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Excerpt

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Introduction: Feminist Rethinking of Citizenship

‘Citizenship’ has become a key word in academic scholarship and in social and political discourse, and the issues of gender and citizenship have recently been taken up by feminist scholarship (Lister 1997a; Bussemaker and Voet 1998). Citizenship is rooted in philosophical and political traditions. The vocabulary of citizenship is about ‘individual rights and obligations’ and about ‘belonging and participation to political communities’. Citizenship is a contextualised concept and is contested. Vocabularies of citizenship are dependent on the social and political context and historical legacies in which they have been developed (Turner 1992). The European welfare states have different vocabularies of citizenship, but there has been no systematic comparison of the implications of different models of citizenship for gender relations (Bussemaker and Voet 1998).

The political scientist Carole Pateman first raised the question of women’s citizenship in modern democracies in a path-breaking article in 1985 that addressed women’s exclusion from active citizenship and their specific inclusion as mothers (1985). During the last ten years, gender and citizenship have become key questions in feminist scholarship (Pateman 1988; Phillips 1992; Lister 1997a). One of the central themes in the feminist rethinking of citizenship has been a re-establishing of the link between women’s social rights and the democratic citizenship that has been one of the legacies of the history of feminism (Hernes 1987; Pateman 1988; Siim 1988, Sarvasy, 1994; Pateman 1996; Lister 1997a).

The relationship between feminism and citizenship is ambivalent, and feminist scholarship has developed different frameworks and competing visions of women’s full and equal citizenship (Phillips 1992, 1993; Lister 1997a). One of the central questions in feminist political theory has been that of analysing women’s *exclusion* from citizenship, this

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emphasis leading to a focus on institutional and structural *barriers* for women's access to democratic citizenship. Carole Pateman's influential approach – I have called it the 'patriarchal hypothesis' – explains women's exclusion from democratic citizenship and their specific inclusion as mothers as a result of the public/private division in modern democracies (1988).

More recently there has been a shift of focus towards an interest in women's agency and women's inclusion in democratic institutions (Phillips 1995; Lister 1997a). Today, the feminist debate about the role of women's agency is often based on a normative vision that aims at increasing women's political participation and representation in politics, for example through the quota system and the legislation of parity (Young 1990a; Gaspard et al. 1992; Phillips 1992). I hope that this work will contribute to shifting the focus of attention in feminist scholarship from a theoretical figure of patriarchy and exclusion to an analysis of the dynamic processes of women's participation in civil society and in public political life.

From a global context, women's exclusion from civil, political and social rights is still important. During the 1990s, globalisation and immigration have created new problems of exclusion and inclusion (Bottomore and Marshall 1992). One of the challenges is to integrate diversity and difference, based on gender, ethnicity and race, within the framework of citizenship (Young 1990a; Phillips 1993; Lister 1997a; Yuval-Davis 1997). Another is to analyse the new problems of exclusion for women that are connected with education, unemployment and marginalisation from the labour market. I suggest that the growth of feminism has at the same time created new possibilities for the inclusion of women in active citizenship in all European welfare states. These are most visible in the Nordic context. Here, women's mobilisation in the new feminist movement has been accompanied by their integration within the political elite, with the result that women today comprise between 30 and 40 per cent of representatives in parliament (Bergquist et al. 1999). This has changed the political meaning of gender and given women a new political presence in politics.

The main concern of this book is with tracing the connection between the social and political aspects of citizenship, especially the bonds between civil society and the public arena from the point of view of women. The notion of women's *agency* plays a crucial role in the framework for several reasons. It is premised on the belief that politics matters. Second, agency provides a link between an active, participatory citizenship and demands for equal civil, political and social rights. Finally the focus on women's agency points to the importance of women's activities as mothers, workers and citizens and of the interconnection of the different arenas of state, market and civil society.

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**The New Paradigm about Gender in
Modern Democracies**

The French Revolution represents a break with the old patriarchal society and traditional gender relations and the beginning of modern post-traditional societies based on a new notion of *equality* among individual citizens (Pateman 1988; Duby and Perrot 1992a). The old patriarchy was overthrown but it gave way to a new gendering of the public sphere, which became a new division between 'public' man and 'private' women. Feminist scholarship has different interpretations of the potential for modern democracy for women, but there is agreement that modern democracies have constructed a new paradigm about gender and that assumptions about gender relations are embedded in them (Landes 1988; Scott 1988; Pateman 1988).¹

Taking the French Revolution as a point of departure is a methodological choice indicating that modern democracies express a new dynamic between public and private arenas and new visions about citizenship. Key issues are what the assumptions about gender have been in modern democracies and how gender relations have influenced the development of democracy. Feminist scholarship suggests that modern democracies imply new forms of inclusion and exclusion of women citizens in the public, political sphere. The concept of citizenship becomes a central problematic for the analysis of discourses about gender in modern democracies because it expresses a contradiction between the universal principle of the *equality* of men and the *particularity* or *difference* of women and other excluded groups (Pateman 1988; Scott 1988).

Feminist scholarship has begun to examine the contradiction between the universality of man and the particularity of woman, as well as the specific exclusion and inclusion of women in citizenship in different national contexts (Bock and Tane 1991; Bock and James 1992; Koven and Michel 1993). The theoretical and methodological premise of the book is that there is no universal story about gender and citizenship. The story about the constraints on and possibilities for the inclusion of women in full citizenship and of the relation between the social and political aspects of citizenship needs to be told from different national contexts (see Bussemaker and Voet 1998).

In modern democracies, gender and the gender system are dynamic concepts embedded in national histories, institutions and cultures. The guiding hypothesis of this book is inspired by the claim of feminist scholarship that modern democracy represents a break with traditional societies, that it has constructed a new understanding of the public political arena, and that it includes a new discourse about gender. The three cases of France, Britain and Denmark have been selected because

they represent three different vocabularies and dynamics of citizenship and gender that illuminate the processes of exclusion and inclusion of women as workers, mothers and citizens (Siim 1999a).

Key Notions: Agency, Power and Discourse

My approach to citizenship is inspired by understandings in sociology, political science and feminism. Citizenship is a status, a practice and an identity, and it has a vertical as well as a horizontal dimension.² The framework of citizenship combines two analytically distinct dimensions of citizenship: the social and the political. I focus on the interplay between political, social and civil rights, as well as on the connection between social citizenship, political participation and power (Hernes 1987; Siim 1988).³

The notion of agency is contested. According to Anthony Giddens (1984: 14), agency is about action to intervene in the world and about the capacity to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or cause of events. In feminist scholarship women's agency often refers to women's ability to determine their own daily life as well as their collective ability to make a difference on the public arena. In Ruth Lister's recent attempt to synthesise the liberal and civic republican framework of citizenship, human agency⁴ is defined as 'a conscious capacity to choose and act at a personal and political level' (1997a: 38). In feminist scholarship women's agency may refer both to women's independent organising and to the capacity of women's collective agency to influence formal politics. In this study the notion of agency is a key to women's active citizenship and refers both to individual actors and to the political influence of women's collective agency. On the analytical level it is a way of connecting the different arenas of state, market and civil society and the different forms of participation, 'from below' and 'from above' (Sarvasy and Siim 1994; Siim 1998a). From this perspective, the notion of agency raises key questions about the relation between women as a social and political group and their political identities and practice, and about cooperation and conflict between women's collective agency and collective actors like the labour movement.

'Politics' is another key term that is contested and has different meanings in different theoretical traditions. Feminist scholarship has criticised the narrow understanding of politics in political science and in civic republicanism, which has politics defined exclusively in relation to political institutions and deliberations about the common good. Feminist scholarship has suggested a broader notion of the political to include the 'politics of everyday life' (Lister 1997a: 29). This does not mean that 'everything is political'. It is crucial to be able to distinguish

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between political questions and personal questions that we may decide for ourselves without the intervention of the state (see Phillips 1992, 1993; Elshtain 1993). In my understanding, politics is a dynamic concept that is both historical and contextual. The point is that there is a struggle about what politics is, and about where the line should be drawn between what is included and what is excluded as political. In an elaboration of the conventional distinction between politics, policy and polity, Wendy Stokes (1998) gives three dimensions of politics: the actors and the political forms of activities; the content of policies and how politics takes place; and the structure of the polity defined by political institutions, culture, laws and discourses. Politics thus includes citizens' activities in voluntary associations in civil society,⁵ which can be defined as the horizontal dimension of citizenship (Andersen et al. 1993). Active citizenship refers both to political activities related to women's everyday life and women's independent organisations outside the political system, as well as to women's integration in political organisations and institutions.

The notion of discourse is inspired by Nancy Fraser's framework and by Chantal Mouffe's (1992a: 11) understanding of the political 'as a discursive constructed ensemble of social relations'. Fraser (1988: 146) distinguishes between the discursive and practical dimensions of social welfare programs and defines the discursive, or ideological, dimension 'as the tacit norms and implicit assumptions that are constitutive of practice'. I find Fraser's understanding useful because it differentiates discourse and practice as two analytical dimensions of the social, and it indicates that the forms used to describe social life are also active forces shaping it. This makes it possible to analyse the interaction between discourse and practice (see also Fraser and Gordon 1994: 5).

In the sociological tradition of Anthony Giddens (1984) and in feminist scholarship, agency thus involves a 'generative' concept of power as enabling, as opposed to 'hierarchical' power, which is 'the ability of individuals or groups to exert their will over others' (Lister 1997a). The present book aims to contribute to a synthesis of the two feminist perspectives or paradigms of power: the concept of empowerment of actors 'from below', which enables them to influence politics and political institutions; and the constraints on actors imposed by macro-sociological structures (Pateman 1988; Scott 1988). In feminist scholarship, empowerment has both an individual and a collective dimension, and is often connected with the autonomy of women to determine their own lives as well as their ability to influence politics. Iris Young (1990a: 251) has defined empowerment as 'the participation of an agent in decision-making through an effective voice and vote'. The argument is that there is space for politics and for women's agency to influence politics.

I find that access to the public, political sphere is therefore a double challenge for both women and modern democracy. Women's presence in politics can be seen as a means of changing sexual power relations in modern democracies. But it can also be seen as a way of gaining a new pluralism and diversity in modern democracy and of creating a new form of solidarity that includes not just women but all marginalised and oppressed social groups (Young 1990a; Phillips 1993; Siim 1994a; Dean 1996; Lister 1997a). Wendy Sarvasy and I used the notion of feminist pluralism to indicate that women as a collective have different political profiles, identities and interests and that citizenship practice must build bridges across the differences among women:

First, women participate on a number of political arenas – in neighbourhoods, at work places, in formal political institutions, organisations, social movement, and the welfare state. Second, a plurality of different identities and ideologies exists within the category women. Third, each individual woman assumes a number of roles and identities. Fourth, citizens participate in a number of formal levels of political organisation, including global, regional, nation-state, and post-nation state formations. (Sarvasy and Siim 1994: 253)

It also acknowledges that the individual women have a plurality of roles and identities and often construct their own citizenship practice by combining overlapping identities and sometimes contrasting roles.

From this perspective the study of women's equal citizenship includes the dynamic connection between agency, political institutions and political discourse. The different vocabularies of rights and responsibilities, political participation, and power each express different dimensions of citizenship (Siim 1994a).

First, civil, social and political rights raise questions about formal and substantial gender equality, but also about sexual difference. The right to abortion⁶ on demand, for instance, has been interpreted as an individual civil right, but it can also be interpreted as a political and social right and a body right based on sexual difference (Shaver 1997). The right to maternity leave can also be interpreted as a social right or as a right based on sexual difference or indeed on human diversity between women and men (see Sen 1992).

Second, active citizenship includes women's multiple activities in civil society as well as their presence in the political arena. This raises questions about strategies that will ensure gender equality in political participation and representation in public life. The quota system and affirmative action – forms of preferential treatment that give women a certain number of seats – have been employed to increase women's political representation. These methods to ensure gender equality are,

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however, contested and have been interpreted by some feminist scholars as inadvertently reproducing gender differences in politics (Mouffe 1992a,b). Democratic inclusion also raises questions about the right to form political communities and identities, about the right to cultural diversity and difference, and about the ability to create autonomous political communities and identities for ethnic groups. One question is the role of women's organisations and the interplay between the women's movement and the national political culture – that is, the variations in political values and attitudes in national contexts.⁷

Third, democratic citizenship raises issues about unequal power relations between women and men. In feminist theory the notion of power has been reconstructed to include male domination in the governing of society as well as the empowering of women, defined as a dynamic process enabling women to mobilise collectively in order to acquire 'a voice and a vote' (Young 1990a). The challenge is to integrate the two perceptions of power to a comprehensive framework of unequal power relations and to develop a dynamic understanding of power relations.

I suggest that an analysis of citizenship in terms of power contributes to increasing our understanding of both the mechanisms that reproduce sexual power structures and the role of women's agency in determining their own life as well as influencing society. This approach thus combines the question of how and through what processes the sexual hierarchies in society are created and reproduced with the question of how they have changed historically and how they may be abolished in the future.

On the theoretical level, the basic approach is inspired by feminism as well as by post-structuralism. The object of this book is twofold: to confront universal theories of citizenship with a gender perspective that makes the contradictions between the vocabularies of citizenship – freedom, equality and fraternity – visible; and to confront (universal) feminist theories of citizenship with research about the politics and dynamic of gendered citizenship in the national contexts of France, Britain and Denmark. There is a dynamic interaction between theory and research. Feminist theories can help to develop a gender-sensitive framework for comparative studies that will give us new knowledge about women's citizenship and contribute to developing feminist theories of citizenship.

The crucial question is what is the political meaning of gender in different political cultures, in the content of women's social and political rights, in the form of women's political activities, and in the content of women's political identities? This includes an analysis of the interaction between women's social and political citizenship, between women's rights and their political participation, identities and power.

The two crucial elements in my framework for understanding social and political citizenship can thus be summarised as follows:

- Active citizenship and the interaction of institutions and human agency is the key to democratic citizenship. The active/passive dimension is the aspect of citizenship that helps to explain dynamic changes as well as variations in models (Mouffe 1992a; Turner 1992, 1993). The notion of 'active citizenship' includes activities in a number of political arenas, from neighbourhoods, the workplace, informal organisations, social movements, and the welfare state to formal political organisations (Phillips 1992; Sarvasy 1994).
- The discourse about public/private is a second dimension of citizenship that contributes to explaining differences in as well as transformations of citizenship (Turner 1993). The vocabulary of 'public/private' defines the meaning of the public and private arenas and includes notions about gender and the family that are embedded in political institutions and social policies (Pateman 1988; Scott 1988).

The two dimensions of citizenship express who the agents are, the kind of politics and where the politics takes place, that is, the interaction of institutions, culture, discourses, policies and human agency. They can therefore help to explain variations in national models of citizenship as well as in women's citizenship (Siim 1998a).

Methodological Reflections and Outline of the Book

My own point of departure has been my Danish/Scandinavian background, where the political meaning of gender has changed dramatically during the last thirty years when women have been included as active citizens. I am aware that the Danish bias has coloured not only the main questions in this study but also the framework, the key concepts, and interpretations of the three cases. My curiosity for comparative work was stimulated first by the apparent contradictions between the social policy logic of the Danish context and the dominant Anglo-American norm in relation to attitudes towards public childcare that I experienced doing research in Britain and the USA in 1985 (Siim 1988, 1990). It was fuelled again by the puzzling contradiction I became aware of while living in Paris from 1993 to 1995 between the French revolutionary tradition, which excluded women from democratic citizenship, and the Danish democratic tradition, which had apparently managed to include women in the political elite.

My interest in democratic citizenship and women's agency is no doubt influenced by Danish political history as well as by Scandinavian feminist

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research. I have wondered why it was that women were included in democratic citizenship in Denmark, what the implications of this are for democracy and public policies, and to what extent a similar development can be expected in the French and British cases as well as in other European democracies.

One of the objectives of this study has been to contextualise the framework of citizenship and to challenge the liberal Anglo-American basis for the prevailing theories of citizenship, including the feminist language of citizenship. Feminist theorising during the 1970s and 1980s often had a bias towards liberal Anglo-American theory and practice that focused exclusively on the negative effects of the public/private divide for women (Pateman 1988, 1989).

In comparative feminist research in the 1990s, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the histories and logic of the different European welfare states (Bock and Thane 1991; Koven and Michel 1993). Feminist scholarship has also turned for inspiration to the 'women-friendly' Scandinavian welfare states, and Scandinavian feminists have started to conceptualise women's relations as mothers, workers and citizens (Hernes 1987; Siim 1988). This book aims among other things to deepen the knowledge of the Scandinavian case by presenting new research about citizenship in Denmark.

The new body of comparative feminist research has challenged the Anglo-American dominance in feminist and political theory. The recent interest in France is also part of the growing feminist interest in political and comparative history, which has made visible the gap between the revolutionary democratic tradition and the exclusion of women 'from the city' (Duby and Perrot 1992a; Rosanvallon 1992; Pedersen 1993a,b; Scott 1997a). Feminist scholarship has during the 1980s and 1990s become increasingly sensitive to context, and one of the aims of this has been to develop 'situated' knowledge. Since feminist thinking is embedded in national configurations that influence norms and frames of reference as well as interpretations, it is not surprising that British feminists have raised the issue about the virtues and inadequacies of the liberal discourse of (male) autonomy and (female) dependency and that Scandinavian feminists have criticised the paternalism of the universal welfare states and social democracy (Hernes 1987, 1988; Hirdman 1990, 1991). One of the special contributions of French feminists is the critique of the concepts of universalism and the public good in republican theories, which have made it difficult to integrate women in politics (Gaspard 1994; Varikas 1994). The comparative approach raises important questions about what concepts travel well across national and cultural boundaries and of the different meanings of key concepts like the family, market and the state as well as feminist notions of equality and difference.

The aim of the book is twofold. On the theoretical level it is to gender and degender paradigms of citizenship by confronting mainstream theories with feminist approaches. On the comparative level it is to develop a gender-sensitive framework for citizenship that is dynamic in the sense that politics (in the broad sense, which includes history, institutions, culture, discourse and agency) plays a key role in the determination of gender and citizenship.

Results from comparative studies indicate that there are fundamental differences in the understanding of gender and citizenship in European welfare states, and feminist scholars have started to conceptualise these differences (Koven and Michel 1993; Pedersen 1993b; Lewis and Ostner 1994; Siim 1994). The recent study of shifts in the discourses of gender and citizenship from different national configurations indicates a need for a more systematic analysis of the national histories and dynamics behind the evolution of women's civil, political and social rights (Bussemaker and Voet 1998). Two questions have been the inspiration behind the comparative study. From the perspective of women's social citizenship, to what extent does the male-breadwinner model in Britain represent the exception rather than the rule? To what extent does the inclusion of women in democratic citizenship in Scandinavia represent the exception or the future democratic developments? (Siim 1999b).

The methodological approach aims to develop a gender-sensitive framework for comparative studies of citizenship by examining the interaction of institutions, discourses and agency in France, Britain and Denmark. The focus is on the development of citizenship as a central institution in modern European welfare states. France, Britain and Denmark are selected because these three cases have different discourses, vocabularies and politics of citizenship, with contrasting assumptions about gender and different roles for women's agency (Siim 1999b).

In this study, the French case is taken as the point of departure because it illuminates the contradiction between the active revolutionary model of political equality premised on the exclusion of women from political citizenship (Landes 1988; Duby and Perrot 1992a). In the French vocabulary, citizenship is associated with the struggle for political rights (Rosanvallon 1992). Questions about social rights have not usually been discussed from the framework of citizenship, although feminist scholars have recently tried to re-establish the link between the social and political aspects of citizenship (Jenson and Sineau 1995; Del Re and Heinen 1996). The case thus illustrates the potential and constraints of the republican discourse and solidaristic policies to secure full and equal citizenship for women. From the point of view of political rights, France is the laggard, and the thesis is that the republican heritage helps to