GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP
Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark

Recent feminist analysis shows that the prevailing concepts of citizenship often assume a male citizen. How, then, does this affect the agency and participation of women in modern democracies? This insightful book presents a systematic comparison of the links between women’s social rights and democratic citizenship in three different citizenship models: republican citizenship in France, liberal citizenship in Britain, and social citizenship in Denmark. Birte Siim argues that France still suffers from the contradictions of pro-natalist policy, and that Britain is only just starting to re-conceptualise the male-breadwinner model that is still a dominant feature. In her examination of the dual-breadwinner model in Denmark, Siim presents new research about Scandinavian social policy and the dynamics and contradictions of women’s political presence. It thus makes an important and timely contribution to debates in political sociology, social policy and gender studies.

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My approach to citizenship reflects inspiration from scholars I have met and collaborated with in different contexts during the last 15 years. I became interested in the concept of democratic citizenship and in the feminist approach to citizenship in the autumn of 1984 while I stayed in Palo Alto as a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Research on Women (CROW). This was the first time I met Carole Pateman and Wendy Sarvasy – two political scientists and feminist scholars who became important to my thinking in different ways. Carole Pateman gave me her Berkeley Lectures ‘Women and Democratic Citizenship’ to be delivered in the spring of 1985. Wendy Sarvasy has remained my best friend and critic, and we worked together to develop a new framework to understand the intermeshing of social and political citizenship.

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The serious comparative work on models of citizenship from a gender perspective started in Paris in 1993–95. I participated in the work of the international research group ‘L’État et Rapports Sociaux de Sexe’ and in the seminars of GEDISST: Groupe d’Études sur la Division Sociale et Sexuelle du Travail. I received invaluable inspiration from seminars and discussions of the group on gender and citizenship from a comparative European perspective. My friends Jacqueline Heinen, Mariette Sineau and Bérengère Marquez-Pereira have enlightened me about the French case and have made useful comments to the first drafts of the chapter about gender and citizenship in France.

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Abbreviations

AJE  Allocation Jeune Enfant
APE  Allocation Parentale d’Education
CGT  Confédération Générale de Travail
CGTU Confédération Générale de Travail Unitaire
EC   European Community
EU   European Union
MLF  Mouvement Libération des Femmes
NCW  National Council of Women
NUSEC National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship
NUWSS National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies
NWLM New Women’s Liberation Movement
UFCS Union Feminine Civile et Sociale
UFSF Union Française pour le Suffrage en France
WLL  Women’s Labour League
WS   Women’s Sections