

Women's Citizenship

Kathleen Lynch, Equality Studies Centre, UCD

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Creating an egalitarian society

Equality: From Theory to Action

(Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. and Walsh, J)

Palgrave Macmillan: London: June 2004

- **Economic Equality** - in economic relations -earned incomes, wages, wealth ownership and transmission, and welfare support -
goal= equality of resources
- **Socio-cultural Equality** -in systems of communication, interpretation and representation (media, education, the churches)
goal=equality of respect and recognition
- **Political Equality** -wherever power is enacted -in formal politics, on boards, committees, in work and family/personal relations
goal=equality of power in public and private institutions
- **Affective Equality (emotional context)** -wherever relations of love, care, and solidarity operate - personal relationships, work relations, community and associational relations
 - *goal=equality in the doing of care work and equality in the receiving of care: it integrates a concepts dependency and interdependency into our understanding of equality and ‘citizenship’*

What is Citizenship?

- **3 Perspectives:**
 - **Universal liberal view - citizen as autonomous employed worker**
 - **Neo-liberal ‘new right’ - citizen as autonomous economic maximiser**
 - **Caregiver perspective -based on a relational ontology -citizen as interdependent and dependent**
- **Universalist Liberal view of citizenship**
- Rational, autonomous view of the citizen (full member of society)
 - *Civil Rights* - -freedom of speech, right to own property, right to work; to conclude contracts; right to control one’s own body (civil rights exercised in the courts)
 - *Political Rights* -right to exercise political power (exercised in parliaments, councils, local authorities, public bodies etc)
 - *Social Rights* -rights to social security, welfare, pensions - right to participate as equals – right exercised in public policy -your rights as a paid worker determines your citizenship status (T.H. Marshall)

Problems with Liberal and Neo-liberal views of Citizenship

- **Liberal perspective:**
 - Ignores the way race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability etc. influence citizenship status
 - Universal de-gendered, de-classed, etc. notion of citizenship has led to partnership without equality -social partnership masks inequalities in capacity and influence
 - It is silent on the reality of dependency and interdependency as central to human existence
- **Neo-liberal politics offers a market view of membership of society**
 - citizen is defined as a ‘consumer’, ‘client’ with the capacity to buy services/products - no rights guaranteed by the state
 - citizens are defined as autonomous, privatised ‘the anxious classes’
 - focus is on caring for oneself - individual responsibility for failure
 - state’s role in public service provision is to be seriously circumscribed - ending the subvention to the development of civil society institutions - via cutting community development funding, community education funding

The ‘public and the private’: the love and care sphere

- Deep divisions between the ‘public world’, where there is silence on care and love, and the ‘private’ and ‘community worlds’ where care-related and ‘development’ work is an over-riding concern
- The masculinised character of the public sphere is masked by the disallowing of the language of care and love in that domain
- Why is there silence about the affective domain, and the emotional labour required to produce and reproduce humanity?

Care-less Citizenship

- **The Market economy has become the primary producer of cultural logic, of cultural value**
- **The emotional labour involved in caring and loving has been discredited and denied**
 - care and love are seen as a necessity and a nuisance
 - caring is coloured by the context with which it is associated- oppressive
 - understandable feminist ambivalence about care work due to the former
 - the ‘coloniser within’ leads us to distance ourselves from caring
 - emulating the idealised image of the self sufficient ‘rational’ citizen
 - need to deconstruct care work from a feminist perspective - enable care discourses to redefine public discourse, policies and politics

Challenging the market-driven neo-liberal view of society and public services

- **Caregiver Parity and Rights-based view of citizenship**
 - recognises interdependency and dependency of all human persons
 - claims there is a duty of public care for all members of society
 - assumes collective responsibility for service provision
 - calls for the democratic accountability of state institutions rather than market accountability
- Challenging the dichotomy between ‘strong’ publics and ‘weak’ publics: the ‘weak’ must define the ‘strong’
- 3 types of public sphere - discourse sphere, the policy sphere & the political sphere
- Women are often involved in what Nancy Fraser calls ‘**subaltern**’ **counter-politics – community politics**
 - **Why? - because local ‘community’ discourses, policies and politics has been focused on the care ethic but this is inadmissible in the ‘strong’ public sphere of national and international politics**

A Caring society: care-full citizenship

- Caring is a species-defining activity for humanity
 - Care is both a social practice and
 - an ethic to guide public practice
- Caring is a starting point for a new political vision for society
- Care and love work are times intensive, demanding- conflict with paid labour
- Love labour - the labour required to develop bonds of solidarity, belonging and neediness cannot be commodified
- Several dimensions of care: **caring about** - characterised by attentiveness; **caring for** - taking responsibility for doing care; **taking care of** - concrete work of maintaining and repairing human relations; **care receiving** - responsiveness to needs

Conclusion

- *“if women wish to make changes in the societies they live in, they must seek and achieve power positions. It is essential that women should enter the political arena since the societies are all male dominated, for men certainly cannot be relied on to initiate or carry through the necessary changes”* (Stacey and Price)
- *“If women do not engage in formal politics, male power will continue to hold sway undisturbed and women’s citizenship in all spheres will thereby remain diminished”*,
Ruth Lister