

SOCIAL TRANSITIONS
IN MALTESE SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

Citizenship in the Maltese Islands

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The collection of papers in this book focus on the issue of citizenship as it is played out in the Maltese Islands in the first decade of the twenty first century. The Maltese Islands in 2005 consisted of 410,290 people, 50.3 percent being female: of these, 96.2 percent were Maltese citizens (National Statistics Office, 2007, p. vi). Citizenship for all these individuals means different things, as social factors such as gender, age, disability, sexuality, religion, social class, nationality, race or ethnicity interact and intersect with the everyday experiences and vagaries in the histories of the persons involved.

Citizenship concerns rights and responsibilities which are contingent on a specific time and space. The collection of papers included in this book focus on this issue even if the manifest objective of this book was not citizenship. This focus was inadvertent and occurred when the researchers concerned analysed Maltese national state practices and discourses, and how they impact on various social groups. It is these practices and discourses which help draw up the boundaries of the nation, and hence underline who belongs and who does not. Through their papers, the contributors have helped to undermine the assumption that all citizens are equal, and underlining how social inequality renders certain citizens more equal than others. The right to education is one of the rights bandied around in public discourse, but as G. Cassar in this volume demonstrates, access to education is affected by social class derivation, or gender, for example.

Citizenship rights and responsibilities cannot be taken as a given, but are contested concepts. Rights and responsibilities expand or contract depending on factors internal or external to individual states (Faulks, 1999). The right to work for example, especially the need to find full time work which provides living wage employment, is being undermined by neo-liberal policies promoted by supra-national entities such as the World Bank and The European Union. These neo-liberal policies, some argue, produced the global recession evident in the first decade of the 21st century. Such policies facilitated the expansion of certain international corporations on a global level. The main objective of such entities is the augmentation of profit, with little consideration for the human, social, environmental or ecological toll neo-liberal practices might have on the communities involved in transactions with these corporations. When corporate social responsibility or the protection of the environment are mentioned

in corporate mission statements, these are often used as a marketing ploy employed to promote products or services, rather than to right the wrongs enacted or forestall them from occurring.

The challenge to the definition of citizenship comes from both below and above. Citizens challenge the 'given' definition of citizenship in their day-to-day interactions with state agencies and actors, as well as through their participation in non-governmental entities and other organisations within civil society, an issue discussed by Briguglio and Zammit in this volume. Supra-national entities such as the United Nations or the European Union, as well as hegemonic countries such as the USA, might also impose their own definition of 'citizenship' on other countries less strategically located economically or politically. Countries which endorse the economic and political frameworks promoted by these entities are 'rewarded' since such policies facilitate foreign investment; those which do not, become international pariahs, have embargoes levelled against them or are invaded.

Agius in a paper in this volume sets out to locate the Maltese nation-state on a global basis, using indicators utilised by supra-national agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations to help position the Maltese Islands economically, socially and politically. Events on a global basis also impact on a local level. Vella, on the other hand, focuses on the interplay of both internal and external factors and the effect these had on the present shape of the Maltese economy. He traces how political mongers within the British Parliament in the past together with the decisions made by leaders of Malta's two leading political parties, have given the Maltese economic system, the shape it has nowadays.

An external agent which has had a huge impact on the type of legislation, policies and practices that have been enacted by the Maltese nation state in the last decade, has been beyond doubt the European Union. EU accession in 2004 led the Maltese state to implement a number of legislative changes (see Briguglio and Zammit this volume) in various fields. The changes enacted were myriad in scope since they included the promotion of equality on the basis of race, disability, and/or sexuality; fiscal changes such as the transition into the Euro zone which took place in 2008, and cultural changes, such as the banning of hunting in certain time periods. Entry into the European Union also encouraged more participation in grass roots movements, especially participation in international non-governmental organisations (INGO), which would enable Maltese individuals to use the resources and clout of organisations located outside Malta. It also introduced a new culture, the culture of accountability, and this, more than the presence of INGOs, promoted citizen action.

The authors who have participated in the compilation of this volume have given differential importance to factors external and internal to the Maltese state, and their impact on the daily/nightly experiences of people residing in the Maltese Islands. One should also note that the focus of the papers included in this volume is more on *de facto* rather than *de jure* citizenship. *De jure* citizenship refers to formal citizenship, that is the legal status bestowed on particular individuals in a particular historical and geographical space. This legal status translates into a set of rights and obligations linked to particular historical, cultural and political circumstances. The content in this book is mainly based on *de facto* citizenship since the chapters tend to focus on the intersection and interplay of social factors such as age, gender, religion, social class, race/ethnicity, marital status among others, and how these affect access to the environment, family relationships, education, material and physical well being.

For example M. Cassar, Visanich and Formosa in this volume focus on the interplay between gender, and age in their papers, and demonstrate how young or old age interact with gender and class to affect access to employment, leisure, health and/or sexual activity among others. Abela explores the term 'family' and delineates a number of social issues and problems which impact on family life in the beginning of the twentieth century. Azzopardi and Scicluna demonstrate that the prison population is over represented by certain genders, races and social classes. Savona-Ventura uses health statistics to draw a correlation between substance abuse, gender, social class and single parenthood. Cutajar on the other hand problematizes locally produced definitions of 'social class', from a gender and race perspective.

Social relations are organized within a given social, political and cultural context as well as time frame. As noted above, factors from within the country can challenge and/or promote a particular formulation of citizenship. Montebello in this book demonstrates the waning impact of the church on state discourses and/or political agents. Although there is much evidence which demonstrates the increasing prevalence of secularization among the Maltese – for example the continuous rise in separation cases since 1995 (Mompalao, 2008), the drastic decrease in church attendance (Discern, 2005) among others – the ideology of the Roman Catholic Church as an institution is still referred to when it serves the interests of the secular powers that be. For example the issue of divorce, same sex marriages and contraception have been de-legitimised by certain policy makers and social agents who fall upon religious doctrine to bolster their argument.

Some of the papers in this volume tend to demonstrate that when changes have

been effected on a local level, they have tended to come from above, rather than from below, except for environmental issues. Sultana and Baldacchino (1994) argue that this 'blueprint' was inherited from British ascendancy over the Maltese Islands, and never challenged. This in spite of the fact that the European Union promotes the concept of subsidiarity and devolution (Cutajar, 2009), on the one hand, while retaining a hold on what happens on a supra-regional level! The Maltese political centre still retains a hold over decision making and taking (Cutajar, 2007), and consultation is sometimes a sham when big projects or important policies are implicated. Although some of these decisions were challenged through grass roots mobilisation, as in the case of projects envisaged for Ta' Ċenċ and Ramla Bay in Gozo, it is more difficult to rebut legislative and policy changes. When the authorities go through the motions of involving the public in consultation exercises, but only paying lip service to the feedback they get from the general public, means that when changes are effected, they do not always address local needs. 'Methods of ruling' coupled with 'ideological practices (Smith, 1990) help shape the material organization of historically specific patterns of social relationships. This hierarchical way of making and taking decisions percolates in other institutions within civil society, whether these are religious (Montebello in this volume) or not.

Pettman (1995) defines citizenship as membership in a particular political community. Peled (*cited by Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 72*) differentiates between the broad political community within a nation-state, what he defined as civil society, and the hegemonic national collectivity – the state. The focus in the book is on the interplay between the two. Although the book's title seems to hint at a homogenized political community, in reality, as the chapters demonstrate, certain factors such as gender, social class, marital status, region, age, disability, as well as race and ethnicity, mediate agency and power. People tend to assume that Maltese citizens have equal status and agency in the myriad cultural, political, economic and social fields. A number of chapters in this book set out to demonstrate how this is not always the case.

State discourses in the forms of laws and practices help 'differentiate' different groups of people from the rest of the nation. The differentiation between 'us' and 'them' can be illustrated using the case of irregular migrants. These tend to be sent to detention centres, usually located on the fringes of a town or village, as soon as the authorities are made aware of their presence on Maltese territory. They remain there until their status in the Maltese Islands is adjudicated by the Maltese authorities. Once they arrive, they are made to live by the rules of a system that sets them apart and denies them the rights and privileges made available to the rest of the nation (Essed, 1991, p. 94).

What is interesting though is that it is implied that irregular migrants tend to be of African origin when this is not the case since there are other ethnic groups who enter Maltese territory without the necessary permits. These include individuals deriving from East European countries, ex-U.S.S.R. and Asia. Their presence is scarcely alluded to by the local media and policy makers, unlike migrants deriving from Africa. The age, religion and gender of African irregular migrants impacts on the way they are portrayed by the fifth estate and some politicians. Children and women are more likely to be defined as objects of pity, and are less likely to be seen as a threat to the nation, than working age men who are perceived as 'stealing' employment opportunities from the more deserving 'natives'. The assumption that the majority of migrants are Muslim, is also used as an excuse to exclude them from this nation-state, even though not all African migrants are Muslim. When the Maltese refer to Muslim however, they incorporate a myriad number of religious groups under one umbrella, when there are rifts between different religious groups lumped under this category.

Categories as it has been delineated above, facilitate social analysis, but at the same time do not really reflect the different living experiences of differently positioned and situated individuals and groups located in the same space and time. The following section attempts to explicate when and how this happens by analyzing different theoretical approaches to the explanation of the concept citizenship.

Citizenship

Citizenship can be understood as a set of relations between individuals, social groups and structures of power (Staeheli & Cope, 1994, p. 447). As we have seen above, an individual can be a member of a variety of collectivities. The individual's relationship with the state is mediated through collectivities, whether these are local (for e.g. the local council), national (for e.g. the National Council of Women), supranational (for e.g. the European Union), or international (for e.g. the United Nations).

There are a number of theories which attempt to define the concept of 'citizenship'. The most prevalent is the liberal theory of citizenship. Other theories of citizenship are usually reactions to this definition, as will be underlined below. This perusal of theories is however not exhaustive of all the different perspectives related to the definition of citizenship or even of the different permutations found in one perspective. It is just a 'taster' of the different definitions of citizenship that exist.

Definitions

The **Liberal** definition of citizenship regards the relationship between individuals and the state as defined by a set of normative expectations. These normative expectations are encapsulated within a set of rights and obligations eligible for all members. Faulks (1999) and Yuval-Davis (1997) regard Marshall as one of the most eminent liberal theorists. Citizenship for Marshall boils down to a specific set of social, political and civil rights and obligations, which delineates one's membership in a particular community. Civil rights, which were the first rights to be formulated in Western democracies, include the right to free speech, justice, association and accumulation of property ownership, as well as the right to have this property protected by the state. The right to own property and to have this protected by the state is discussed by Scicluna and Azzopardi in their chapter on crime. Sammut, this volume, writes about whether or not there is freedom of speech within the Maltese Islands, when certain social groups tend to have more access to the media industry. Political rights include the right to vote and stand for office. This issue was tackled by Briguglio. Social rights entail social protection from the state for those who are economically vulnerable, a topic discussed mainly by Deguara, M. Cassar and Formosa with regards to poverty, youth and the elderly respectively.

Marshall was optimistic that with the development of social rights, the inequities promoted by capitalism would be eradicated so that individuals would have equal access to other rights. Deguara, M. Cassar, Formosa, Cutajar, G. Cassar, Azzopardi & Scicluna and others in this volume, time and again, underline that social rights does not level the unequal playing field; sometimes it might help stigmatise those who are in receipt of social benefits.

Marshall underlined that one can belong to multiple communities. In fact he envisaged a multi-tiered citizenship. According to Marshall, an individual can simultaneously be a member of a region (as in the case of Gozo in Malta; or Wales and Scotland in the United Kingdom), multiple states (those with dual citizenship) and supra-states (the European Union) simultaneously (Yuval-Davis, 1997). This play out of simultaneous positioning is reflected in some of the papers in this volume, for example Cutajar.

The primary limitation of the liberal perspective is that it constructs individuals as being at a par with each other. By promoting a homogenous definition of a community, Marshall does not take into consideration potential conflict among differently positioned groups and/or members within the group (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Marshall is also not aware of the fact that market rights which are linked to the right to property (Faulks, 1999), impinge on political and social rights

(Bryson, 1991). Those social groups with a tangential or no hold in the labour market do not have a political voice, and this in turn affects their social rights. As Faulks underlines, the cost of failure to manipulate economic forces are borne by the individual.

Although the liberal theory promotes the idea of political rights, the structure which retains the greater control of power is the state. This issue is not discussed by liberal theorists who regard the state as a necessary evil, an instrument to bring about order when diverse social groups or individuals try to promote their divergent needs and interests to the detriment of other social groups or individuals. The state is perceived as a powerful social actor since social rights are said to derive from claims made to the state. The limitation of this approach was addressed by theories that are going to be mentioned below, which however do not challenge the assumptions made by the liberal theory, but expanded upon certain of its facets.

Marshall is also criticized for neglecting to focus on citizens' obligations (Faulks, 1999). His overemphasis on rights and individualism, has according to some theorists led to an identity crisis. Communitarian theorists such as Etzioni (1995, cited by Faulks, 1999) believe that the problem with this definition of citizenship lies with its failure to generate allegiances among the wider community. Individuals tend to promote their own needs and rights first, and then that of the community.

Neo-liberal political theorists have further undermined the legitimacy of the liberal theory. They believe that extensive social rights have had a negative impact on the profitability of capitalistic enterprises (Faulks, 1999). The state needs taxes to enable it to provide for social rights, and taxes tend to be paid by individuals and entrepreneurs. More taxes means less capital in circulation, capital needed to promote entrepreneurial ventures, neo-liberals conclude. Nowadays the stress is on economic rights, rather than social rights. The demand for social rights is being challenged, the main reason quoted being that they have failed to empower deprived individuals. Deguara focuses on social rights, but does not go into whether or not they have empowered benefit recipients, because she does not perceive as the most factor.

Mann (1996, cited in Faulks, 1999), who writes from a **Marxist** perspective, sees citizenship as a ruling class strategy. Mann regards citizenship as the tool the ruling classes use to control the burgeoning power of the bourgeoisie and the working class. The ruling classes, namely the dominant economic class together with political and military rulers, need to control the state to do so, either directly (as members of parliament) or indirectly (by contributing

funds to the political party in power for example). Mann pertains to the idea that citizenship is meted out in a top-down fashion in particular historical, cultural and political circumstances. The idea though, that historical, political and cultural factors might affect the way citizenship is defined in a particular time and space, means that the nature of citizenship in this theory is seen as contingent and not universal.

For Mann the shape of citizenship is also based on the particular shape of governing adopted by different states across time and/or space. For example he believes that the USA and United Kingdom adopted a constitutional tradition of governing due to the number of revolutions that helped promote the civil rights of propertied men. Political rights emerged eventually when the working class, through the help of trade unions and the creation of the Labour Party, put pressure on the state to extend these rights.

Countries which adopted an absolutist tradition were Germany, Japan and Russia. These countries ceded civil rights to the bourgeoisie, but denied them political rights. Concessions were eventually made in the social sphere through the meting out of welfare rights to help mitigate the possibility of a working class rebellion. Mann also speaks about a contested form of political regime, where citizens promote their interests through revolution from below, as in the case of France.

The 'merged' type of political regime can incorporate a mixture of the three models delineated above. The Maltese Islands can be said to have passed from an absolutist political regime, adopted by the British from 1800 to 1921, to constitutional rights when propertied men were for a short period conceded some limited form of political rights in 1921. The riots of 7th June 1919 over the increase of bread might have led up to the latter. Universal franchise in the Maltese Islands was given in 1947 although the British retained control of certain areas, such as defence. Independence in 1964 led to the adoption of a constitutional political regime, although remnants of the absolutist political ideology remain. This is evident when decisions are made in a top-down fashion – for example the decision to set up the Sant'Antnin waste recycling plant close to an urban centre. Such decisions are sometimes contested from below either through the mobilisation of social movements such as *Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar*, trade unions, citizens' associations and/or political parties. A case in point concerns the court cases initiated by the *Labour Party* and *Alternattiva Demokratika* to force the Maltese government to refund VAT charged on cars bought after 2004 (*Times of Malta*, March 21, 2009).

Mann (1996, cited in Faulks, 1999) however tends to underestimate the role

played by social movements in civil society in shaping citizenship. Mann pertains to the idea that class factors rather than social movements are now shaping the actions of the ruling class. This might have been the case up to the 1970s and 1980s in the Maltese Islands, although some social movements, especially environmental groups, are nowadays proving as powerful as class factions were in the past when it comes to contesting the power of the state. A case in point was the campaign started by a number of Maltese NGOs, political parties and social groups who joined forces to challenge the extension of St. John's Museum (Din l-Art Helwa, National Trust of Malta, 2008).

Turner (1994, cited in Faulks, 1999) adopts a **comparative** approach to the study of citizenship. One of the reasons why he is being quoted here is due to the fact that he sees religion as relevant in the shaping of citizenship (see Montebello this volume). Turner sustains that a particular form of Protestantism helped create a passive citizenship. This claim is also made by Montebello who maintains that the way the local Roman Catholic Church was, and to some extent is still administered, helped produce passive citizens dependent on the Church for handouts, advocacy and advice, although trust and dependence on this entity is now being undermined by rampant evidence of secularization. Although Turner agrees with Mann that citizenship from above is still prevalent nowadays, that is state led strategies are used to bring about social control, this does not exclude citizenship from below. The possibility of creating citizenship from below is an issue discussed by Briguglio and Zammit in this volume. Citizenship from below can be facilitated by the actions of associations within civil society.

Turner also differentiated between active or passive forms of citizenship prevalent in different countries. This dichotomy is linked to the way the private and public sphere are defined in different countries. France and the USA were categorized by Turner as having active citizenship since revolution and struggle from below helped fashion citizenship. Where there is active citizenship however, the state interferes in the affairs of civil society to mitigate the threat of revolution. This fear of grass roots rebellion is evident in the creation and implementation of the Patriotic Act introduced in the USA after the terrorist actions of 11 September, 2001 for example. Associations are used in the United States to mediate between civil society and the state in an attempt to prevent excessive interference in the private sphere.

The United Kingdom is an example of citizenship from above, that is it has the characteristics of an authoritarian state. This type of political regime leads to a deferential and passive subject status. Although this type of citizenship promotes passivity in the public sphere, civil society retains its autonomy in the private sphere. The Maltese Islands due to their colonial past adopted and to

a lesser extent adapted this type of regime. New social movements have been quite successful at times in undermining the absolutist powers of the state. The *Front kontra l-Golf Course* for example succeeded in preventing a stretch of agricultural land in the limits of Rabat, Malta, from being turned into a golf course at the beginning of the 21st century (Grima, 2004).

The comparative perspective is criticized because it does not incorporate gender and racial differences in its definition of citizenship. Turner for example regards the private sphere as a haven from a heartless public world. The private sphere however is a haven for men: this is the site where a number of women and children are subjected to daily acts of violence and abasement. This came about, as Pateman (1988) observes, because the voluntary contract between citizens – where individuals renounce a portion of their freedom to attain protection from the state – is a masculine construct, since initially, only men were perceived as citizens by the law. This contract is in turn facilitated by a sexual contract which pre-existed citizenship and which gave men rights over women within the private sphere.

Hill Collins (1991), like Turner, also perceives the private sphere as a haven – a haven for racialized women who use this location to come to terms and recuperate from the violence enacted by racist discourse and practices prevalent within the public sphere. Anderson and Phizacklea (1997) however see the private sphere as the place where racialized women are exploited by 'white' women when these are employed to do the work the latter have no time for. This is the site where racialized women work for long, excessive hours, and then are rewarded by a pay which is less than the minimum wage. This is the sphere where they are refused legal status by employers, while having to cope with violence and sexual harassment on a daily basis. The issue where 'Third World' female nationals are employed to carry out the domestic and caring responsibilities that middle and upper class Maltese women do not have the time or inclination for, has not been fully researched in the Maltese context.

Mann and Turner however add to the theoretical paradigm promoted by Marshall. Their main contribution is their idea that rights are affected by change, and that they are therefore contingent and not universal. This change derives in part from the dynamic relationship between civil society and the state, although they neglect to take into consideration the effect forces external to the nation-state might have on the delineation of this construct. Developing countries are more likely to be in a position of having to accommodate to the dictates of hegemonic structures and countries situated outside the nation-state, and less likely to be involved in the fashioning of the political and economic global agenda. This issue was not taken into consideration by any of the theorists mentioned since these

tend to derive from First World countries. Some of the strengths of these theories originate from the fact that Mann stresses geo-political factors, while Turner introduces the difference between active and passive citizenship, in addition to the role played by the public and private sphere in the definition of citizenship. As global events have however shown, no country lives in isolation, and global factors tend to impact on citizenship, as the spate of international migration has shown. At the same time citizenship rights, rather than responsibilities, are often contingent on the physical presence of an individual in a given space. Cutajar (2000) for example questions how transferable pension rights are for some of the Maltese who have migrated in the past. Some of these might have earned pension rights in another country, but their access is contingent on proof of residence for claimant and dependents. When confronted by this increasing reality of mass migration, citizenship rights tend to be upheld and in so doing, might sometimes be used to encroach on a migrant's human rights.

The definition of citizenship based on a liberal paradigm has also been challenged by **communitarianism**. Etzioni (1995, cited by Faulks, 1999) critiques liberalism because it failed to generate a sense of loyalty and duty to the community. Individuals pursue their interests at the expense of shared values and associations within civil society. Both are necessary for the cohesiveness of communities. Etzioni points out that it is impossible for the state to meet all demands deriving from individuals. The promotion of individualism by liberalism, leads individuals to feel alienated from their public and private rights. Individuals are alienated from fellow citizens, whom they perceive as competitors. They are also alienated from their own sense of self since they believe that the state, not their own agency, can satisfy these needs. These factors, Etzioni believes, have led to the breakdown of civil society, family (Abela this volume) and community ties. This breakdown has been accompanied by a growth in anti-social behaviour, something which has been noted in the Maltese context by Azzopardi and Scicluna in this volume.

Etzioni blames the deterioration of civil society on the 'parenting deficit'. This communitarian theorist believes that a successful social order needs to be based on a common morality held by all coupled with voluntarism. This theory sustains that governments should facilitate the role of citizens' associations, because these promote a sense of empowerment and community responsibility among individuals. For him, an active conception of citizenship is one where rights and responsibilities are balanced.

This and the other theories did not challenge neo-liberal policies or the inequalities promoted by the workings of a free market. Etzioni blamed social disorder on the decline of marriage and the family. These institutions have however

been affected by recent economic changes. Abela in this paper illustrates how economic factors hamper family relationships. Economic changes have also led to an increase in structural unemployment, part-time and temporary jobs, issues which are discussed by Cutajar in this volume. Etzioni however did not take the last mentioned factors into consideration (Faulks, 1999). Etzioni, like the theorists mentioned above, ignored the social realities of gender, class and/or ethnicity that undermine the unity of civil society. These social divisions impinge on the individual's capacity to carry out civic responsibilities, which in turn affect access to social rights, an issue explored by Cutajar (2000).

The communitarian theory therefore fails to address barriers that affect the performance of obligations, such as the responsibility to work and pay social security contributions. Barriers, according to Faulks (1999) may lead to poverty (an issue tackled by Deguara in this volume), lack of cultural capital (tackled by G. Cassar) and lack of access to information, all necessary for the full exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities.

All the theories mentioned here focus on issues and events that arise at a local and national level. Particular events have however demonstrated the effect global political and economic events have at the local level. For example the 2008/9 financial crisis instigated a global recession which, coupled with wars and famine in Africa, increased the impact of outmigration from this continent of groups of people in search of better futures in neighbouring continents. This wave of migration in turn impacted on developing countries such as Malta, which were themselves being affected negatively by global economic forces and yet had to deal with the increased presence of 'foreign' elements in search of scarce employment opportunities. Such events demonstrate how individual rights and security are challenged by forces beyond the local. Nowadays the emphasis is more on global citizenship obligations, and on human rights rather than on citizenship rights since the latter tend to have currency in a particular location only, but do not have currency beyond the borders of the nation-state which creates them.

Yuval Davis (1997) maintains that citizenship is a multi-tiered construct. Citizenship depends on people's membership in a variety of collectivities at the local, ethnic, national and supra-national level. Yuval-Davis however maintains that citizenship can be two-tiered, consisting of:

- a. the hegemonic national community that contains groups that are accepted as full members of an imagined, homogenous community;
- b. the rest of the civil society who do not fit within this imagined national construct, and hence have residual, truncated status within this paradigm.

The intersection and interaction of social factors such as gender, religion, intra-national ethnicity, class, sexuality, extent of physical ability, and stage in life cycle, among others, tend to position individuals differently with regards to citizenship. For example a rich physically disabled person might be able to buy property, one of the basic rights, but his or her disability might render physical access to this property problematic if the necessary structural adjustments have not been implemented.

This means that the definition of citizenship limits the boundaries of civil society to certain social groups located within a particular time and space. Since citizenship as a construct was and is constructed by representatives deriving from particular social groups, namely able bodied, heterosexual, middle class, middle aged males, some of whom profess to uphold Christian values, the rights and needs of other social groups are not incorporated in the construct, and in the process, help detract from the political agency of such groups, who are positioned by this discourse as mendicants, dependent on the vagaries of the state when it comes to tackle their 'specific', hence secondary, rights and interests. Yuval-Davis refers to individuals or social groups who are entitled to most social and civil rights, but are deprived of certain political rights, as denizens. The concept denizen will be used here to refer to all those who cannot partake of full citizenship on the basis of the fact that they are not perceived as belonging to the hegemonic national community.

Citizens become denizens when certain state practices promote, naturalize and normalize the characteristics of the dominant group (Pettman, 1996, p. 42), in the process defining other social groups without the said characteristics as abnormal. Since the majority of political and policy actors tend to be male (Laiviera, 2004), Maltese, 'white', able bodied, Catholic, and middle class, it is no wonder that citizenship criteria tends to reflect and naturalize the capacities of this social group. The nation after all is constructed on and through gender, social class and race. As Smith (1996, p. 51) underlines, race, class and gender are conjoined systems of belief about identity and inequality.

Pettman (1996, p. 21) argues that women and racialized minorities are not treated in the same manner as men and the ethnic group in power within the nation-state. Both collectivities are said to suffer from invisibility since they and their interests are perceived as particular by policy makers, with the expectation that they should personally deal with obstacles that impede their full participation within the public sphere. They are assigned formal or constitutional equality, however they are supposed to find ways of dealing with their particular needs and interests. For example women who are culturally assigned caring responsibilities conducted in the private sphere, have to find a substitute to carry out these

responsibilities, before they can work and/or participate in political activities. Those who do not find willing relatives who might volunteer to carry out these tasks for free, or do not have the money to pay for one when the former are not forthcoming, must continue to enjoy material destitution linked with the carrying out of unpaid work in the private sphere (Cutajar, 2004).

'Particular' needs and differences occur when a particular social group promotes its own needs and interests, as the norm. The promotion of one set of 'particular' needs and interests of individuals or social groups, 'otherizes' the claims made by differently positioned individuals or groups. Otherized groups have their agency within the public sphere curtailed. When groups and individuals are deprived from full and equal participation in the sphere, the sphere where laws and policies are created and implemented, their agency is contingent on the moral support given by the groups/individuals in power. Once this support is however withdrawn, their civic efficacy is undermined. For example minority or subordinated groups are encouraged to participate within the labour market when there is an economic boom. Recession sees a withdrawal of such a concession. This means that the right to employment is conditional for some, but undisputed for others.

Participation within the public sphere is culturally given more value, and those who do so enjoy economic and political power. Those who for one reason or another cannot participate in this sphere due to caring responsibilities, physical or mental disabilities, lack of material power, or those who have faced imprisonment at one point in their personal history, are personally held accountable for this predicament. They are castigated for this lack of participation politically and materially. Lack of material means often leads to less time and energy needed to participate in political activities which might redress their material and political predicament. In fact social groups which for one reason or another cannot participate in the public sphere are perceived as having a muted social status, and their needs and interests go unnoticed by policy makers.

At the same time, this social group – like other minority groups such as the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual group) and 'racialized' minorities – suffer from hypervisibility since they are defined by discourses and practices prevalent within a particular context as being biologically different from the 'norm'. Their differential embodiedness places them in danger of being physically and/or verbally attacked within the public sphere: in the case of women, this danger is also prevalent within the private sphere.

This is why identity-based associations react when a policy and legislation is enacted without consultation between differentially positioned social groups

within society. Pettman (1996, p. 17) adds that when citizenship is perceived as an association of equals in a political community, the state has trouble to accommodate those who claim inclusion as members of a category-group defined by state practices/policies as different.

True (1996, p. 117) argues that "gender, race and class ideologies are mutually reinforcing components of a homogenizing process that produces the white, Western, bourgeois, male subject as the insecure national norm". True defines the dominant subject as insecure because the nationalist ideal requires the ongoing, active consent of heterogeneous subjects for this social group to maintain its hegemonic status. The nation, however, is a terrain of constant and ideological struggle. In-groups and out-groups are constantly being re-negotiated in relation to international and national forces. Staeheli & Cope (1994) argue that some social movements – for example the Malta Gay Rights Movement (MGRM), the National Council of Women (NCW), etc. in the case – mobilize to actualize citizenship rights for those whose group or category identity has been used as grounds of exclusion. Political and economic alliances within and without the nation-state also have a bearing on this re-negotiation. EU accession has however given identity based groups more legitimacy to promote their claims, and has pushed the state to acknowledge these claims through legislative and institutional means.

As McClintock (1995, p. 360) underlines, there is no single narrative of the nation since different social groups experience the myriad national formations in different ways. At the same time one should point out that the particular social groups that contest the national homogenizing process are themselves ideological and material constructions whose boundaries, structures and norms are also the result of constant struggle and negotiation (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 73). Since the following section is going to focus on the term 'women', even this term is problematic. For example I remember when I was conducting workshops with participants who were taking part in the NCEP project entitled "Taking Gender Equality to Local Communities". Some of the participants queried whether the term 'women' should also be taken to include transsexuals, prostitutes, lesbians, disabled women or women deriving from developing or underdeveloped countries who happened to be residing in the Maltese Islands. As can be seen, there are different permutations to the 'concept' women in the Maltese Islands.

Women, Citizenship and the Family

This section will be used to illustrate how women as a social group, have their citizenship status mediated through their location within the family, which

explains their subordinate position in their relationship to the state. The discussion here will be limited to gender although other social factors such as social class, age, sexuality, marital status, disability and/or race interact with gender to differentiate the experience of citizenship for different groups of women. The interaction and intersection of gender with age, region and/or social class is discussed in chapters written by G. Cassar, Deguara, M. Cassar, Formosa and Cutajar.

Pascal (1993, p. 114) believes that women's oppression stems from their domestic responsibilities which limit women's citizenship gained through their participation in paid work and political activity. Pettman (1996, p. 43) however reiterates that not all women suffer from the same level of subordination. Some women are privileged in terms of race, culture, lack of disability and/or class power even while being constrained by their gender. They are therefore in a stronger position to mediate the effect of gender in their everyday life.

Women's experience of citizenship is different from that of men because state discourse renders women invisible as has been demonstrated before. Citizens and workers are seen as gender neutral when in fact they are defined as male (Pettman, 1996, p. 13). Citizenship is in fact construed as being masculine since it is defined in the light of men's attributes, capacities and activities (Pascal, 1993, p. 113). Pettman (p. 7) adds that the fraternal contract helped establish the political rule of elite men and through it, the gender rule of men over women as a group. This social contract, according to Pateman (1988), legitimizes the sexual one, namely men's sex rights to women's bodies and labour in the private sphere. Pettman underlines that although not all men are admitted to public power, all men are admitted to sex rights, women's unpaid labour, sexual services and reproductive powers. This masculinist construction defines women in their relation to men and as a consequence women are seen as inferior to men.

This masculinist definition of politics defines the public sphere as a masculine space and the private sphere as a feminine one (Pettman, 1996, p. 8). Hill Collins (1990, p. 46) argues that the dichotomous split between the public sphere of economic and political discourse, and the private sphere of family and household responsibility, means that paid work conducted outside the family is seen as more valuable than unpaid work performed by women for their family. With the dichotomous split between the public sphere and private sphere during the Industrial Revolution, the public domain became the sphere where individuals could compete on an equal basis to achieve status, prestige and power (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 46), while roles within the private one became assigned on the basis of gender and age (Bryson, 1992, p. 162).

Although female labour and sexual services within the domestic sphere support and allow men to function within the public sphere, women are constructed by the state as dependents of men (Pettman, 1996, p. 17). This occurs because the concept of citizenship, which is based on the notion of an independent and autonomous individual, does not take into consideration the fact that women's citizenship rights are limited by the relationships, roles and obligations they are assigned on the basis of their embodied location within their family (Pascall, 1993, p. 116). Pettman (1996, p. 17) however adds that women's domestic responsibilities are the basis of their inclusion and/or exclusion from politics. As mothers they have the civic role of giving birth to and raising future citizens, and some states might give them credit for this – take France for example (European Industrial Relations Observatory on-line, 2005). At the same time, motherhood and other caring responsibilities deprive women from exercising their full civic rights and hence renders them dependent on both the state and individual men, and hence subject to their power.

Pateman (1988) argues that women are confronted by the choice of either becoming full citizens, and to do so, they need to adopt masculine roles; or renounce such roles, and carry out women's work which has no value where citizenship is concerned. When they opt for both masculine and feminine roles simultaneously, that is, they take on caring responsibilities when being involved in the public sphere, the former responsibilities will infringe on their capacities as workers (Rizzo, 2006). At the same time, while statist discourse tries to give the impression that it wants more women to participate in the labour market, the necessary structures and discourses needed to facilitate such an option, are not endorsed.

Citizenship encompasses civil, political and social rights, as well as duties and responsibilities. The following section will delineate how women's duties and responsibilities within the private sphere affect their civic, political and social rights in the Maltese Islands.

Women and citizenship

Civil rights: Maltese women made substantial gains with regards to legal rights to person and to property through the 1991 legislative amendments to the Maltese Constitution, the incorporation of the European Convention on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms within the Civil Code in 1987 and the amendments made to family legislation within the Civil Code in 1993 (National Report on Women in Malta, 1994, p. 8). Their rights as national subjects, workers and/or parents were further promoted through a spate of legislation that

was introduced prior to EU accession, namely the Employment and Industrial Relations Act implemented in 2002 (especially articles 26-32 of Chapter 452 of the Laws of Malta) and the Gender Equality Act introduced in 2003 (Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta).

The Maltese state has however stopped short of providing radical social structural reform leading to equal outcomes. Caring is still perceived as a feminine role, and this impacts negatively on women's paid economic activity rates, leading to women's intermittent employment participation (Lister, 1997). This means that when women are caring for others within the private sphere, they are depriving themselves from full citizenship rights, formally based on their participation in the labour market (Bryson, 1992). Pascall (1993, p. 118) underlines that when the state does not make appropriate provisions to help lighten women's caring roles within the private sphere, women's civil liberties are at stake.

Political rights: Although universal franchise in Malta was granted in 1947 (Callus, 1992, p. 110), women are still an under-represented group within elected and nominated assemblies (Laiviera, 2004). Pettman (1996, p. 19) maintains that women's responsibility in terms of family, domestic labour and care undermine the choice, mobility, independence and energy needed for sustained public presence. This means that women with caring responsibilities cannot exercise their full citizenship rights even when they are legally entitled to them (Pettman 1996, p. 21). Yuval-Davis (1997, p. 92) maintains that without the enabling social conditions, political rights remain vacuous.

Pateman (1988) maintains that with the shift from patriarchy to fraternity within the 19th century, men became entitled to political participation. Their political citizenship however was facilitated by the relegating of women to the private sphere. The construction of boundaries between the public and the private sphere can therefore be seen as a political act where the state, civil society, family and kinship networks have differential influence in the drawing up of these boundaries. The construction of the private domain has determined women's inferior status as citizens within the public domain. Withdrawal from the political sphere however has had a deleterious effect on women's status as citizens since it is the sphere where changes in policies and legislation are implemented (Lister 1997).

Social rights: Bryson (1992, p. 66) argues that the institutional apparatus of the welfare state has the objective of guaranteeing the rights of economic and social well-being, conditions which bear directly on free action.

Fraser (quoted by Bryson, 1992, p. 163) regards the social welfare system

as a two-tiered construct. Individuals participating within the labour market, what is termed as the masculine sub-system, are positioned as rights-bearing beneficiaries and purchasing consumers of services because they pay national insurance contribution. Participants within the feminine sub-system are positioned as dependent clients of the state since they do not work, and might not be in a position to pay national insurance contributions (Bryson, 1992, p. 163). Those who do not have the financial means to take care of themselves, can apply for non-contributory benefits such as social assistance or a non-contributory pension. Pascall (1993, p. 120) however underlines that these non-contributory benefits are remuneratively lower than benefits accruing from participation in the labour market. This means that in the majority of times, citizenship rights accruing from paid employment is better when compared to citizenship rights derived from unpaid work conducted within the private sphere.

Pascall (1993, p. 120) underlines that even when women gain access to contributory benefits, their social rights are not equivalent to those of men because of their intermittent participation within the labour market and/or their gendered location within the labour market. As Wharton (2005, p. 197) retains, when job evaluations of certain jobs were undertaken it was found that jobs evaluated as comparable in terms of their skill requirements, working conditions, and the like were often compensated at different levels depending on their sex composition. Predominantly female jobs tended to be devalued relative to jobs of comparable skill filled by men.

Since social rights are attached to paid employment, Pascall (1993, p. 120) maintains that paid employment is the basis for citizenship. This is evident in the way national insurance policies penalize women for carrying out vital work within the private sphere. In the Maltese Islands, workers who take parental leave or a career break are not allowed to pay national insurance contributions to cover those years when they were not working. Bryson (1992) suggests that people who withdraw temporarily from the work force to undertake caring responsibilities should be accredited national insurance contributions since the state is benefitting from this unpaid labour. This ensues from the fact that when such work is not done by private individuals, the state would have to provide care for those individuals who do not have anybody to take care of them.

Conclusion

As noted above, some formulations of citizenship argue that the moral basis of citizenship rests on direct reciprocity. This means that those who expect

their citizenship rights to be acknowledged must first fulfil their civic duties. Ironically enough, those who carry out their responsibilities within the private sphere forfeit their basic rights to liberty of movement, civil or political rights and/or rights to social protection (Pascall 1993, p. 123). In societies where caring is considered a female responsibility, the unpaid work conducted within the private sphere does not offer the carer economic security in the end. Unfortunately for those who accept to take on such a responsibility they are neither socially, politically nor materially rewarded (Pascall 1993, p. 122).

As underlined in the sections above, notions of citizenship based on the conceptions of equality and universal principles hide entrenched differences (Pascall 1993, p. 115). Pettman (1996, p. 17) argues that when societies create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed, the interests and beliefs of the powerful appear the interests of everyone with the consequent result that the construction which emerges at a particular moment in time, tends to silence or marginalize minorities and those whose interests and beliefs are different from those espoused by state elites.

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