political development.

Towards a national citizen service

The rise of NCS on the political agenda arrived with the election of David Cameron as leader of the Conservative party in 2005. Cameron had already proposed the idea of a 'National School Leaver Programme' (NSLP). He noted that he was 'not suggesting a return to national service' and did not have a 'blue-print in mind' but sought:

Something that prepares teenagers for their responsibilities as adult citizens that enables them to meet people from different backgrounds, and to learn about the realities of life in different communities, and which teaches them the lifelong lesson that we're all in this together; that we have duties to our fellow citizens, and that self-respect and self-esteem come from respecting others and putting their needs first.¹⁷

Cameron encouraged various voluntary organisations, the Armed Forces and community group to develop ideas for a school leaver programme lasting a few months that prepares teenagers for their

responsibilities as adult citizens. In 2006, the first detailed policy statement of Cameron's leadership intended 'to create a national programme for young people to support their personal development and promote a sense of social responsibility as they move from childhood to adult life'.¹⁸

NSLP quickly emerged as a policy initiative which sought to address an increasing range of youth-based issues, helping tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour by giving young people purpose, optimism and belonging. A pilot programme was developed by an 'independent' charity 'inspired' but 'not owned' by the Conservative party: the Young Adult Trust (YAT), involving over twenty voluntary organisations. They proposed a 'two-week residential programme' followed by a 'homecoming celebration' in a participant's local community.

In October 2006, Cameron formally launched the YAT and elaborated on the type of programme envisaged, one which was 'something like National Service', universal but not military or compulsory, was residential and which sought to mix 'classes and backgrounds', that addressed crime and family breakdown and developed community cohesion, and encouraged social responsibility. He claimed that citizenship was 'not about understanding the workings of Parliament, or knowing the law. It's about relationships.'¹⁹

In September 2007 the Conservatives provided a more detailed overview of the aims and aspirations of a national programme and how it would be structured and developed. They outlined a 'highly-specific vision' of a 'six-week programme for every school leaver' which would involve a one week residential component, four weeks of community involvement and a final week residential 'Challenge' involving physical activities with the involvement of the armed forces, sporting and outdoor organisations, public services or businesses. This would be

followed by celebration ceremonies in various venues, including sports stadiums, town halls, military bases, hotels and Parliament. Costs, funding, inclusivity of the programme and duplication of volunteering were not addressed.

The programme would now be called 'national citizen service', Cameron heralding the idea at the 2007 Conservative party conference as a 'compelling' means of developing 'self-respect' and 'social responsibility'. Military undertones were apparent, with Cameron asserting that it will be a way of learning respect for our country and each other just like national service. Yet hopes that the Armed Forces would be involved were rebuffed, General Mike Jackson noting 'it would not be right to change the British armed forces from highly professional bodies to an extension of some sort of social service'.²⁰ The programme was also aimed at contributing to a sense of Britishness, with the requirement for young people to develop a sense of what being a British citizen means to them. There was, however, a reluctance to promote a sense of obligation to the state, with emphasis instead on community, highlighting a shift in focus from citizenship and civic society (central to Labour's approach) to one where civil society was seen as key to identity. Whilst the Conservatives indicated that delivery of the programme would require a multi-agency approach involving the voluntary and private sectors, the state's role was that of mere enabler.

It was also envisaged that NCS would be valued by employers, who should acknowledge volunteer participation via work opportunities, apprenticeships, fast-track interviews and sponsorships for study and travel. NCS would address social and economic concerns, such as truancy, low self-image, mental health, alcohol and drugs, youth unemployment and reliance on welfarism, and would help tackle anti-social behaviour. NCS was focused on addressing social and

moral issues seen to affect certain sections of young people across British society without considering economic and political factors and was not mentioned by Cameron in connection with problems of broken politics or democracy.

Launching national citizen service

In 2009, small numbers of young people participated in 'The Challenge'—a civic service programme run by the Shaftesbury Partnership. Research on these pilots, conducted by the University of Strathclyde, was commissioned by the Conservatives, informing the publication during the election of a second NCS policy document launched during the general election by Cameron.²¹ At the launch, Cameron reiterated many of themes concerning social responsibility developed since 2005. The length and structure of NCS were altered, now envisaged as a two-month summer programme, starting after GCSEs, and involving residential and at-home components delivered by independent charities, social enterprises and businesses (but not local government). Based on 'The Challenge', the first two weeks of the programme would involve residential components, the first week located away from the participants' local community, involving outdoor physical challenges, and the second week aiding their 'home community' and developing new skills. Week three would involve a full-time 'social action' project in the local community and participants would continue to work on this project in weeks four to eight on a part-time basis, requiring at least thirty hours further service. Successful participants would attend a graduation ceremony and join an alumni programme. The core aim was outlined as building a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society.

In launching NCS in government, Cameron announced that £50 million

would be found over two years by diverting money from the Department of Communities and Local Government component of the preventing violent extremism anti-terrorism programme (Prevent). This would provide 11,000 places in summer 2011, at a cost of £13 million, with the remainder of the funding being allocated to expanding the programme in 2012. Cameron suggested that 'over time all 16 year olds will take part' and reiterated that NCS would be 'in the same spirit' as National Service. Cameron revealed that the idea and structure of NCS were informed by his experiences in the cadet force at Eton, helping vulnerable people and military training. He again hinted that the Armed Forces could be involved, although this does not formally form part of NCS. The NCS policy document drew attention to the Strathclyde research paper which had evaluated pilots of 'The Challenge', deemed 'highly-successfull' (sic) with 100 per cent of participants surveyed reporting they would encourage others to participate in the programme.²² It suggested that trust and engagement were enhanced, whilst qualitative interview evidence indicated that the programme had achieved its core aims of social mixing, supporting the transition to adulthood and community engagement and encouraged leadership and team-building skills linked to a greater sense of responsibility. Some participants felt more engaged and better equipped for the transition to adulthood.

Yet there was little hard evidence in the Strathclyde report, based on a very small scale experiment involving 107 young people, that NCS-type challenges change the long-term behaviour and attitudes of young people towards social responsibility or lifelong civic activism. The report also raised doubts, not acknowledged in Conservative policy papers or associated speeches, regarding the effectiveness of NCS. For example, although many found the outward-bound residential compo-

nent enjoyable, questions were raised as to the extent social mixing was sustained when young people returned to their own communities. Attention was drawn to the difficulties faced by those from disadvantaged backgrounds, where levels of social capital are often lower, in maintaining the positive impact of NCS pilots. This raises questions as to the potential of a short NCS programme to sustain changes in the attitudes and actions of young people, or redress the dysfunctions in society created by educational neglect and other forms of social and economic inequality.

There are concerns about the potential for NCS to disproportionately benefit young people from wealthier backgrounds who are already active in their communities. The Strathclyde report highlighted that middle-class children were more dominant, whilst young people from poorer backgrounds were less likely to believe they could make a positive difference in their communities on completion of the programme. NCS providers could be offered 'payment premium' to incentivise mixing for some young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, enhancing community cohesion. Although Prevent was controversial, it had begun to build trust through developing sustainable structures in communities with low social capital, supplementing other cohesion-building activities by encouraging inter-community debate about the causes and impact of violent extremism and dealing with issues of identity, citizenship and belonging. NCS, on the other hand, is devoid of emphasis on political engagement and other contentious issues, instead focusing on issues of adulthood and social responsibility.

NCS does not connect volunteering—essential to civil society—with political citizenship—which directly links to civic society and there is little to advance democratic participation as a by-product of community-based activities—a significant shift in approach from the concerns

of this government's predecessor. Young people already volunteer in significant numbers, but their political activity remains lower than other sections of society and NCS will not address this problem. Emphases on volunteerism, social citizenship and an organic civil society bypass the disparities in wealth and life-opportunities that can shape attitudes to social activism, citizenship and community.

The NCS proposals go beyond community in suggesting participation would allow young people to do something positive for their nation and also develop a sense of citizenship and enhance a common national identity by discussing Britishness. It is unclear as to which 'nation' is being invoked though, particularly in light of devolution. Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond, has rejected the introduction of NCS in Scotland, noting there were existing volunteering programmes in the country. Moreover, there is little recognition of the contentiousness of Britishness amongst some communities in the United Kingdom.

It is also unclear how NCS will link with existing youth initiatives in and beyond schools, and with statutory citizenship education. There are also uncertainties regarding the ability of charities, social organisations and businesses to develop NCS programmes of sufficient quality, particularly when funding to youth services and training programmes are already being cut. There is little evidence to suggest there are sufficient opportunities for volunteering and social action for young people to meet rising demand. If NCS becomes more popular, then the ability to provide residential opportunities for large numbers of young people is open to question. Focus on NCS could also have implications for long-term volunteering strategies, restricting funding for existing projects.

Such challenges have a number of implications for the scale and quality of NCS. If near universality is achieved as

Cameron has mooted, the potential costs are envisaged to be at least £800 million. The government expects that the costs of delivery will be derived from a number of sources, as the government grant will not meet the full costs of the programme. Young people and their schools are expected to provide a small contribution towards the cost of their summer NCS programme. Whilst those with appropriate social resources in more affluent areas may accept such challenges, the introduction of fees could limit the ability of some to participate due to lack of money, or simply put others off who feel they have better things on which to spend money. Philanthropic contributions are unlikely to meet such costs and schools may find it difficult to provide funds.

Issues relating to the funding of NCS highlight uncertainties as to its long-term sustainability and benefits. Staffing of the programme relies on large numbers of appropriately trained unpaid volunteers to support NCS providers. It is hoped that many such volunteers will be recruited through the proposed 'Alumni Programme'. The Strathclyde report noted that although the outward bound residential element was well-organised and popular with participants and volunteer mentors, doubts were raised about community-based elements in terms of the longevity of commitment. A steady decline in participation of young people was noted once back in their communities, with nearly 20 per cent failing to graduate.²³ Some participants sought to continue their projects, but this did not prove feasible.

Conclusions

The motivations for NCS lie in an organic view of society whereby citizens and communities cohere through voluntarism and participation, enhancing a sense of belonging that leads to greater civic participation. NCS is backed and part-funded, but not run, by the state. The

role of local government is minimal. The use of volunteering organisations, charities and businesses to deliver NCS raises further questions about the commercialisation and consumerisation of citizenship as third-party providers mediate, incentivise and reshape the relationship between the state and young citizens. The experiences of National Citizen Service-type programmes in other countries highlight the binary issues. Tensions between universality and compulsion are evident in the aspirations of the NCS, as are those between the military and non-military motivations of such programmes, whilst there are clear distinctions between the private-sector-sponsored model evident in the United States and the statist German model.

NCS is an important plank of the Conservatives' promotion of the Big Society, but is representative of a broader lack of precision regarding motivations and perceived outcomes. NCS seeks to redress a range of social problems concerning young people without acknowledging fully other economic and political factors that influence attitudes to civil and civic society. In terms of building a better, as well as bigger society, the programme may need to link volunteering to democratic participation and citizenship more explicitly and connect to the state in addition to local communities. Commercialisation and consumerisation of citizenship may be inevitable if the programme is to be extended as there is otherwise no discernible way of financing a universal national programme other than through private financing, but funding may be difficult to obtain.

The Conservatives' model of good citizenship, as developed through NCS, is a very different entity from the political citizenship and emphasis upon democratic rights and responsibilities mooted by Labour. Volunteering rather than political participation is seen as integral to citizenship and the establishment of a better society. To be judged a success,

NCS will need to extend volunteering and community participation across the full range of demographic groups and move beyond transient boosts to local schemes towards the construction of truly organic communities.

Notes

- 1 D. Cameron, 'The best is yet to come', 4 October 2006 (http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2006/10/Cameron_The_best_is_yet_to_come.aspx).
- 2 D. Cameron, 'Building a pro-social society', 23 November 2005 (http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2005/11/Cameron_Building_a_pro-social_society.aspx).
- 3 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), *Citizenship Survey 2009–10*, London, DCLG, 2010.
- 4 http://www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/sites/www.ipsos.com.public-affairs/files/documents/what_do_people_want_need_and_expect_from_public_services.pdf
- 5 As party leader, Cameron first raised the idea of national citizen service at the Political Studies Association 'Values of Britishness' conference, London, 28 November 2005.
- 6 <http://today.yougov.co.uk/politics/Cameron-National-Service>, 9 April 2010.
- 7 Commission on the Future of Volunteering (CFV), *The Future of Volunteering*, London, CFV, 2008.
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- 9 T. Hickman, *The Call-up: A History of National Service*, London, Headline, 2004.
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- 12 'Community service in Germany: an army of volunteers', *Economist*, 15 July 2010.
- 13 J. Crabtree, 'Citizenship first: the case for compulsory civic service', *Prospect*, no. 156, 2009 (<http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2009/03/citizenshipfirstthecaseforcompulsorycivicservice/>).
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- 16 P. Frumkin and J. Jastrzab, *Country and Community: Who Benefits from National Service?* Boston, MA, Harvard University Press, 2010.
- 17 D. Cameron, Speech to Foreign Policy Centre, London, 24 August 2005.
- 18 Conservative Party, *Built to Last*, London, Conservative Party, 2006, p. 5.
- 19 D. Cameron, 'Young Adult Trust will make a constructive difference', Speech to Youth Adult Trust, 30 October 2006.
- 20 'Ex-Army chief: Tory national service plan amounts to some sort of social service', *Daily Mail*, 10 September 2007.
- 21 This research was funded by Martin Rose, chair of the Big Society Network—a charity which stresses its independence from government. Since February 2008, Rose has donated over £25,000 to Tim Loughton MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Children and Families, for research into National Citizen Service.
- 22 Conservative Party, *National Citizen Service*, London, Conservative Party, 2010; Strathclyde University, *The Challenge Programme Evaluation*, Glasgow, Strathclyde University, 2009, p. 7.
- 23 Strathclyde University, *Challenge Programme Evaluation*. The report notes that 87 out of 104 young people graduated. There was also a 5 per cent dropout rate due to 'unacceptable behaviour'.

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