Citizenship and Difference: Feminist Debates
Introduction to the Annotated Bibliography

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The dominant idea of citizenship refers to individuals endowed with rights and entitlements in the context of territorial sovereign states. Defined in this way citizenship stands as the principle political identity of liberalism, which goes a long way in explaining why the nature of citizenship has been a preoccupation of so many, for so long. Throughout its history citizenship has proven to be an elusive concept. Efforts to confine its meaning, by harnessing it to one or another of a steady stream of definitions and redefinitions, proliferate. However, classical definitions of citizenship still enjoy pride of place in the political pantheon – although not peacefully. Of late, so contentious has the term become that debates rage across a broad expanse. Governments, scholars and activists all have opinions to express and arguments to put forward. The nature of these opinions and theories are as diverse as the sites from which they originate and the actors that give them voice.

However, despite the degree of contestation that surrounds even the most innocuous elements of the concept, it is widely accepted that citizenship, because it has its origins in a specific set of social and political arrangements, needs to be reformulated if it is to remain relevant in the contemporary world. Current contextual features such as globalization, a shift to the right in political discourse world-wide, the increasing pluralisation of many western nations, and the legacy of the civil rights and anticolonial movements of the 60s are some of the changing circumstances that are eroding the traditional foundations and meanings of citizenship in contemporary societies.

For centuries feminists, scholars and activists alike, have been particularly preoccupied with the issue of women’s exclusion from citizenship. Initially they sought to account for women’s historical exclusion from citizenship and the implications that this history of exclusion holds for liberal claims of universality and equality. More recently questions have arisen concerning the persistence of gender inequalities of citizenship, despite the fact that in most western nations women were granted formal citizenship in the early decades of the 20th century. Changing contextual circumstances, such as the ones listed above, have only served to further entrench, as well as transform, these inequalities. In addition, the recent post modern critique of essentialism has sent feminists scurrying back to their desks to tackle the issue of differences between women. The result being that it has become de rigueur for modern feminist theorists to think through exclusion on a variety of different planes, simultaneously. In this endeavour they have met with varying degrees of success as some varieties of feminism have proven almost as impervious to substantive change as does the concept of liberal citizenship itself.

Despite the range of responses that feminists have generated concerning citizenship and women’s equality, some common ground can be identified. To
begin with, few feminists would deny that gender plays, or at the very least has played, a role in determining an individual’s citizenship. And, it is generally agreed that the persistence of gender inequalities means that current liberal conceptualizations of citizenship are inadequate. It has also become apparent to all but the most conservative feminists that women’s exclusion from citizenship – particular in a substantive sense - is a complex and variable process that defies easy explanations or remedies. It is at this point that this frail consensus amongst feminists begins to fragment until all but the most hearty of feminists theorists are left standing.

Although there are some who would vehemently disagree, it is fairly widely accepted that women’s exclusion from citizenship is not accidental but constitutive, meaning that citizenship is dependent on a particular set of arrangements and practices that are gendered. In other words it is no accident that women were left out of early formulations of citizenship. Conversely, the claim is that it was the very fact of women’s exclusion that made citizenship possible in the first place. This goes some way in accounting for the gap between women’s formal and substantive citizenship. If women’s exclusion is constitutive then simple acts of formal inclusion will not be effective because the current structure of citizenship relies on exclusion and therefore its gender associations are one of its integral features. The conclusion that many feminists have reached its that the whole structure has to change in order for women to truly enjoy the benefits of citizenship. In its more radical manifestations this becomes a call for abandoning the notion of citizenship altogether. Although this is not a position that enjoys overwhelming support. Following from these insights into the gendered nature of citizenship is the whole discourse of difference. Beginning with gender differences and then developing into a theory of interlocking oppressions that accounts not just for the vast array of differences that lead to exclusion but also seeks to articulate the complex relationship that exists between them.

Arguably one of the most important contribution that feminists have made to the field of citizenship is the insight that, despite a discourse that defines the political as the relations and identities that inhabit the formal public sphere, there exists a contrapuntal relationship between private and public spaces. In other words, the private conditions the public and therefore is not apolitical but deeply imbricated in the relations of ruling. The private/public debate is one that has raged among feminists for some time there are few who would deny the centrality of this bifurcation of space in terms of conditioning citizenship but there is less agreement on how to or whether to remedy it.

Increasingly, there is support among feminists for the notion that citizenship is productive rather than reflective, referring to the fact that citizenship defines a community rather than simply describing one that already exists. In particular, this signals a shift in terms of what constitutes a political act, a political identity and a political space. In effect it denaturalizes the foundations of liberalism. In
this regard, feminism has been much altered as a result of its dialogue with post modern and post structuralist theory. Postmodern critiques of power and foundations occupy the furthest point on the continuum of feminist citizenship theory often producing some of the most vocal and compelling critiques.

Moving from the questions of deconstruction to ones of construction, decades of theorizing has led to a wide acceptance within the feminist community, varied though it may be, that the constitutive nature of women’s exclusion calls for a broadening of the concept of citizenship in terms of spaces, practices and identities. This would shift the theoretical focus from formal to substantive aspects of citizenship, defining citizenship as an identity rather than as a formal politico-legal status concerned exclusively with the gaining and granting of rights and obligations within the formal political sphere. And for the most part feminist continue to call for the abandonment of the abstract theorizing that has hitherto been the primary preoccupation of liberal scholars, in favour of a grounded, localised approach to research and theory that takes context into account and the real lived experiences of individual acting as citizenship in the everyday.

However, there are still some who would question the wisdom of trying to revive the concept of citizenship at all. Reasons for this range from recognition that the power of the nation state is waning due to processes of economic globalization through to recognition that the constitutive nature of gender and race exclusion means that citizenship and democracy are irredeemably tainted by relations of patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism. More recently, although certainly not nearly enough, compulsory heterosexuality has been added to this list. Yet this is not the view of the majority, most of whom would agree to retain some form of citizenship, albeit often times in a seriously revised, almost unrecognizable form. And there are still those who believe that the promises of equality, justice and freedom that have been associated with citizenship are still possible and all that is needed is to return it to its roots in classical liberal theories of participatory or direct democracy.

The annotated bibliography that this essay serves as an introduction to reviews some of the major feminist literature on citizenship written in the past decade. Included are feminist classics written by Carole Pateman, Kathleen Jones and Iris Marion Young, alongside lesser-known works that builds on or challenges the assumptions and/or conclusions of earlier theory. What they have in common is that they all address, to some degree, the question of citizenship and difference. Included also, as background, are a few examples of mainstream liberal writings by influential liberal theorists such as T.H. Marshall, Bryan Turner, Jurgen Habermas and Will Kymlicka. An effort has been made to include a substantial amount of Canadian content and to include some articles that address the topic of education for citizenship.

The articles reviewed in this bibliography refer almost exclusively to citizenship within western liberal democracies, particularly the United States and Canada,
although there is a trend in recent literature towards a more global focus\(^1\). The core collection of articles, those concerning citizenship and difference, can roughly be divided into those that address empirical questions – the nature of citizenship as women currently experience it – and theoretical discussions that attempt to determine how women’s exclusion has been accomplished and account for its persistence despite formal acts of inclusion. These categories are not mutually exclusive they are complimentary. Any distinction made between them is made simply to serve the interests of clarity. Empirical research is informed by theoretical writings and contributes to theoretical understandings. Similarly, the best theorizing allows itself to be guided by reference to the everyday lived experiences of women acting citizens. Finally, it is also important to remember that feminism is not a coherent theoretical category but draws from a various theoretical paradigms ranging from liberalism to post modernism. All of which can be detected in the articles that have been chosen for inclusion in this bibliography.

**Liberalism**

It is the theoretical paradigm of liberalism that animates the concept of citizenship in present day western capitalist democracies and therefore all feminist theory on citizenship positions itself in some relation to liberalism. For most feminists the stance is a critical one. The following is a brief discussion outlining some of the major tenets of liberalism.

Citizenship as it is currently understood is a liberal concept and as such it takes for granted, and is limited by, core understandings of the nature of political, economic and social life as they are defined by the liberal theoretical paradigm. The discourse of liberalism is not unified or coherent. It refers to a range of political positions and beliefs from neo-liberalism to social democracy. It is the product of a complex and specific history and is marked by its extreme fluidity. However diverse its expressions, liberalism can be identified with several related core concepts. These are a set of inter related concepts that define and sustain the discursive space of meaning and mode of thought – the ‘regime of truth’ – of liberalism.

Historically liberalism is the privileged ideology of modernity and, in particular, it is associated with the economic system of capitalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie. Liberalism developed as a reaction against the arbitrariness of authority based on birthright that was part of the feudal system. In order to address such inequities it aligned itself with the ideal of meritocracy or the natural equality of all men.

Perhaps the most important features of liberalism is its reliance on a doctrine of individualism, placing at the centre of its theoretical discourse a sovereign subject, conceived in idealist and abstract terms, as atomistic, free of all

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\(^1\) See for example articles by Bakan and Stasiulis, Mohanty and Alexander and Yuval-Davis
constraints, both social and spiritual, and endowed with a set of inalienable rights. This exaggerated individualism has led to the idea of universalism and claims that liberalism transcends the interests of any particular group or nation. The universal subject expresses a core subjectivity, common to all free men, that is capable of pursuing a definition of the common good as the political ideal. This tendency to universalize the particular is a distinguishing trait of ideology.

Historically, the ideal of universalism only applied to free or sovereign individuals and the main criteria for establishing one’s status as free was through owning property. From the outset the unfree - women, slaves, peasants and children - were restricted from claiming standing as individuals. It is part of the circuitous logic of liberalism that this lack of citizenship status came to be a means of rationalising the conferral of the label unfree. Similarly only citizens could own property but the ability to own property was also the basis for claiming citizenship.

As Pateman has pointed out the problem that has plagued liberalism throughout its history has been how to account for difference – that of gender or otherwise – in a way that allows the political fiction of universalism and equality to stand. Particularly considering how dependent liberalism has always been on the idea of difference as inequality.

There has always existed a tension between universalism and the particularity of interests that liberalism serves. In addition, liberalism’s commitment to individualism has proven difficult to reconcile with the idea of mass democracy. Despite the revisionist history of some contemporary liberals, classical liberalism was committed to the idea of representational government but not that of broad participation.

The concept of liberty is a core feature of liberalism. Liberty is conceived of in negative terms referring to freedom from constraint, primarily the freedom of individuals to compete in a free market. The notion of equality is subordinated to liberty and in classic liberal terms refers only to legal equality or the right to be considered equal before the law irrespective of wealth and power. While classical liberalism did not address the issue of conditions, contemporary forms of liberalism have tended to adhere to a middle ground that speaks to equality of opportunity.

Liberalism is premised on a view of society as competitive and contractual. The individual is naturally driven by a search for security, power and to secure their self-interest. The individual is the privileged subject of political action and the privileged form of political interaction is rationalism. Differences between individuals are perceived as a difference of status, referring to the social prestige that accrues to an individual as a result of their role and position within society. Status is based on individual merit and attributes and not influenced by social factors beyond the level or control of the individual. The public realm – or civil
society – is the privileged domain of action. The private realm is the realm of affection and embodiment. It was liberalism that first promoted the bifurcation of social space into public and private, privileging private man in his private space and making the domestic sphere with its specific sexual divisions into a symbol of his sovereignty and constructing it as a form of private property.

Liberalism expresses a limited notion of the state and a contractual conception of the social bond that is consensual. In contemporary liberal societies these classic ideals are reflected in the adherence to consensual model of society in which consensus is the basic source of unity and social solidarity. Consensus is normative and necessary for the proper functioning of society, as are the institutional arrangements that strive to secure and express this consensus. All members of society naturally share interests and stakes in existing institutional and political processes. All members of a society also share a common value system, including envisioning the ideal society as one that functions as a unified and harmonious whole. The ideal of consensus assumes that when conflict does arise, it can be adequately resolved through recourse to existing institutional structures and processes because the base causes of conflict are not structural but a question of inadequate implementation.

Under liberalism, rights do not emerge as a result of struggle but as natural rights that are acquired prior to one’s entrance into society. Power is conceived as influence and is restricted to the public domain, to institutional and organizational forms. Power is assumed to be extrinsic to individuals and society, merely expressing, rather than constructing, differences. The liberal paradigm itself is assumed to be inevitable, a natural progression in the teleological development of human society and expressing the highest degree of civilisation yet to be achieved. As the following discussions will reveal, feminists take issue with many of these key features of liberalism.

**Identifying Recent Trends in the Discourse of Citizenship**

A large of amount of the feminist literature on citizenship investigates recent trends in citizenship discourse and practice that have proven antithetical to women’s substantive citizenship rights. Much of this literature concerns the recent shift to the right of political discourse in western democracies. Thatcherism, Reganism, Harris’ Common Sense Revolution, Klien and now the liberal government of Gordon Campbell in British Columbia are all examples of the neoconservatism that has come to monopolize the frame of reference for political debate since the mid 70s. This return to a narrow, traditional conservatism has had dire consequences for citizenship, particularly for marginalised communities. Several of the articles in this collection discuss these recent trends in citizenship discourse, identifying as particularly worrisome the return to narrow and elitist interpretations of key concepts such as participation, rights and entitlements, and a rise in a political rhetoric of individualization and
marketisation that has resulted in the loss of more progressive, equity oriented associations.

A chief exemplar of this type of grounded critical theory is the two articles by Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon. In one the authors claim that US citizenship discourse has become increasingly defined by the binary of charity versus contract with the effect that the ideals of solidarity and mutuality that have historically underpinned ideas of social citizenship have receded, and contractual discourse has come to define the rights and entitlements of citizenship. The result is a gendered discourse of citizenship wherein citizenship is increasingly defined in economic terms and citizenship rights are the result of a contractual agreement between a citizen and the government. In other words they are directly proportional and dependent upon one’s economic contributions. Unemployment and pension entitlements are seen as legitimate whereas social entitlements that are not directly related to an individual’s economic contributions, such as welfare, are interpreted as charity. Furthermore this second category of rights is and has been materially and symbolically associated with women and in particular women of colour. Thus Gordon and Fraser argue that citizenship is becoming increasingly racialised and gendered.

A complimentary article by the author’s traces the evolutions of dependency discourse from being a descriptor referring to a social status shared by most of the population to a pathologised state indicating one’s deficiency of character. The quality of one’s citizenship has become directly related to the degree of independence one can claim. However, as Fraser and Gordon argue the new discourse of dependency has mystified particular dependency relations such as those between capital and labour, while highlighting and pathologising others such as the dependency of a woman on a man or the colonized on the coloniser. Once again the gendered and racialised caste of this discourse has significant consequences for the citizenship of women and blacks, and in particular black women who have come to serve as the paradigmatic example of undeservedness.

Alexander and Mohanty’s research supports this line of argument although their focus is on an international rather than a North American context. They claim that the role of consumer and earner has increasingly come to define citizenship and that freedom has come to be narrowly defined as increased choice without any attempt to address the conditions that make choices meaningful. This shift holds particular consequences for women in postcolonial societies who are subject to racialised and gendered discourse as citizens and workers.

In the Canadian context, the work of Jenson and Phillips traces the changes that a conservative political agenda has meant for the citizenship regime of this country. They claim that increasingly discourses of marketisation and individualism have come to define Canadian citizenship with the effect of engendering a shift from a focus on facilitating access and participation to
disseminating information. The resulting changes have been detrimental to women’s citizenship. Jenson and Phillip’s work is particular important for the fact that they define citizenship as a regime rather than a status and identify it as a crucial component for ordering social relations.

The article by Canadian sociologist Patricia Evans is also an important contribution to this debate, as it demonstrates the gendered nature of citizenship wherein the rhetoric of social welfare benefits versus employment benefits reflects the privileging of male experiences of wage labour over women’s experiences of caregiving. Evans views these entitlements as a tangible marker of citizenship and therefore the issue of ease of access is central in determining questions of substantive citizenship.

The Public/Private Debate

Whereas the above noted articles tend more to illustrate the extent of women’s exclusion, the following theoretical articles seek to account for this exclusion. Any discussion of contemporary feminist citizenship theory must begin with Carole Pateman’s classic work, *The Sexual Contract*, in which Pateman identifies the central problem plaguing liberal political theorists, both past and present as being how to account for gender differences. Pateman argues that classic social contract theory addressed this problem by relegating women to the private realm, evacuating them from public political life and thereby rendering them and their situation political irrelevant. The effect was that public relations of equality were based on women’s subordination and the unfreedom and inequality of the private realm. Women were necessarily excluded from citizenship while the political fiction of equality and universalism served to mystify this fact, as well as its constitutive nature. Pateman claims that relevance of her work lies with the fact that social contract theory forms the foundations for our current political practice and theory.

Dutch theorist Ursula Vogel continues Pateman’s work, exploring the importance of men’s dominion over women in marriage both symbolically and materially. Challenges to arguments as to the private public division as being the primary mechanism of women’s exclusion, comes from theorists such as Suad Joseph who claims that the division itself is a theoretical fiction and is not applicable to non-western context where concepts of femininity and the domestic have always been implicated in ruling relations. The charge of ethnocentrism is a valid one. Joseph’s work is also an important reminder as to the limitations of confining any discussion to terrain of theory alone. Similarly, later scholars exhibiting an allegiance to various theoretical traditions have claimed that the division of the public and private is fictive and that all activities have both a public and a private dimension.
In contrast, liberal scholars such as Mary Dietz and Anne Phillips argue for a retention of the idea of the private as a non-political realm and advocate for feminists to return to the pursuit of politics as defined by classic liberal theory.

**The Woolstonecraft Dilemma**

Acknowledging the fact of women’s exclusion from citizenship, feminists have long been plagued by what Pateman identifies as the Woolstonecraft dilemma, which refers to the dilemma of whether to call for recognition of women’s difference or to demand women’s equality under existing circumstances. Feminists take up a wide range of positions in relation to this debate and their responses are very much conditioned by their understanding of the nature and process of women’s exclusion. In this collection Saravasy wades in on the side of maternal feminism when she advocates for recognition of women’s caring work in the public sector as a basis for establishing citizenship. In contrast, Phillips and Dietz argue against broadening the space of politics based on women’s experiences. They claim that although transforming personal relation is an essential component in the struggle for women’s equality, they are not political in a formal sense particularly because private relationships such as maternal relations are between unequals. Phillips and Dietz counsel feminists to refrain from referencing women’s maternal role as a basis for political subjectivity and practice and to concentrate their attention on expressly political activities that transcend identification with the particularities of gender. Their solution to women’s equality is women’s increased representation and participation in formal political sphere.

Radical democracy supporter and advocate of a post structural approach to Marxism, Chantal Mouffe also claims that gender cannot remain a central organizing principle for society. According to Mouffe, feminists should redefine citizenship in such a way that gender is irrelevant. However, in contrast to Phillips and Dietz, this would entail a radical revisioning of the concept of citizenship rather than a return to liberal foundations.

Less polemical than maternalism but still retaining allegiance to its basic sentiments, Jones argues that most feminists agree that citizenship needs to be redefined to accommodate a broad range of political practices, subjects and spaces that reflect the real lived experiences of a variety of previously excluded groups. Jones arguments are expanded upon in the article by Ruth Prokhovnik.

In a departure from the terms of the debate set out by the Woolstonecraft dilemma, Patemen argues that the either/or nature of this debate is misleading. Historically, feminists have called for both reform and transformation. However as both a recognition and a denial of gender are implicated in liberalism’s original project, it therefore it is not a question of difference that is at issue but that of subordination. Pateman is supported by Scott who argues that to fight for the recognition and inclusion of women’s roles and attributes is to naturalise
identities and relations as they occur under patriarchy. The alternative would be to address the issue of difference as inequality, particularly how ideas of difference have conditioned women’s unequal citizenship and how gender has structured categories of citizenship thus far. Sylvia Walby also calls for recognition of women’s exclusion from citizenship as central feature of any reformulation of the concept.

Equality and Universalism

Several theorists have followed in Pateman’s footsteps by investigating the philosophical underpinnings of liberal theory, emphasizing the symbolic role that women’s exclusion serves in defining the nature of the political. Chief amongst these is Iris Marion Young and several of her articles are included in this bibliography. Young’s earlier work focuses on the liberal problematic that she identifies as the “will to unity” that results in the suppression of alterity, therefore making it difficult for liberalism to deal with difference. Young also identifies as problematic the notion of the deontological self that is the privileged subject of liberal political discourse. In a liberal estimation this subject transcends the social, and denies its particularity, affectivity, and interestedness. Likewise rationality is the key political attribute. Under classic liberalism women are by nature all that the deontological self is not. They are affected, interested, embodied, and passionate and therefore must be relegated to the private sphere where the very force of the difference is maintained.

Young underscores the gendered nature of distinction between key binaries – such as public/private, citizen/noncitizen - as well as the relational nature of meaning that indicates the necessarily interdependency that exists between the privileged masculine subject and its feminized other. Young also teases out the troublesome meanings that underlie the principle of universality that is another key feature of liberal political discourse. She claims that liberalism’s tendency to universalize the particular is a major marker of ideology.

In addition, Young identifies the tension that exists between the ideal of universality, which refers to the existence of shared understandings or subjectivities, and universality as it refers to application. According to Young the consequence of the contradiction that exists between the two meanings attributed to the concept of universalism is an enforced homogeneity that results in exclusions. The solution for Young is the institutionalisation of heterogeneity, a political programme that finds support in the writings of a wide range of feminist theorists including Ruth Lister, Chantal Mouffe, and Joan Scott.

Particularly complimentary to Young’s writing is the work of Joan Scott. Like Young, Scott is concerned with epistemological basis for liberalism’s resistance to difference. She identifies as central the fact that liberalism associates equality with sameness. This pairing Flax informs us has come about because liberalism was a response to feudalism when inequality was rationalized by reference to the
existence of natural differences. As a result, liberal theory has come to associate difference with inequality. This oppositional relationship allows for inequality to masquerade as mere difference, thereby masking the working of power. Scott advocates redefining equality so that it is poised against inequality rather than difference. Alternatively, Jane Flax makes a case for replacing the notion of equality with one of justice, which she claims is more compatible with difference. More liberal theorists such as Ruth Lister, argue for retaining a notion of universalism as a differentiated concept that is in dialectical tension with difference.

**Citizenship and Race**

Feminist debates over citizenship have been further complexified as anti-racist and post-colonial feminists challenge mainstream feminism to explore its reliance on an essentialised notion of the category woman. Articles included in the bibliography by Bannerji and Bakan and Stasiulis investigate the racialised nature of citizenship in Canadian context, whereas Alexander and Mohanty offer an international perspective. Alexander and Mohanty’s work is particularly important for its demonstration of the interlocking nature of oppression. Ahiwa Ong’s work is also important in this regard. More mainstream approaches to the issue of racial exclusion are exemplified in the work of Iris Marion Young and Will Kymlicka who suggest a programme of differentiated rights for minorities. However, in contrast to Kymlicka who sees such rights as a temporary measure meant to addresses failures in application, Young sees them as necessary due to the fact that inequality is an inherent feature of liberalism.

British theorist Parekh also addresses the issue of the racialisation of citizenship. Her orientation is practical in that it doesn't question the nature of liberal foundations but lobbies for greater representation and participation by minorities in existing political institutions. Important is the fact that she questions the nature of these institutions if not in form at least in content and declares that ethnic communities should have the right to define, not just Participate, in social and political institutions that impinge on citizenship.

A more radical critique is offered by Dhaliwali who claims that democracy and citizenship are modernist concepts that are necessarily racialised in nature and as such are inextricably implicated in colonialism and neo colonialism relations. Dhaliwali claims that despite its progressive trappings, Mouffe’s radical approach to democracy is equally as suspect as the more mainstream approaches that it tends to vilify as Mouffe advocates for a deepening of liberal democratic principles, defining the problem yet again as one of application and extension rather than structural. Dhaliwali argues that despite its claims to radicalism, radical democracy cannot account for the ways it differs from liberalism in terms of outcomes.
Turning her critical gaze on feminism, Dhaliwali claims that despite their demonstrated proficiency at revealing the masculinist nature of the liberal subject, feminists have ignored the racialised nature of this same subject. Dhaliwali states that the simply to extend a generalised critique derived from an attention to gender to cover questions of race, is inadequate. Alternatively, feminists are called on to understand categories of oppression as interlocking and to pursue the notion of a vastly differentiated subject than the one that they have promoted thus far.

Anti-racist, feminist scholar Yuval Davis also recognizes the gendered and racialised nature of the liberal subject. However, she argues that despite this fact the ideal of liberal citizenship is still reconcilable to feminism. Yuval Davis critiques both Kymlicka and Young’s for naturalizing ethnic communities and failing to recognize the differences that exist within, as well as between, them. With regards to citizenship, Yuval Davis advocates for a multi-tiered construction that is differentiated in terms of spaces and identities. She further divides the traditional designation of the private sphere into that of civil society and the family or domestic sphere and claims that all three spheres – public, civil society and the domestic realm – need to be accounted for in discussions of citizenship. Furthermore, Yuval Davis argues for a revisioning of citizenship that addresses one’s membership in both a community or communities and a nation, as well as one that is able to account for the relations between nations. Her addition of a global dimension of citizenship is echoed in the writings of Ruth Lister and Bakan and Stasiulis. Yuval Davis concludes by cautioning that citizenship is a limited concept that she claims cannot hope to address all the dimensions of inequality that currently exist.

**Redefining the Political: Feminism, Post structuralism and Citizenship**

Another significant challenge to the feminist political project has come in the form of post structuralism. In feminists circles one of its chief proponent is Judith Butler who in the article included here questions the nature of the subject and the political as they have been defined under liberalism. Butler claims that to determine the nature of political foundations apriori to the political process is to secure a particular programme of domination. Contrary to liberalism, Butler takes the view that the subject is not transcendent but is constituted in the social and therefore the act of establishing identities, as either political or non-political, is itself a political act. Here she is not referring to just the gendered or racialised nature of the subject but offers a more thorough critique of political subjectivity itself. Butler concludes that as expressions of power, all political foundations including feminist ones are suspect and must be considered provisional.

Butlers arguments are echoed by Chantal Mouffe, several of whose articles are included in this bibliography including an extract from her classic work, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, co-authored with Ernesto Laclau and that
applies post structuralist theoretical insights more explicitly to questions of governance. Like Butler, Mouffe questions the received nature of liberal political foundations, particularly its reliance on rationalism as the preferred form of political interaction. Mouffe claims that liberalism’s recourse to concepts of universalism and equality allows for an illusion of neutrality that mystifies the power relations that establish political foundations in the first place. In contrast Mouffe claims that democracy should mean making power visible.

In terms of difference Mouffe claims that liberalism’s reliance on unity means that difference is perceived as a threat that needs to be contained. Alternatively, she calls for difference to be reconceived as a resource. Like Butler, Mouffe supports the principle of provisionality and also calls for recognition that contestation and conflict are inevitable features of the political, thus making it necessary to forego our dependency on unity as a defining political value.

Kristie McClure has been heavily influenced by Laclau and Mouffe and Butler. In the article included here, McClure is responding to the charge that post modernism is antithetical to feminists politics. Like Butler and Mouffe, McClure questions the assumption that the political subject, spaces and practices of liberalism exhaust the category of the political. She argues that to continue to pursue a political program that assumes the rightness of these foundations is to contribute to the continuance of oppression. Alternatively, McClure argues for shifting our focus to everyday social relations and representational practices.

Barbara Cruikshanks also addresses these same issues, pursuing even more closely the application of post structural theories to questions of governance and citizenship. Like McClure, she argues that citizens are both the effect and the instrument of governance, therefore casting into question a progressive politics that pursues the acquisition of citizenship as its primary goal. Similarly, Ann Fields adopts what she refers to as a sociological definition of citizenship treating it as an identity category that produces subject and therefore highlighting rather than sidelined its exclusionary aspects. Under Fields, citizenship is tied to a particular conception of the nation and importance is accorded to its extra-legal aspects - the informal relations of citizenship - as a central feature for determining national membership.

Recent Trends in Feminist Research

The challenge posed to mainstream feminism by post structuralism, postcolonialism and antiracism has recently generated some interesting empirical work. Canadian historian Franca Iacovetta has identified a recent trend in feminist research away from abstract theoretical debates and towards grounded research that considers citizenship in specific contexts and an accompanying shift in focus from the formal political spaces to cultural sites and processes. This shift is exemplified in anti-racist feminist theorist Himani Bannerji’s recent writings on citizenship that emphasis substantive inequalities of citizenship within
immigrant communities, including the imaginary nature of Canadian identity and the importance of being able to imagine as a determinant of citizenship.

Also important is the work of Lisa Lowe who investigates the central role that national culture plays in producing citizens. Similarly, Ong’s work focuses on the issue of cultural citizenship, defined as equal parts cultural performance and subjectification. Ong’s research investigates how subjects are made, and make themselves, in relation to discourses of the nation and citizenship that pervade institutional and everyday practices. Iacovetta’s own work is another good example of this recent trend in theory towards issues of culture and citizenship. Her work investigates the production and dissemination of public health policies as they were applied to newly-arrived Italian immigrants. Her work demonstrates the connection between process of social regulation and nation building in 1950s Canada and the effects on citizenship. Rather than denying difference, Iacovetta highlights the important role that difference plays in consolidating hegemonic identities, as well as how domestic practices have always already been a part of the relations of ruling.

Conclusion

Despite the broad range of theoretical perspectives represented within the field of feminist citizenship theory itself, and the seemingly deep chasms that divide them, there are really only a few key points of argument in the feminist repertoire on citizenship. Very little has been done to match the groundbreaking work of Carole Pateman on social contract theory and the public/private divide. The tendency of new work in the field to revisit and rehash old arguments, means that it is often difficult to distinguish between theoretical perspectives except in the broadest terms. This is not mean to belittle the differences between liberalism and post modernism but often both arrive at the same end point when it comes to critiquing liberal citizenship and neither has much to say about solutions. Feminist theory on citizenship has reached something of a theoretical impasse, stuck in a deconstructive moment and finding itself unable to move towards a more constructive position.

The reasons for feminism encountering this impasse are many. One may be that feminist theory has allowed itself to be defined, and therefore confined, by its opposition to liberalism. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge liberalism’s limitation and try to think out and beyond them. Perhaps some of the problem lies in the separation between empirical and theoretical work. By and large feminist theoretical work tends to continue to be locked in mortal combat with liberalism while the more empirical, localised research has explored and drawn on other theoretical traditions to produce some truly innovative work. Despite a rhetorical commitment to the interdependency of abstract theory and grounded research they still don’t talk much to each other. And perhaps some of the trouble lies with the continued privileging of western theory so that theory produced in relation to
other cultural context, which perhaps provides a vantage point for thinking our way out of liberalism, has been sidelined.

Clearly it is time to move forward and some of the more recent feminist work can be used to show the way. One option is to continue the type of critical empirical work done by theorists such as Gordon and Fraser and Bakan and Stasiulis. Their work has contributed to our understanding of existing relations, practice and policies of citizenship. It serves as a challenge to abstract liberal theory in that it demonstrates the contradictory and variable character of citizenship in western democracies. Complementary, is the recent feminist research that has taken up issues of culture as it relates to citizenship. The concern here has been less with making an argument for cultural rights than to explore an expanded notion of the political and investigate the role that culture plays in producing and reproducing inequalities of citizenship in a variety of cultural contexts. Certainly in this regard, issues of particular concern should include the global context, the standing of ethnic communities within nations and non-western contexts.

The knowledge produced as a result of both of these lines of inquiry will prove a valuable asset for the second phase of the work that now confronts feminists. Feminist need to try their hand at developing an alternative model of citizenship that will actualize theoretical insights such as the differentiated universalism favoured by theorists such as Ruth Lister, or suggestions for remedying the bifurcation of space into public and private that have been posed by Ruth Prokhovnik. Mohanty and Alexander’s attempt to outline a model of feminist radical democracy constitutes one step in this direction. Although theory exists on a variety of different levels and its relative import should not be determined solely by the ease to which it is possible to translate theoretical insights directly into theory, certainly there is much more work that needs to be done in this area. However, in closing we would do well to remember Yuval Davis’ words of caution. Citizenship is a limited concept that cannot hope to capture all the dimensions of power that condition inequalities in the present moment and therefore, while not a reason to abandon it, our expectations of what we can achieve in its name need to acknowledge its limitations.