

# Women, Citizenship and Difference

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## Abstract

The article discusses some of the major issues which need to be examined in a gendered reading of citizenship. However, its basic claim is that a comparative study of citizenship should consider the issue of women's citizenship not only by contrast to that of men, but also in relation to women's affiliation to dominant or subordinate groups, their ethnicity, origin and urban or rural residence. It should also take into consideration global and transnational positionings of these citizenships. The article challenges the gender-blind and Westocentric character of many of the most hegemonic theorizations of citizenship, focusing in particular on the questions of membership in 'the community', group rights and social difference and the ways binaries of public/private and active/passive have been constructed to differentiate between different kinds of citizenships. The article argues that in order to be able to analyse adequately people's citizenship, especially in this era of ethnicization on the one hand and globalization on the other hand, and with the rapid pace at which relationships between states and their civil societies are changing, citizenship should best be analysed as a multi-tiered construct which applies, at the same time to people's membership in sub-, cross- and supra-national collectivities as well as in states.

## Keywords

women; citizenship; difference; nation; state; transversal politics

'Citizenship' has become a very popular subject of debate in the last few years, appropriated nationally and internationally, by both Left and Right, as well as by feminists. The interest in citizenship is not just in the narrow formalistic meaning of having the right to carry a specific passport. It addresses an overall concept encapsulating the relationship between the individual, state and society.

This article discusses some of the major issues which need to be examined in a gendered reading of citizenship. Its basic claim is that a comparative study of citizenship should consider the issue of women's citizenship not

only by contrast to that of men, but also in relation to women's affiliation to dominant or subordinate groups, their ethnicity, origin and urban or rural residence. It should also take into consideration global and trans-national positionings of these citizenships.

T.H. Marshall (1950, 1975, 1981), the most influential theorist of citizenship in Britain, has defined citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community' (1950: 14), which includes civil, political and social rights and obligations. By formally linking citizenship to membership in a community rather than to the state, as liberal definitions of citizenship do, Marshall's definition enables us analytically to discuss citizenship as a multi-tier construct, which applies to people's membership in a variety of collectivities – local, ethnic, national and trans-national. Such a multi-tier construction of citizenship is particularly important these days when neo-liberal states redefine and reprivatize their tasks and obligations. It also enables us to raise the question of the relationship between 'the community' and the state and how this affects people's citizenship. The debates in the literature between the 'liberals' and the 'communitarians' (see, for example, Avineri and Shalit, 1992; Daly, 1993; Nimni, 1996; Phillips, 1993) and the 'republicans' (Peled, 1992; Roche, 1987; Sandel, 1982; Oldfield, 1990) relate to these issues. The article examines some of the implications of this debate for notions of social rights and social difference.

Bryan Turner (1990) has constructed an influential typology of citizenship based on two dimensions – the public/private and the active/passive. Turner's typology, sadly, is completely Euro- or, rather, Westocentric (Yuval-Davis, 1991a), his 'universal' typology being based on the development of citizenship in four Western countries – France, the USA, England and Germany. Even more astonishing perhaps, is the fact that Turner's typology is gender blind (Yuval-Davis, 1991a; Walby, 1994), although the two dimensions he considers are ones which have often been used in order to describe gender differences in general and difference in relation to women's citizenship in particular (Pateman, 1988; Grant and Newland, 1991). The article, therefore, explores these two dimensions and how they should be theorized when seeking to construct a comparative non-Westocentric framework of analysis of gendered citizenship which incorporates notions of difference.

A word of warning, however, is necessary before the exploration of the various issues considered in the paper can start. When dealing with the notion of citizenship it is also important to remember that, as Floya Anthias and myself have commented before (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989: 6), on its own, the notion of citizenship cannot encapsulate

adequately all the dimensions of control and negotiations which take place in different areas of social life, nor can it adequately address the ways the state itself forms its political project. Studying citizenship, however, can throw light on some of the major issues which are involved in the complex relationships between individuals, collectivities and the state, and the ways gender relations (as well as other social divisions) affect and are affected by them.

### **Citizenship, nationalism and 'the community'**

As Roche (1987) describes it, in the liberal tradition individual citizens are presumed to have equal status, equal rights and duties, etc., so that principles of inequality deriving from gender, ethnic, class or other contexts are *not* supposed to be of relevance to the status of citizenship as such. The citizens are therefore constructed not as 'members of the community' but as *strangers* to each other, although they are sharing a complex set of assumptions about and expectations of each other which, when not fulfilled, can be enforceable by the state.

This liberal abstraction of self has been criticized, however, by the 'communitarians' who claim that notions of rights and duties, as well as those of equality and privacy, have no meaning outside the context of particular communities (Ackelsberg, 1995). On different grounds, the proponents of republicanism such as Sandel (1982), also find the individualistic construction of citizenship highly unsatisfactory. They argue that such a construction of citizenship denies the possibility of citizenship as constituting a membership in a moral community in which the notion of the common good is antecedent to the individual citizenship choice. Liberal construction of citizenship, according to Sandel, assumes the priority of right over good. Republicanism, on the other hand, constructs citizenship not only as a status but also as a means of active involvement and participation in the determination, practice and promotion of the common good.

However, as Peled comments (Peled, 1992: 433), 'This raises the question of how the republican [moral] community is constituted and what qualities are required for active participation in it'. According to him, two distinct notions of community can be discerned in the current revival of republicanism: a weak community, in which membership is essentially voluntary, and a strong, historical community that is *discovered*, not formed by its members. In a strong community its 'ongoing existence is an important value in and of itself' and becomes one of the, if not the most, important imperatives of the 'moral community' (*ibid.*).

Membership in such a community involves 'enduring attachment', often a myth of common origin, and is clearly bonded by a myth of common

destiny. In other words, this 'strong community' is the national 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983). There is no difference between republican constructions of the 'moral community' and the *gemeinschaft*-like constructions of the 'national community'.

The question arises, then, what should happen to those members of the civil society who cannot or will not become full members of that 'strong community'. In virtually all contemporary states there are migrants and refugees, 'old' and 'new' minorities and in settler societies there are also indigenous people who are not part of the hegemonic national community (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995). In addition, there are many other members of the civil society who, although they might share the myth of common origin of 'the community', do not share important hegemonic value systems with the majority of the population in sexual, religious and other matters.

Peled's solution (following Oldfield, 1990) is a two-tier construction of citizenship: a full membership in the 'strong community' for those who can be included, and for people who cannot:

a residual, truncated status, similar to the liberal notion of citizenship as a bundle of rights. Bearers of this citizenship do not share in attending to the common good but are secure in their possession of what we consider essential human and civil rights.

(Peled, 1992)

In other words, Peled is suggesting the institutionalization of an exclusionary two-tier system of citizenship as a way of solving the discrepancy between the boundaries of the civil society and the boundaries of the national collectivity. This solution is far from being satisfactory. Politically it openly condones discrimination and racialization of citizens on national grounds (Peled brings Israel and its treatment of the Palestinians who have been citizens of the state since 1948 as the ideal case of a state which successfully managed to do so). Theoretically, this model dichotomizes the population into two homogenous collectivities – those who are in and those who are out of the national collectivity, without paying attention to other dimensions of social divisions and social positionings, such as gender, intra-national ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, stage in the life cycle, etc., which are crucial to constructions of citizenship.

Yet, with all these reservations, the above position at least recognizes the potential inherently contradictory nature of citizenship as individual and communal, inclusionary and exclusionary. In Marshall's works, these issues were not problematized at all and there has been an automatic assumption of an overlap between the boundaries of civil society and those of the national community. Not incidentally, as Theodor Shanin (1986) has

commented, in English, unlike other languages (such as Russian or Hebrew), there is a missing term which expresses the notion of ethnic nationality, to differentiate it from nationality which is equivalent to formal citizenship in the state. In different states and societies the relationship between the two differs hugely and can be structured formally or informally, in ways which prioritize one hegemonic ethnic/national collectivity or several; in which such a membership would be primarily important for one's identity or not; which could provide members easier or more difficult access to a whole range of social, economic and political facilities; and which may or may not actually ground legally that members in different collectivities would be entitled to a differential range of civil, political and social citizenship rights. A common status in Europe, for instance, is that of the 'denizen': someone who is entitled to most social and civil rights but is deprived of the political rights of national voting.

Paradoxically, although Marshall's theory of citizenship does not relate to any of these issues, his conceptual definition of citizenship as a membership of the community rather than of the state can provide us with the framework to study specific cases of the differential multi-tier citizenship. A word of caution is necessary here, however. As elaborated elsewhere (Cain and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Yuval-Davis, 1991a) it is important not to view 'the community' as a given natural unit. Collectivities and 'communities' are ideological and material constructions, whose boundaries, structures and norms are a result of constant processes of struggles and negotiations, or more general social developments (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). The moral imperative which interprets the 'good of the community' as a support for its continuous existence as a separate collectivity can become an extremely conservative ideology which would see any internal or external change in the community as a threat.

### **Social rights and social difference**

The liberal definition of citizenship constructs all citizens as basically the same and considers the differences of class, ethnicity, gender, etc., as irrelevant to their status as citizens.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the welfare state assumes a notion of difference, as determined by *social needs*. In the words of Edwards 'Those with similar needs ought to get similar resources and those with different needs, different resources, or – more succinctly – treatment as equals rather than equal treatment' (1988: 135). These differences were initially conceived exclusively as class differences. As originally envisaged by Beveridge (1942), social welfare rights were aimed at improving the quality of life of the working classes (as well as the smooth working of capitalism). As Harris (1987) put it, welfare was conceived as the

institutionalized recognition of social solidarity within the political community of the citizens.

This social solidarity is being threatened by a variety of groupings, ethnic, racial, religious and sexual sub-collectivities which exist within the marginal matrix of society and 'which experience informal and formal discrimination consonant with their credited lower social worth' (Evans, 1993: 6). A primary concern of many relevant struggles and debates (Gordon, 1989; Hall and Held, 1989) has been around the right to enter or to remain in a specific country. The 'freedom of movement within the European community', the Israeli Law of Return and the Patriality clause in British immigration legislation are all instances of ideological, often racist, constructions of boundaries which allow unrestricted immigration to some and block it completely to others.

Even when questions of entry and settlement have been resolved, the concerns of groupings constituted as ethnic minorities might be different from those of other members of the society. For example, their right to formal citizenship might depend upon the rules and regulations of their country of origin in addition to those of the country where they live, as well as the relationship between the two. Thus, people from some Caribbean Islands who have been settled in Britain for years were told that they could not have a British passport because their country does not recognize dual citizenship and because they had not declared on time their intent to renounce the citizenship of their country of origin after it received independence. Concern over relatives and fear of not being allowed to visit their country of origin prevent others (such as Iranians and Turks) from giving up their original citizenship. Women workers who have children in other countries are often ineligible to receive child benefits like other mothers. Countries like Israel and Britain confer citizenship on those whose parents are citizens rather than on those born in the country. Further, the right of entry to a country is often conditional on a commitment by the immigrant that neither s/he or any other member of their family will claim any welfare benefits. Citizenship needs to be examined, therefore, not just in terms of state, but often in relation to multiple formal and informal citizenships in more than one country, and most importantly, to view them from a perspective which would include the different positioning of different states as well as the different positionings of individuals and groupings within states (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1994).

A whole different set of citizenship issues relates to indigenous minorities in settler societies (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995; Dickanson, 1992). It is not just that in many societies indigenous populations have been very late, if at all, entrants to the formal citizenship body of the state. It is that

if their claim on the country – in the form of land rights – were to be taken seriously and in full, this would totally conflict with the claim of the settler national collectivity for legitimacy. Attempts to solve the problem by transforming the indigenous population into another ‘ethnic minority’ have usually met with a strong and understandable resistance (de Lepervanche, 1980). Formal treaties, which would institutionalize and anchor in law the relations between what Australian Aboriginals have been calling ‘the imposing society’ and the indigenous people, often create a complex situation in which there exist two national sovereign entities over the same territory – one which owns the state and one which attempts to establish a sovereign stateless society within it. Somewhat similar, if less racialized, struggles are present in the many regionalist secessionist movements which claim the right of national self-determination *vis-à-vis* their states which themselves have been constructed as nations.

The most problematic aspects of citizenship rights for racial and ethnic minorities relate to their social rights and to the notion of multi-culturalism (Parekh, 1990; Jayasuriya, 1990; Yuval-Davis, 1992, 1997). For some (e.g. Harris, 1987; Lister, 1990), the problem remains within the realm of individual, though different, citizens. The homogenous community of Marshall is being transformed into a pluralist one by the reinterpretation of his emphasis on equality of status into mutual respect (Lister, 1990: 48). However, such a model does not take into account potential conflicts of interest among the different groupings of citizens, nor does it consider the collective, rather than the individual, character of the special provisions given to members of groupings defined as ethnic minorities (Jayasuriya, 1990: 23).

The question of a collective provision to meet the needs of ‘ethnic minorities’ relates to policies of positive action aimed at group rather than individual rights. Multiculturalist policies construct these populations, or rather, effectively, the poor and working classes within them, in terms of ethnic and racial collectivities. These collectivities are attributed with collective needs, based on their different cultures as well as on their structural disadvantages. Resistance to these policies has been expressed by claims that constructing employment and welfare policies in terms of group rights can conflict with individual rights and are therefore discriminatory. However, at least in countries which officially adopted multiculturalist policies, such as Canada, Britain and the USA, it has been widely accepted, at least until recently, that in order to overcome the practical effects of racism rather than just its ideology, collective provisions and positive action, based on group membership, are the only effective measures to be taken (see Burney, 1988; Young, 1989; Cain and Yuval-Davis, 1990). Similar policies have been constructed in other pluralist states, such as India and South Africa.

The question becomes more problematic when positive provisions relate to the different 'cultural needs' of different ethnicities. These can vary from the provision of interpreters to the provision of funds to religious organizations. In the most extreme cases, as in the debates around Aborigines, on the one hand, and Muslim minorities around the Rushdie affair, on the other hand, there have been calls to enable the minorities to operate according to their own customary and religious legal systems. While the counter-arguments have ranged from the fact that this would imply a *de facto* apartheid system to arguments about social unity and political hegemony, those who support these claims have seen it as a natural extrapolation of the minorities' social and political rights.

This raises the question of how one defines the boundaries of citizens' rights. Kymlicka (1995) suggests a differentiation between 'two kinds of group rights': one which involves the claim of a group against its own members and one which involves the group's claim against the larger society (or the state). Kymlicka opposes the use of state powers in the support of claims of the first kind, because he suspects that very often individuals within the group would be oppressed in the name of culture and tradition. In the second case, however, the issue often involves protection of a disadvantaged group by others and so, in this case, state intervention should be welcome. While the general line of argument of Kymlicka can be supported, he reifies and naturalizes the groups' boundaries and does not differentiate between people with specific power positionings within the groups (which are not homogenous and can be with differing and conflicting interests) and 'the group'.

Jayasuriya (1990), in a somewhat different terminology when grappling with the same question, suggests a distinction between needs, which are essential and which therefore require satisfaction by the state, and wants, which fall outside the public sector and are to be satisfied within the private domain in a voluntary way. This conceptualization of 'wants' and 'needs' as objective differences between essential and non-essential cultural demands of specific sub-collectivities within the civil society is, of course, highly suspect. Cultural needs are not fixed a-historical essentialist characteristics of collectivities. Cultures are highly heterogeneous resources which are used selectively, and often in contradictory ways, in different ethnic projects which are promoted by members of specific collectivities, often in a way which disadvantages women. Women often suffer from the acceptance by the state of the definition of what constitutes 'the cultural needs of the community' in matters of education, marriage and divorce and other provisions such as women's refuges (Sahgal and Yuval-Davis, 1992; for testimonies on these issues from women activists from various post-colonial countries in a South African mobilization conference on this issue, see Amy Biehl, 1994).

## The private and the public

Jayasuriya establishes the boundary line of provision by the state in between the public and private domains, as if this boundary is natural and static. This boundary is, however, highly problematic and is both gender and culture specific.

There is a high degree of inconsistency in the ways that different authors discuss the public/private boundary and its relationship to other concepts such as political and civil society, the family, the economy, the voluntary sector, etc. Feminists like Carol Pateman (1988, 1989) and Ursula Vogel (1989) identify the public sphere as identical with the political, while the private sphere relates primarily to the family domain. Pateman examined the writings of social contract theorists as 'the most famous influential political story of modern times'. 'Fraternity' (one of the three slogans of the French revolution which also called for liberty and equality) signalled, she argued, the transformation of the hegemonic power relations in the society from a patriarchy – in which the father (or the king as a father figure) ruled over both other men and the women, to a fraternity – in which the men get the right to rule over their women in the private domestic sphere, but agree on a contract of a social order of equality among themselves within the public, political sphere. Women, therefore, were not excluded from the public sphere incidentally but as part of the bargain between the new regime and its member citizens. In a similar way Vogel has shown that women were not simply latecomers to citizenship rights, as in Marshall's evolutionary model. Their exclusion was part and parcel of the construction of the entitlement of men, not only as individuals but also as 'representatives of a family (i.e. a group of non-citizens)' (1989: 2). Indeed, in Britain women lost their citizenship during Victorian times, when they got married; they continued to lose it if they got married to 'foreigners' until 1948, and it was not until 1981 that they got the independent right to transfer their citizenship to their children (WING, 1985; Bhabha and Shutter, 1994).

In contrast to Pateman and Vogel's construction of the private as the domain of the family, Jayasuriya (1990) regards the private domain as that which is not financed and/or controlled by the state, including religious institutions. Bryan Turner (1990) includes in the private domain self enhancement and other leisure, as well as spiritual activities. Sylvia Walby (1994: 383) criticizes him for adopting 'the male viewpoint' in this by conflating two meanings of 'private' – one which relates to the autonomy of the individual, and one which relates to freedom from the interventions of the state. She argues that, while the family may or may not be free from the intervention of the state, it is not an autonomous and free space for

women, nor has it a unitary set of interests. Different members of the family – nuclear and extended – have different social positionings, powers and interests within it.

If we accept the meaning of ‘private’ as that in which the individual is autonomous, then this can be exercised to a lesser or greater extent in all social spheres, where people – and not just women – can act both as part of social structures and collectivities with all the constraints these provide, and as autonomous individual agents, whether it is in the family, in the civil or in the political domain. Similarly, depending on people’s preferences and hobbies, leisure and self-enhancement activities can be spent with the family or other personal friends, with the trade union, church or ethnic sports associations, or as a councillor in the local government in the political domain. At the same time, political power relations with their own dynamics exist in each social sphere. The most important contribution of feminism to social theory has been the recognition that power relations operate within primary social relations as well as within the more impersonal secondary social relations of the civil and political domains.

The recognition that power lines operate horizontally as well as vertically has given rise to the Foucauldian perspective that there is no need to theorize the state as a separate unitary sphere. However, as elaborated elsewhere (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989: 6), while the state is not unitary in its practices, its intentions or its effects, there is a need to retain the state as a separate sphere, ‘a body of institutions which are centrally organized around the intentionality of control with a given apparatus of enforcement at its command or basis’. While ideological production, like education and the media, can lie both inside and outside the state, the exercise of individual and collective rights continues to be tied to the state (Soysal, 1994). Thus control over the state continues to be the primary political target. Especially in the modern welfare state, there is no social sphere which is protected from state intervention. Even in cases where there is no direct intervention, it is the state which has usually established, actively or passively, its own boundaries of non-intervention. In other words, the construction of the boundary between the public and the private is a political act in itself.

Given all these inconsistencies and confusions in the determination of the ‘private’ domain, I suggest that we abandon the public/private distinction. Rather, we should differentiate between three distinct spheres of the state, civil society and the domain of the family, kinship and other primary relationships. Feminists, such as Ann Orloff (1993) and Julia O’Connor (1993), have already pointed out that there is a need to add the family domain to that of the state and the market when examining the ways

societies organize the provision of welfare. However, the family domain has also to be added when we discuss different locations for political organization and power.

It is misleading to see in the rise of the 'modern nation-state' a completely different form of social organization from the 'pre-modern' ones. In many states, especially post-colonial states, one's extended family and kinship relationships have continued to be used as foci of loyalty and organization. Political, social and probably even civil rights might depend on the familial positioning of the particular citizen (Saudi Arabia or Jordan are probably good examples of such a state but in more diluted forms this phenomenon is spread much more widely, especially when looking at ruling parties' élites). Traditional social, and especially familial, relations continue to operate and often women have few or no formal citizenship rights. Paradoxically, where familial relations are important in the politics of a country, women who are widows or daughters of political leaders have the highest chance of becoming political leaders, as has been the case in the Indian sub-continent, for instance.

At the other end of the continuum, we have the states of the former Soviet Bloc, where an attempt was made to incorporate into the state all facets of the civil – and to some extent also familial – domains. All political, economic and cultural activities were aimed to be controlled by the state; all forms of organization or expression which did not follow the state (and the CP) line tended to be repressed and controlled; and membership in the party brought with it higher civil, political and social rights. There was a virtually complete recruitment of women into the labour force and the collectivization of certain aspects of domestic labour, such as child-care facilities and public canteens – although women tended to occupy lower labour and political positions to men and be responsible for all remaining domestic responsibilities (Voronina, 1994: 733).

In Western welfare states, such as the Scandinavian countries, the state has also supplied public facilities to help with women's domestic responsibilities and child care, so as to enable women to go out into the labour market. Women work more than men in the public sector and, unlike in the former Soviet bloc, have had high rates of political representation. However, as Helga Hernes (1987) argues, in countries like Norway the corporations in civil society are those which carry the most significant economic and social powers, and they have tended to be controlled by men.

Welfare states are considered to be those where the influence of civil society is the greatest in terms of the location of political, as well as economic power. Marshall (1981) described the capitalist society as the hyphenated society in which there are inevitable tensions between a capitalist economy

and the welfare state. Esping Andersen (1990) described the variations between different welfare state regimes as dependent on the extent to which the market forces or the state have the upper hand in the struggle for domination. It is important to remember, however, that the civil domain is not just the market. It is not only economic, but political and social relations which operate there, in collusion and/or resistance to the market forces. Political parties, social movements and trade unions are not part of the state even if they are often organized and focus their activities on the state. Education and media can be owned or not by the state and can have ideological projects which are autonomous to a larger or lesser extent from the state. Of particular importance to our concern here are formal and informal organizations, associations and institutions in civil society which are organized by/for members of a particular ethnic/racial/national collectivity. Such collectivities play a larger or smaller role in the construction of state policies and social and political relations. The formal ethnicization of the different regions in Yugoslavia in the revised constitution approved by Tito during the last years in his life has been a major stepping stone in its history and a partial explanation of later developments.

In general terms the above examples demonstrate the differential relative importance of the familial, the civil and state agencies domains in the determination of the social, political and civil rights of citizens. Any comparative theory of citizenship, therefore, must include an examination of the individual autonomy allowed to citizens (of different gender, ethnicity, region, class, stage in the life cycle, etc.) *vis-à-vis* their families, civil society organizations and state agencies.

### **Active/passive citizenship**

The other axis of Bryan Turner's comparative typology of citizenship is that of active-passive which he defines as 'whether the citizen is conceptualized as merely a subject of an absolute authority or as an active political agent' (1990: 209). The conventional differentiation, then, between 'citizen' and 'subject' is removed in Turner's definition, and instead becomes a continuum of passivity and activity.

The history of citizenship is different in different countries. In some countries, like in France and the USA, it has been the result of a popular revolutionary struggle, while in others, like Britain and Germany, it has been more of a 'top to bottom' process. Similarly, in some post-colonial countries, like in India or Kenya, national independence was achieved after a long period of popular struggle, while in others, like in certain islands of the Caribbean, that transition was much more peaceful and political rule

was passed smoothly from the colonial élite to the local one. Today, virtually all the world's population live in countries in which some form of citizenship exists, at least in the Marshallian sense of being a member of a community.

As to participating in some form in ruling as well as being ruled, the Aristotelian definition of citizenship (Allen and Macey, 1990), the picture is, of course, very different. Only a minority of people, in probably the minority of world states, can be said to have this kind of active citizenship status. This is not just a question of formal rights. Even in the most democratically active societies there are strata of the population which are passive, too disempowered and/or alienated to participate even in the formal act of voting. Among them can be not only children, migrants, ethnic minorities and indigenous people in settler societies, but also what has come to be labelled as the 'underclass', which in the USA is to a large extent black, but which in Britain and other countries can also be largely white, and in which lone mothers loom large (Lister, 1990; Morris, 1994). Gender, sexuality, age and ability as well as ethnicity and class are important factors in determining the relationship of people to their communities and states.

The notion of the 'active citizen' has been a focus of debates and policies in recent years within both the 'Left' and the 'Right', especially in Britain. The recent growth in interest in citizenship among the Left has coincided with signs that many of the social rights which have come to be taken for granted in the welfare state have come under threat, in the areas of health care, education, retirement, child benefits, etc. Rather than concentrating on social rights, however, the Left (and Centre) has used citizenship as a call for political mobilization and participation and in Britain it also became part of a campaign for a written constitution (Charter 88) in which social citizenship entitlement would be enshrined so that a radical Rightist government would not again be able to transform the relationship between people and state so easily.

The language of citizenship has also been a major discourse of the Right. In Britain 'the active citizen' has been put forward as an alternative to the welfare state, in which 'the citizen', constructed as an economically successful middle-class male head of a family, would fulfil his citizenship duties by giving his spare money and time 'to the community' (Lister, 1990; Evans, 1993). In this discourse, therefore, citizenship stops being a political discourse and becomes a voluntary involvement within civil society, in which the social rights of the poor are transferred, at least partly, from entitlements into charities. Lister (1990: 14) quotes the Conservative Minister Douglas Hurd defining active citizenship: 'Public service may once have been the duty of an élite, but today it is the responsibility of all who

have time or money to spare'. Obligations are shifted from the public sphere of tax-financed benefits and services to the private sphere of charity and voluntary service. Rights become gifts and active citizenship assumes a top-down notion of citizenship. Typically, quangos, which are appointed rather than elected, have come to be the means by which various public services, like health and welfare, are being managed.

This depoliticization of the notion of citizenship has been enhanced with the publication of the government's Citizen's Charter in 1992 which constructs citizens as consumers whose prime rights are to have the freedom to make well-informed choices of high-quality commodities and services in public and private sectors and to be treated with due regard for their 'privacy, dignity, religious and cultural beliefs' (Evans, 1993: 10). The balance of citizenship rights has shifted away from social rights of welfare towards civil rights of an economic kind. Its aim is to promote individual persona and autonomy rather than the relationship between the individual and community and would clearly fall within the liberal mode of citizenship described above.

The Thatcherite notion of citizenship as consumerism is not based on a completely free market model, in spite of its universalist rhetoric. There are legal and moral constraints which prevent a variety of marginal or minority groups from pursuing their religious and cultural beliefs or economic needs in equal measure (Evans, 1993: 6). The state's management of these 'moral aliens', who are to be found in the marginal matrix of citizenship, is exercised in social, political and economic arenas. This is the twilight zone between the liberal and republican constructions of citizenship, where religious, ethnic and sexual minorities are located outside the national 'moral community' but inside the civic nation.

To those who can afford it, this is not a completely closed-off system. Evans describes how sexual minority groups have developed socio-economic 'community' infrastructures around their identities, organized to obtain further housing, insurance, medical, parenting, marital rights, etc., and spend a significant proportion of their income on distinguishable lifestyles in segregated or specifically gay social and sexual territories (1993: 8). Multiculturalism which is aimed at ethnic minorities can be described in similar terms. Multiculturalist policies are aimed at simultaneously including and excluding the minorities, locating them in marginal spaces and secondary markets, while reifying their boundaries.

The question of citizenship rights and social difference has been a difficult one in feminist political theory. Iris Young (1989) has suggested that representative democracy should treat people not as individuals but as members of groups. She argues that a discourse of universal citizenship

which would ignore these differences would just enhance the domination of groups which are already dominant, and would silence the marginal and oppressed groups. She suggests, therefore, that special mechanisms have to be established to represent these groups as groups. Such an approach, however, can easily fall into politics, in which the groups are constructed as homogenous and with fixed boundaries, the interests of specific individuals within groups constructed as representing the interests of the whole group and the advancement of the specific group becomes primary.

An alternative approach is suggested by Anne Phillips (1993). While recognizing that notions of difference cannot just be ignored, she suggests (following Mary Dietz, 1987) that the participation in the public arena of politics should be based on what she calls 'transformation', getting beyond one's immediate sphere, rather than transcendence: the first, she sees, as rightly stressing the limits of localized and specific identities, while the latter involves pursuing this to the point of jettisoning all group differences and concerns. John Lechte (1994), inspired by Kristeva's theory of the relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic, argues that the private, which is the domain of difference, and the public political domain, can be posited not as a dyad of opposites, but as the first being the materiality of the latter, which gives it its particular meaning. In other words, every discussion of individual differences already involves the public domain. Young's construction of 'oppressed groups' is no more 'natural' than any other political discourses, and the transformation/transcendence process is inherent to the act of naming.

Suggestions of other feminists and activists who attempted to deal with the question of citizenship rights and social difference focus differentially on the social and on the political. Correa and Petchesky (1994) argue that, rather than abandoning rights discourse, we should reconstruct it so that it both specifies differences, such as gender, class, cultural and other differences and recognizes social needs. Sexual and reproductive (or any other) rights, understood as private 'liberties' or 'choices', are meaningless, especially for the poorest and most disenfranchised, without enabling conditions through which they can be realized. In the post-GLC era in London with the massive backlash against the identity politics which was practised there, some black and other radical activists came to the conclusion that the alternative to group politics should be a politics of confronting these disabling conditions. The argument has been that, if black people suffer disproportionately from unemployment, for instance, political discourse which focuses on unemployment will particularly benefit black people. However, this approach would not exclude, nor create a construction of otherness for other unemployed (Wilson, 1987).

Zillah Eisenstein's approach to questions of difference is to ask whether we can construct an 'understanding of human rights which is both universal and specific' (1993: 6). Her solution is to construct a woman of colour as an alternative, inclusive standard norm to that of the white male. It might be more difficult, but I much prefer her earlier position that, while we cannot do without some notion of what human beings have in common, we can and must do without a unitary standard against which they are all judged (Eisenstein, 1989).

Instead of a given unitary standard, there has to be a process of constructing a standard norm for each specific political project. Black feminists like Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and Italian feminists like Raffaella Lambertini and Elizabetta Dominini (see Yuval-Davis, 1994, 1997) have focused on the transversal politics of coalition building, in which the specific positioning of political actors is recognized and considered. This approach is based on the epistemological recognition that each positioning produces specific situated knowledge which cannot be but an unfinished knowledge, and therefore dialogue among those differentially positioned should take place in order to reach a common perspective. Transversal dialogue should be based on the principle of remaining centred in one's own experiences while being empathetic to the differential positionings of the partners in the dialogue, thus enabling the participants to arrive at a different perspective from that of hegemonic tunnel vision. The boundaries of the dialogue would be determined, as Hill Collins has argued (1990), by the message rather than its messengers. The result of the dialogue might still be differential projects for people and groupings positioned differently, but their solidarity would be based on a common knowledge sustained by a compatible value system. The dialogue, therefore, is never boundless.

Of course, in 'real politics', unlike in grass-roots social movements, there is often no time for extensive continuous dialogue. When the Women's Unit in the GLC in the early 1980s tried to work in this manner, it ended up being largely ignored by the daily hierarchical structures of decision making which were working at a much faster pace. Transversal politics should not be seen as necessarily opposing the principle of delegation, so long as the political delegates are seen as advocates, rather than representatives, of specific social categories and groupings and so long as their message is a result of transversal dialogues.

### **Citizenship's rights and duties**

The various definitions of citizenship emphasize that citizenship is a two-way process and involves obligations as well as rights. Sometimes the two

can get confused. For example, voting is considered a primary citizenship right. However, there are quite a few states – often not the most democratic ones but those in need of legitimation of their powers – in which voting has become the duty of the citizens (in some of them – as in Egypt where this is the duty only of the men – women have had to ask for this right specifically and in writing, proving that they are literate), and if they do not comply with that duty they can be heavily fined.<sup>2</sup>

Defending one's own community and country has been seen as an ultimate citizen's duty – to die (as well as to kill) for the sake of the homeland or the nation (Yuval-Davis, 1985, 1997). This duty has given rise to Kathleen Jones's claim (1990) that the body is a significant dimension in the definition of citizenship. Traditionally, she claims, citizenship has been linked with the ability to take part in armed struggle for national defence, this ability has been equated with maleness, while femaleness has been equated with weakness and the need for male protection. Some feminist organizations (as NOW in the USA, ANMLAE in Nicaragua and others) have fought for the inclusion of women on an equal footing to that of men in the military, arguing that once women share with men the ultimate citizens' duty – to die for one's country, they would also be able to gain equal citizenship rights to those of men. In the Gulf War women fought together with the men in the American army, in almost indistinguishable tasks as well as uniforms – uniforms designed for ABC (atomic, biological and chemical) warfare which seem to be quite indifferent to the 'type' of human 'bodies' underneath them.

This experience raises several sobering thoughts in relation to this kind of argument. First, the experience of some of the women who had to leave small babies behind (mostly in the care of their own mothers, as often the husbands of these women serve in the army as well), shows that feminist equal opportunity slogans can be used to create further pressures on women, rather than to promote their rights. Second, their experience shows that the differential relations of power between men and women, including sexual harassment, continue also within the military domain and therefore it cannot automatically be considered as empowering women. Third, this argument ignores the general social and political context of the military and its use.

Probably even more importantly for our concern here is the fact that virtually none of the soldiers who fought in the Gulf War on the side of the Western Allies did it as part of national service. Women and men were professional soldiers who see the military as their professional career. I have elaborated on this elsewhere (Yuval-Davis, 1991b, 1997: ch. 5), but the clear implication is that, in modern warfare, fighting is often no longer a citizen's duty.

Originally, citizenship has been conditioned by owning property and therefore the universal duty was to pay taxes. With the expansion of citizenship over the different classes, this duty is now conditioned by the amount of earnings a person has, and therefore, again, cannot be seen as a universal duty. For propertyless people, earnings are based on employment. Carol Pateman (1989) points to the fact that Marshall mentions 'the right to employment' as one of the citizenship rights, just at a time when the architects of the welfare state were constructing men as breadwinner-worker and women as dependant-wife. A major fight of the feminist movement has been for equal pay and equal opportunities in employment. In spite of certain achievements in this field, the gender gap and the segregated labour market have largely remained and women continue to be primarily constructed as wives and mothers. Similarly, often less successful results have been achieved in fights against discrimination on the labour market for racial and ethnic groupings.

Moreover, it became clear that equal opportunities policies can be effective only in relation to those who have actually entered the labour market. Meekosha and Dowse (in this volume) point out the even more fundamental point that disability sometimes excludes people from being incorporated into the citizenship body in any way whatever (whether in terms of entering a country, the right to vote, for employment, etc). As mentioned above in the discussion on 'active citizenship', citizenship duties can become a marker of the privileged. This, of course, tallies historically with the emergence of citizenship in the Greek polis, in which citizenship rights and duties were the privilege of the few, on the back of women, slaves and denizens who were excluded from it.

Recent discussions on 'workfare' as a substitute for 'welfare' have used the discourse of citizenship duties as a condition for citizenship rights, and 'community service' is constructed as the way the 'have-nots' can fulfil their duties. Many of the people who call for this shift express a sincere desire to break the perpetual cycle of dependency, deprivation and alienation of welfarism. However, 'workfare', in addition to its inherently selective nature and the side effects that its execution can bring to other sections in the labour market, shifts the primary ground of the debate on citizenship from political to social, from personal and collective empowerment into coerced, that is, unfree labour.

Citizenship rights are anchored in both the social and the political domains. Without 'enabling' social conditions, political rights are vacuous. At the same time, citizenship rights without obligations also construct people as passive and dependent. The most important duty of citizens is, therefore, to exercise their political rights and to participate

in the determination of their collectivities', states' and societies' trajectories.

### **Concluding remark**

The article discusses some of the issues which are relevant to the development of a theory of citizenship which will not only be non-sexist, non-racist and non-Westocentric, but would also be flexible enough to deal with the far-reaching changes in the global (dis)order and reconstructions of state and society. Such a theory needs to dismantle the identification of the private with the family domain and the political with the public domain; it needs to construct citizenship as a multi-tier concept and to sever it from an exclusive relation to the state. The various sub-, cross- and supra-national and state collectivities of which people are formally and informally citizens can exist in a variety of co-operative and conflicting relationships which would differentially determine the positionings and the access to resources of different people at different times.

Considering these complexities and separating the notion of citizenship from the notion of the 'nation-state' is probably more prevalent than ever in these days of 'glocalization' (as Zygmund Bauman entitled his closing plenary address at the 1997 BSA annual conference). Similarly, such an analytical separation is necessary given the growing number of states which privatize a growing number of their institutions. Many feminists – most notably the Latin American ones (Vargas, 1996) – have found the notion of 'citizenship' to be the most appropriate political mobilization tool in the post-Beijing era. It could be used to integrate separate feminist struggles, such as those about reproductive rights, political participation, poverty, etc. Moreover, once the notion of citizenship is understood as a concept wider than just a relationship between the individual and the state, it could also integrate the struggles of women against oppression and exploitation in the name of culture and tradition within their own ethnic and local communities and transcend the politically dangerous but intellectually sterile debate which took place in the UN conference on human rights in Vienna in 1993 about whether the struggle for human rights should be on an individual or a 'group' level. Power relations and conflict of interests apply within 'groups' as well as between them. At the same time, individuals cannot be considered as abstracted from their specific social positionings.

As I discuss elsewhere (Yuval-Davis, 1997: ch.6), there is no 'end of history', nor is there an 'end goal' for political struggles. Transversal politics might offer us a way for mutual support and probably greater effectiveness in the continuous struggle towards a less sexist, less racist and more democratic society, a way of agency within the political, economic

and environmental continuously changing contexts in which we live and act. The struggle for citizenship should engage us in our homes, our local, ethnic and national collectivities as well as in our struggles with states and international agencies. It is quite an agenda!

## Notes

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- 1 This view, incidentally, was also shared by Marx, as has been developed in his article 'On the Jewish Question' (1975).
- 2 For a contrasting example, in Australia, one of the world's oldest democracies in terms of voting rights for both (non-Aboriginal) men (1850s) and women (1890s–1901), voting is also compulsory (thanks to Ann Curthoys for that point of information).

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