

THE ROLE OF SHOCKS AND SOCIAL PRESSURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS: GREAT BRITAIN AND MEXICO'S DIVERGENT PATHS

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*In Memoriam, Peter B. H. Birks, Regius Professor of
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ABSTRACT. Drawing on T.H. Marshall's classic analysis of how civil, political and social rights evolved in Great Britain, this article follows authors, like Rose and Shin, who used a "social pyramid" to illustrate how the inverted development of such citizenship rights in other nations may weaken liberal democracy. In contrast, I argue that this sequence varies depending on a society's own unique history, and that no one single path can define the development of liberal democracy. In Mexico, the development of citizenship rights (mainly social, political and civil, following T.H. Marshall's categorization) was catalyzed by a series of economic and security-related crises that impacted a broad cross-section of Mexican society. The result of these pressures —both from above (organized elites) and below (organized popular groups)— has been greater enforcement of already existing political rights. This major change eventually led to competitive ballot elections (since the late 1990s) which in turn has forced politicians to focus on reshaping social rights (e.g., making their application universal rather than selective). Since President Felipe Calderon's (2006-2012) "war on drugs," there has also been notable legislation —backed by widespread public support— to strengthen civil rights (e.g., 2008 criminal justice reform; 2011 reforms to the amparo and human rights).

KEY WORDS: *Citizenship rights, changes to, Great Britain and Mexico, Shocks and social pressures, liberal democracy, degrees of.*

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RESUMEN. Siguiendo el análisis de T.H. Marshall acerca del desarrollo histórico de los derechos ciudadanos en la Gran Bretaña —primero los civiles, después los políticos, y por último los sociales— este artículo sigue a otros autores, como Rose y Shin, que han identificado una secuencia histórica invertida en muchos países de la “tercera ola” democratizadora como causa de la debilidad de la democracia liberal en los mismos. Propongo que las diferentes secuencias de desarrollo de derechos ciudadanos no determinan permanentemente la posibilidad del desarrollo fructífero de la democracia liberal. En México, sucesivos shocks sistémicos, es decir, aquéllos que han afectado a muchos y muy diversos grupos sociales, detonaron la organización de presiones desde arriba (élites) y abajo (movimientos populares) que forzaron cambios al contenido y al grado de efectividad de implementación de los derechos ciudadanos. Las crisis económicas (1976, 1982, 1987-8, 1994-5) crearon presiones para el ejercicio efectivo de los derechos políticos, lo que creó elecciones relativamente competitivas desde fines de los 1990s y éstas, a su vez, presiones para la creación de derechos sociales universales en lugar de selectivos. Igualmente, la explosión de violencia generalizada detonada por la “guerra contra el crimen organizado” declarada por el gobierno de Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), otro shock sistémico produjo similares efectos en la organización de presiones de la sociedad civil que forzaron una revisión de los derechos civiles —parte de la reforma al sistema de justicia criminal en 2008 y cambios al recurso de amparo y al estatus de los derechos humanos en 2011—.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Derechos políticos, Gran Bretaña y México, democracia liberal.*

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