

Vivienne Fulda - Space, Civic Pride, Citizenship and Identity in 1890s Portsmouth

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This work is a detailed study of the dissemination of citizenship in Portsmouth in the 1890s. It analyses elite actions and the responses to them in order to determine how citizenship was disseminated, to whom, and with what degree of success. In Portsmouth, there were unique tensions that shaped citizenship. The presence in the town of the naval dockyard, and other government institutions, was perceived by the local ruling elite as a threat to their and the town's autonomy. In addition there was a growing artisan class keen to participate in town society.

Citizenship is analysed through detailed study of the work of governance in the town in relation to the space in which action occurred. Local discourses of citizenship, governance, improvement and authority are closely examined. Through these analyses it is demonstrated that the success of elite citizenship projects was determined by the degree of control exercised over the space in which any aspect of citizenship was played out. It is also shown that the artisan class was a crucial group for the elite in the development of civic culture through which citizenship was disseminated. The interaction of local pride and patriotism is reappraised, since the two could be opposing forces.

This study thus furthers work on citizenship by providing a unique local example original in its linkage of citizenship and space. The analysis of these two factors together adds to the understanding of both. It develops understanding of the work of elites and its effect on people, especially the artisan class at a fundamental level. It also furthers work on the significance of physical and symbolic city space, especially space contested within the town. Civic pride and patriotism are also shown to be linked, enhancing and reappraising work on both.