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A Feminist Approach to Citizenship

DIEMUT BUBECK

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A Feminist Approach to Citizenship

by Diemut Bubeck

Citizenship, that is, the meaning of membership in a political community, has been widely discussed in political and social theory during the last decade.[1] Feminists have contributed directly and indirectly to this discussion: directly through various critiques of malestream authors and contributions to the development of a 'citizenship with a feminist face', and more indirectly through work on maternal thinking and the ethic of care. Whilst Dietz has presented an early critique of the possibility of maternal citizenship[2] — that is, citizenship based on maternal thinking — care theorists have only just started moving into political theory, but have not explicitly addressed conceptions of citizenship. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to argue for the

1 For a recent survey article see Kymlicka & Norman (1994).

2 Dietz (1985).

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possibility and desirability of a feminist conception of citizenship based on the theory of care, and to point out what kind of shape such a theory should take. In section I, I shall present the dimensions along which thin and thick conceptions of citizenship vary. With respect to these dimensions, I then argue in section II that feminists will need to develop thick rather than thin conceptions of citizenship. Section III will be devoted to meeting Dietz's arguments against maternal citizenship, and section IV to indicating how the practice of care can form the basis for a thick feminist conception of citizenship. I conclude the paper by suggesting that care be included in conceptions of citizenship as a general citizen's obligation (section V).

I — Thin and thick conceptions of citizenship

The contrast between thin and thick conceptions of citizenship, following that between thin and thick conceptions of justice or of political morality in the liberal-communitarian debate, suggests that there is a straightforward way of distinguishing between them, and the implication of discussions generally is that there is, since the distinction itself is not problematised. Thus Walzer's recent thesis is that the distinction between 'thin and thick' refers to that between universalist but minimalist, and particularist, locally situated, and 'maximal' conceptions of morality.[3] As far as conceptions of citizenship are concerned, however, given the variety of conceptions that have been discussed, no unidimensional contrast is possible: thick conceptions 'fill in the picture' along a number of relatively independent, even if related dimensions. In the following, I shall look at six such dimensions. Note that the terminology of 'thin and thick' should not be read to imply categorical, exclusive distinctions. The contrasts should rather be thought of as

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3 Walzer (1994).

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dimensions along which conceptions of citizenship vary, and between whose contrasting poles any kind of mixture may be found in conceptions of citizenship. The thinness or thickness of conceptions of citizenship is therefore a matter of degree on each dimension and of the overall number of thin or thick locations on these dimensions rather than a categorical question. Conceptions can also often be found to combine elements from both sides of the contrasts.

The first two contrasts relate to conceptions about the citizens themselves. First, thin conceptions tend to see the citizen as a holder of rights, whilst thick conceptions see her as having characteristic obligations and virtues. Invariably, most conceptions will recognise that citizenship involves both rights or privileges and obligations and/or virtues, but their focus often lies on either one or the other side, rights or obligations, and it is this tendency which allows us to think of them as thin or thick. Secondly, citizenship may be seen as a status which confers certain powers onto those who have it or as active participation in the political life of the community. Thin conceptions based on status do not require any particular type of action from citizens: it is up to citizens whether or not and how they use their powers, given their general conformance to the rules of the community. Thick conceptions, by contrast, focus on the performance expected from a good citizen. This distinction is often used to demarcate liberal from participatory models of democracy, but also to contrast liberal with civic republican models of citizenship. The first two contrasts thus centre on the citizen as either 'passive' and rights-holding (but potentially active) or as active.[4] They are distinct, however, although closely related: the first one refers to the basic concepts used in the characterisation of a citizen's moral status and the second to the inclusion of certain types of performance in

4 See, e.g., Walzer (1989), Parry (1991), Smith (1993) and Kymlicka & Norman (1994) for similar distinctions.

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the conception of citizenship. Kantian type citizenship, for example, is thick according to the first, but thin according to the second dimension, although most conceptions would be thin or thick on both dimensions.

The following two dimensions refer to the conception of the state in relation to the citizen. Thirdly, then, the state can be seen primarily as a threat to citizens from which they need to be protected by being awarded certain rights, or it can be seen as primarily enabling and enhancing the life of citizens in various ways. Invariably, the state will be seen as both on both sides — even libertarians agree that state-imposed law and order enables the exercise of freedom, and even civic republicans recognise the threat of tyranny — but the stress often lies on one side or the other, and this location will influence in turn the thinness or thickness of conceptions of citizenship. Fourthly, the state may be seen as neutral with regard to conceptions of the good life or as embodying and realising conceptions of the good life. This contrast stems from the distinction between liberal and communitarian theories, but it also provides us with a further dimension along which citizenship, and particularly active citizenship can be conceived. If the state is neutral and impartial, then participation in politics and the political sphere involves the ability to abstract from and leave behind the conceptions of the good life that citizens happen to have: political argument will only be possible if common, but necessarily impartial bases are found. Engagement in politics is thus clearly distinguished from everyday life which is informed by these varying conceptions of the good life. If the state is realising the good life, on the other hand, engagement in politics is more closely linked with and informed by conceptions of the good life, and citizens enter politics without having to abstract from their particular ones.[5] Depending on how

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5 Such a closer link does not exclude the possibility of value pluralism within a political community, but there are different ways of locating such pluralism within it: Walzer, e.g., conceives of it as linked to

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the state is seen in relation to the citizen, then, conceptions of citizenship tend to vary: what makes thin conceptions thin is at least partly a particular view of the state as a distinct or even antagonistic entity — typically a liberal or libertarian position — whilst thick conceptions are thick because they typically see the state as much more organically part of, and expressive of, the political, moral and social life of a community.[6]

The last two dimensions refer to attitudes towards the notion of the political and to styles of inquiry. Fifthly, then, citizenship can be seen as restricted to the political sphere, or as reaching beyond the political realm into social and individual life. Thin conceptions, which confine citizenship to the realm of the political, draw a clear distinction between the political and the non-political or between public and private life (or both), whilst the boundaries between political, social and individual life are much less clear, reinterpreted or even consciously rejected in thick conceptions. In thin conceptions, there are parts of individual and social life which are 'private' — which concern citizens not as citizens but as persons independently of their membership in a political community — and which are not to be interfered with by political decisions. Often, the political and the non-political are also seen as having diametrically opposed characteristics: the political is the realm of the universal and of rational argument, whilst the non-political is the realm of the particular, of emotion and of partial attachments and action. Liberals, civic republicans and those writers by whom they are inspired such as Aristotle, Machiavelli or Rousseau tend insist on such exclusive characteristics of the political in contradistinction to the non-

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various sub-communities or groups (Walzer 1994), whilst identity-politics theorists have linked it to membership of various oppressed groups (Young 1989, 1990).

6 See Vincent & Plant (1984) on similarly thick conceptions in the British Idealists.

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political.[7] What, then, does it mean for thick conceptions to reach 'beyond' the political? There are at least three ways in which this phrase can be interpreted. First, and minimally, we might say that thick conceptions reach into social and individual life in that some of the citizens' rights and/or obligations do so: social or economic rights may be seen as an instance, as well as Tory proposals in Britain about good citizenship extending to participation in voluntary care, protection schemes or even policing in one's neighbourhood. In this interpretation, the boundary between the political and the non-political is, by implication, clear and relatively traditionally drawn, but transcended. There is, however, a sense in which such transcendence also changes this boundary de facto, since issues or activities which used to be thought of as private actually do become part of political decisionmaking and expectations — a fact which has certainly not escaped libertarian sensibilities. In the second interpretation, the narrow definition of the political is explicitly questioned. What is transcended here is a narrow interpretation of the political: issues which used to be thought of as private, and hence non-political, are claimed to be political, and activism or activities which were not traditionally conceived of as political are claimed to be such. Marxist, socialist, feminist, anti-racist, and lesbian and gay politics and arguments are instances of this type of transcendence.[8] Thirdly, the distinction between the political and

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7 Arendt (1958) provides an extreme example for the civic republican tradition (cf. also Pocock 1992 and Okin 1992 for a critique of Pocock); Rawls (1993) retains a strict distinction between the political and the non-political, to which Okin (1994) replies critically.

8 It is worth noting the complete misnomer of 'new *social* movements' for some of these movements which have advanced these arguments (excluding the 'older' marxist and socialist movements which have long been recognised as political and fit easily into the class-based left-right spectrum of modern politics). The misnomer is based on a narrow interpretation of the political and overlooks the fact that these movements clearly had political aims, but were in the difficult

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the non-political may be questioned itself. According to this interpretation, there are no clear boundaries between the political and the non-political. Such claims can be made on abstract, ontological grounds, such as by post-modernists, or they can be made on empirical grounds. The paradigm empirical ground is that of democratic political communities, and the claim is that in such communities the very boundary between the political and the non-political will itself be contested because different groups will want to draw it in different ways and will challenge it in various ways at various times: the new 'social' movements, a typically democratic phenomenon, bear witness to this point. What is political, therefore, may be determined from the top in non-democratic communities, but not in democratic ones, since their very structure does not allow such a determination.[9] If, then, a categorical and narrow, minimalist notion of the political is transcended by theorists in these ways, citizenship will in its turn tend to involve much more than in the thin conceptions.

Sixthly, and lastly, the method of inquiry about citizenship can either be a 'top down' abstract derivation from other values or a 'bottom up' inquiry into the interrelations between the political, social and individual life in a political community and their import for citizenship. This is again a somewhat artificial contrast because both thin and thick theorists no doubt use both methods, but it is nevertheless striking that some theorists tend to use one more than the other. Thin theorists are typically preoccupied with rights, liberty, autonomy or equality, deriving their conceptions of citizenship from such premises,[10] whilst thick theorists are much more concretely interested in the actual functioning of political communities and the conditions that have to be met to allow them

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position of having to establish their aims and activities *as political* at the same time.

9 Young's redefinition of 'private' and 'public' is flexible enough to accommodate such changes (Young 1990, p. 119ff.).

10 Parry (1991).

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to flourish,[11] and it is from this type of considerations that the nature of citizenship is then derived. The 'bottom up' method will obviously lead theorists towards thick conceptions: it is the question about the well-functioning and flourishing of political communities, notably democratic ones,[12] which prompts theorists to do much more filling out of details, and also to move beyond the narrowly defined political realm into social and individual preconditions, given that there are interrelations which cannot be neglected in this kind of inquiry. Liberal presumptions about the neutrality of the state and the universal nature of politics, by contrast, will lead liberals to keep their hands off this type of inquiry, since it is certain to lead to normative demands directed at citizens, hence a thicker conception of citizenship.[13] The fifth and sixth contrasts, then, are linked in that the inquiry into preconditions leads very easily to a move 'beyond the political'. They are also distinct, however, since civic republicans clearly use the thick method, but usually endorse very categorical distinctions between the political and the non-political, even if the political is conceived of differently from — more thickly than — typical liberal conceptions.[14]

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11 See, e.g., Oldfield (1990).

12 Parekh (1993).

13 This fact is illustrated by the few liberals who did follow up this question and who, as a result, have ended up with what might be called thick liberal conceptions of citizenship. The price they have to pay for these conceptions is to drop the assumption of the neutrality of the state and the public-private dichotomy or a clear delineation of the political from the non-political (see esp. Macedo 1990, 1992, and Galston 1991). Note also that the British Idealists, and the 'New Liberalism' in early twentieth century British politics in its wake, had a much thicker conception of citizenship than liberalism after the Second World War (see Vincent & Plant 1984).

14 This point reflects the fact that there are several ways in which thick conceptions of citizenship move 'beyond' the political, not all of which have to be endorsed by thick theorists.

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In conclusion, what is striking about the contrasts is how pluridimensional the concept of citizenship is and how difficult it is, therefore, to classify conceptions as obviously either thin or thick. Apart from minimalist libertarian conceptions of citizenship, no conceptions fall consistently on the thin or thick side: civic republicans generally fall on the thick side, but find themselves also on the thin side because of their categorical distinction between the political and the non-political, whilst welfare state liberals, although generally on the thin side, will find themselves on the thick side if they endorse social rights.[15] Conservative and left conceptions vary generally, but both will tend to be on the thick side. What can be said about particular conceptions, then, is that they tend to be thick if they are located more consistently on the thick side, and tend to be thin if more on the thin side of the contrasts. Hence the attempt to reduce these dimensions to a straightforward, unidimensional distinction between thin and thick conceptions, is inappropriate and in fact quite misleading.

II — Why feminist conceptions of citizenship should be thick

Should a feminist conception of citizenship be thin or thick? It seems to me that the features of thick conceptions are generally more hospitable to feminist inquiry and concerns than those of thin ones. I shall argue this point by looking at the dimensions discussed in the first part in reverse order.

First of all, the last two dimensions are most important and also most germane to a specifically feminist approach to citizenship. The 'thick' inquiry into the preconditions of citizenship invites the theorist to do what feminist political theorists have a

15 But see my remarks on British New Liberalism in note 13.

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habit of doing all the time: it looks at what political, but also social and individual conditions allow a political community to function, what, e.g., encourages or discourages active political participation by citizens or what social or individual relations must obtain for citizens to be able to be good citizens. From the question how citizenship is possible, however, there is a small step to the question how the citizenship of various groups is possible. This question, in its turn, allows the critical discussion of theorists of the past. The latter, from Plato to Hegel, have often been quite explicit about the fact that citizenship was to be possible only for some, invariably men, because others had to take over other functions which also had to be fulfilled for a political community to flourish: the citizenship of some, particularly active citizenship, was based on radically unequal distributions on the one hand of resources such as free time or leisure and wealth, which can buy the time and work of others, and on the other hand of the burden of work. These distributions are not part of the political realm and can only be addressed by focusing on the social structure of a political community. In the age of supposedly genuine democratic citizenship, formally inclusive of all,[16] the question how citizenship is to be possible for all instead of for some at the expense of others becomes an urgent problem. The solution to this problem implies looking at social divisions of work and resources between various social groups and thus at the reasons for the continued (structural) exclusion of certain groups from the realm of politics. Feminists are not the only ones making this theoretical move: marxists and socialists have made it before them, and anti-racists are making it at the same time. Argument in this vein, therefore, is common to all theorists who try to understand the conditions of socially oppressed groups, given that the exclusion may not be — and generally is not in the twentieth century — straightforwardly political. Such argument may be in danger of focusing too much

16 Note that universal inclusion is far from being realised even in the late twentieth century, as the case of denizens and minors illustrates.

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on the specific conditions which make equal citizenship possible for certain groups, whilst the danger in the more traditional civic republicans and communitarians is the opposite one of only looking at the general conditions. Thick conceptions of citizenship, however, can and should imply a focus on both, general and specific conditions, and this is why thick conceptions — provided they are genuinely democratic — are more hospitable to feminist inquiry.

The move 'beyond' the political in thick conceptions of citizenship, in the various interpretations I have given of it above, is equally important to a feminist approach and a result of the thick method of inquiry into preconditions. Specifically the categorical distinctions between the political and the non-political and the public and private must generally be suspect. As has been pointed out by many before, women have generally been excluded from politics for most of Western history. This exclusion has often if not in most cases either taken the form of assigning to them properties which were opposed to those of 'real' citizens who participated in politics — lack of reason, emotionality, lacking grasp of the universal, a sexed body — or the form of locating them in the spere of domestic life and care which was defined in exclusive contrast to the political and public sphere. The categorical distinctions between the political and the non-political and between the public and the private, then, have a long history of being part of, and used to justify, the exclusion of women from the political and public sphere. Hence they must remain suspect even at a time when women are formally included. Furthermore, there is a general tendency, even necessity, in feminist argument to address issues which are usually thought of as non-political and private because their de-politicisation and 'privatisation' is part of the way women's oppression was established and is reproduced. This necessity to re-politicise issues, hence to question the clear distinction between the political and the non-political, the public

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and the private, is somewhat vaguely expressed in the early feminist slogan 'the personal is political'.[17] Feminist argument, then, does need to go 'beyond the political' — certainly in the second sense of questioning established definitions of the political. Arguments have also been made, however, in a different strand of feminist theorising about the welfare state that women need different social policies if they are to be equal citizens.[18] Hence the first sense of transcending the political mentioned in the last section — that of extending the scope of citizen's rights to social rights — has been very prominent in feminist argument, too. Lastly, the women's movement itself provides a good example for the third sense, that is, the contestedness of the boundaries between the political and the non-political in democratic political communities as between various groups: as mentioned above, this is most notoriously illustrated by the slogan 'the personal is political'.[19]

Secondly, with regard to the contrasts regarding the relation of the citizens to the state, the verdict is somewhat more complicated. Arguably, though, feminists are again better off on the thick rather than on the thin side of the contrasts. Generally, all feminists would agree that the state is at best a mixed blessing: whilst it has interfered too much with women's lives, on one hand

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17 The notion of the political was unfortunately never explicitly discussed by feminists after Millett's famous re-definition of the political in her coinage of the expression 'sexual politics' (Millett 1977), hence what precisely the slogan meant and means is not very clear. The implicit tendency to question established narrow definitions of the political, in one way or the other, however, was very much to the point, and has to be understood as a response to this necessity to re-politicise which holds more generally for oppressed groups. See, however, Elshtain (1981) for a defense of the value and necessity of the private sphere, hence for an implicit retention of the distinction. See also section III below.

18 Pateman (1989), Lister (1990), Fraser (1994).

19 See Phillips (1991,1993).

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— in the past relegating them to the private sphere and refusing to grant them equal civil and political status,[20] in the present still treating and reproducing them as dependents of breadwinners rather than persons in their own right[21] — it has also kept too much out of their lives, on the other hand, denying them protection and redress against violence inflicted on them as in marital rape and wife battering, and 'special rights' such as maternity and child care provisions. It is also clear, however, that women's citizenship will not improve without the enabling hand of the state. Unlike marxists, feminists do not have a specifically feminist conception of revolution as the taking over of political power and are therefore dependent on the gradual change of existing structures to achieve their aims. Hence they depend at least to some extent on the state. Now some liberal feminists have been content with criticising the patriarchal bias of the state on the basis of, and with the aim of, true state neutrality,[22] whilst also asserting the need to protect citizens' privacy.[23] Even liberal feminists, however, are aware of the need for enlisting the help of the state in realising feminist goals and would like certain ideas embodied in state policy which would certainly challenge more traditional understandings of state neutrality.[24] To the extent that they endorse this impulse, they will move towards the thick side of the contrasts. Other feminists, both socialist and radical, have generally been less wedded to the ideal of the neutrality of the state precisely because they recognise the need for the state in furthering their aims, in the case of radical feminists rather ironically, given their radical critique of the state as patriarchal.[25] Arguably, however, feminist thought is at its most creative and

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20 Pateman (1988).

21 Pateman (1989), Fraser (1989).

22 Richards (1980), Okin (1989).

23 Okin (1991), Allen (1984).

24 Okin (1989).

25 See, e.g., Mackinnon's advocacy of legal changes (Mackinnon 1989).

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innovative if it leaves behind the mirage of state neutrality and instead starts reflecting on how the political community, including the state, could realise new feminist conceptions of the good life based on the theory of mothering and care.[26]

Thirdly, as far as the contrast between the 'passive' and 'active' citizen is concerned, the verdict is somewhat ambivalent. The women's movement has had a strong commitment to participatory democracy from its very beginnings, and feminists have been among its most consistent supporters, most significantly because participatory democracy with its consensual models of decisionmaking gives all a real voice, women as much as anybody else. The stress on performance, however, weighs more heavily on women than on men as long as the sexual division of labour persists which burdens women with most of the unpaid care that is to be performed in any society.[27] Hence the ideal of the active citizen, whilst already a very demanding ideal for men, risks becoming impossibly demanding for women unless a redistribution of paid and unpaid work between the sexes can be brought about. Furthermore, even if the ideal of the active citizen is to become realisable in a non-gendered way, energy and free time have to be much more easily available to all than they are in our current work-oriented Western societies.[28] Note that the traditional solution to the problem of the scarcity of time and energy, endorsed by civic republicans and their predecessors, has always been to free some men to be active citizens by burdening

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26 See Ruddick (1989), Boling (1991), Held (1993) and Tronto (1993) among many others. Note that the call for new impulses from feminist theorists does not imply the rejection of other conceptions of the good life, but may mean a rewriting of them in specific ways.

27 See Phillips's very detailed discussion of participatory democracy (Phillips 1991).

28 More concretely, both paid and unpaid work would have to be distributed much more evenly not only between the sexes, but also between those who have and those who don't have paid work, and the working day would have to be radically shortened.

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others.[29] Since such unequal and elitist solutions are not acceptable to feminists, their commitment to citizenship as performance will always have to be a cautious one and will have to be made conditional on fairly radical social changes. The most traditional form of 'thick' citizenship, therefore, is an ideal that many feminists will want to endorse, but will have to be very suspicious about.

Lastly, the reasons why feminists should be interested at least as much in citizen's obligations and virtues as they are in citizen's equal rights are both negative and positive. The negative reason relates to the formal nature of rights: whilst women's equal rights as citizens in all respects have been an important aim for feminists and have more or less been established in the Western democracies, their equal rights have not brought them substantive equality with men. At least four reactions to this situation are possible. One is to conclude that these equal rights have been interpreted in a patriarchally biased way and that an unbiased interpretation and application will remedy the problem.[30] The second reaction is to argue that equal rights are not enough in a situation of profound social inequality and that special rights are needed to remedy this situation.[31] I cannot do justice to this very controversially discussed argument, but it seems to me that even defenders of special rights do not necessarily have to focus exclusively on these. The third reaction is to conclude that while equal rights are important, they are also relatively restricted in their effectiveness and further social changes are needed which cannot be achieved on the basis of rights. This reaction moves 'beyond' rights discourse without

29 Plato is an interesting exception since he would have freed some women, too, even if for reasons unrelated to women themselves: See Okin (1979), see also her critique of Pocock's endorsement of the Greek ideal of citizenship (Okin 1992).

30 I understand Okin to be taking this position (Okin 1989).

31 Young (1989).

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rejecting it, however. The fourth reaction has recently increasingly attracted supporters among feminists and consists of a rejection of rights discourse altogether. In these writings, which are generally inspired by the ethic of care discussion, rights discourse is criticised as presupposing masculine, antagonistic forms of identity and social interaction. Consequently, other types of moral discourse are explored, mostly discourses based on obligations and virtues. Of these four reactions, none are incompatible with also looking at the thick side of obligations and virtues, and the last reaction would be positively in favour of it.[32] The positive reason, then, for feminists to concentrate their efforts on the thick side is twofold: first, obligations and virtues have not been explored much as yet despite being seemingly more promising than formal rights, and secondly, the theorisation of care points towards a virtue and obligations based discourse of citizenship. Since the theory of care has been one of the most productive areas of feminist work in the last few years, its implications for a feminist conception of citizenship deserve close attention.

In conclusion, feminists should mostly be interested in thick conceptions of citizenship, since only thick conceptions will allow them to focus on the kinds of problems they need to address. Furthermore, only thick conceptions provide space for new theoretical impulses which have come from outside of political theory but are promising to be quite productive here, too. The theory of care provides a good starting point for developing such a thick feminist conception of citizenship: not only does it formulate a part of social life that, although crucially necessary for the survival and welfare of any society, has not entered social

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32 Note that a concentration on or a tendency toward the thick side does not necessarily exclude rights discourse altogether, even though some care theorists do reject it (e.g. Noddings 1984, 1989). It may, however, relegate rights discourse and citizens' rights to a less prominent place than they usually have: see Held (1993), Tronto (1993).

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and political theory, it also provides a substantially different perspective on social and political life. In the following, I shall counter Dietz's critique of maternal or carer's citizenship and indicate how links between care and citizenship can be made.

III — The link between care and citizenship

Before I look at the possible links between the theory of care and citizenship, I have to address an argument which, if valid, would make the attempt to 'translate' private practices, understandings and values — such as those of mothering or care — into public and political ones seem utterly foolish and misguided. The argument, pursued at length by Dietz in her critique of Elshtain's and Ruddick's advocacy of maternal thinking,[33] is that the maternal and the political consist of distinct activities, hence that no such translation is possible: mothering 'is

33 See, among others, Elshtain (1981, 1982), Ruddick (1989). Note that Ruddick's book, *Maternal Thinking* (1989), which appeared much later, consists of an in-depth development of the ideas presented in the three papers on which Dietz bases her critique (Ruddick 1980, 1983a, 1983b). Ruddick (1989) illustrates at least implicitly many of the points I make against Dietz below. It is also worth noting that only Ruddick is a 'pure' theorist of maternal thinking. In Elshtain's work, by contrast, there is a rather unfortunate confusion between two types of argument which are given very different amounts of attention: the first consists of a defense of the value of the family and the private sphere and is foregrounded in most of Elshtain's writing; the second type is more narrowly about maternal thinking, but is much less well developed by Elshtain than it is by Ruddick. It is deplorable that Dietz has focused her critique of 'maternal citizenship' on the much more sketchy Elshtain texts rather than Ruddick's work which, even in the earlier papers, is much more substantial and less easy to reject. Dietz can, however, be read not just as a critique of Elshtain's barely developed 'theory' of maternal thinking, but as a much more general critique of a particular argumentative move in feminist theory, that is, that of using insights from the theory of mothering and care in the discussion of citizenship. It is in this latter respect that her critique is worth rejecting.

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an intimate, exclusive, and particular activity. ... Democratic citizenship, on the other hand, is collective, inclusive, and generalized'.[34] Dietz's critique, based on an Arendtian type of civic republicanism, is obviously inspired by the categorical distinction between the political and the non-political typical of civic republican thought. I have argued generally against this distinction in section II, but it is worth meeting Dietz's specific points in the context of a discussion of how a translation from the private into the public is possible.[35]

Dietz's main point is that a good mother does not necessarily make a good citizen, because a citizen's activities and virtues are distinct and exclusive to political discussion and action and can only be learnt in the public sphere. Does the fact that mothering or caring and political action have some contrasting properties mean that they cannot be informed by the same virtues and values? This clearly does not follow. Honesty, to take a neutral example, is as much of a virtue in the public as in the private sphere (and equally lacking in both), and peace is equally undeniably a value in both spheres, even if its interpretation changes between the spheres. Both virtues and values, therefore, can be appropriate in various social spheres or settings as long as they are general enough and a fitting interpretation for these particular spheres can be found. The interesting trait of virtues is that they are dispositions to act in certain ways, and that these dispositions can be exhibited across a wide range of different situations, hence also, at least in principle, public and private ones. Similarly, whether values are valid in particular spheres or situations depends on whether they are general enough and

34 Dietz (1985), p. 31.

35 Although Dietz focuses on mothering, most of her arguments apply to care, too, hence are important to be met. As will become obvious further on, my own argument about care is made somewhat easier by the fact that a focus on care avoids at least some of the problems which arise specifically from mothering.

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whether they can be shown to apply. Rather than assert apriori incompatibility on the basis of a categorical distinction, therefore, Dietz would need to show that the particular virtues and values characteristic of mothering or caring are not appropriate for the domain of politics. As I shall point out below, on the contrary, the values and especially the virtues of care are more than appropriate for and hitherto unacknowledged and lacking in modern democratic politics.

A further argument relates to the link maternal thinkers and care theorists are trying to establish between mothering or caring and citizenship. Dietz's objection is threefold. First, she argues that in order to link maternal thinking with politics, one would have to 'show that maternal virtues are conceptually connected to, or that the social practice of mothering causally brings about, democratic values — particularly active citizenship, self-government, egalitarianism, and the exercise of freedom'.[36] Secondly, she claims that no political standards or values can be derived from mothering either, since the 'moral imperative of mothering' — the preservation and growth of children — is too specific to lead to any guidelines for political decisions. Thirdly, she maintains that even if there were links, they would not affect politics proper. Now the first objection clearly demands too much: the link between mothering or caring and citizenship does not have to be conceptual or causal, it can equally validly consist of a link through virtues, skills or values that are appropriate in both spheres of action. The onus, of course, lies on the maternal thinker or care theorist to point out what kinds of links there are.[37] Dietz's second objection, demanding, more weakly, a derivative

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36 Dietz (1985), p. 30, my emphases.

37 Ruddick devotes two chapters of her book on reflecting on the link between maternal practice and thinking and political values and activism, specifically peace politics (Ruddick 1989). Tronto (1993) traces some of the values and virtues of care in democratic politics. See also my suggestions in section IV.

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link of the kind I asserted in my reply to the first objection, does not hold either. First, much more general values than that of the preservation and growth of children can be derived from mothering, such as the value of peace and of certain types of conflict resolution, and these values certainly are relevant for at least certain political issues, notably peace politics.[38] Secondly, care, given that it is a more general practice than mothering, also implies more general values such as, e.g., the importance of the meeting of needs, which, in turn, will lead to certain political imperatives like the importance of the welfare state. Furthermore, as I shall point out below, other types of derivative links are possible, such as through particular contents, virtues and generalised perspectives. Some of these links have been drawn by maternal thinkers and care theorists since Dietz's critique,[39] but further work in this area needs to be done to substantiate my points against Dietz. Dietz's claim, then, thirdly, that 'the only effective challenge to a corrupt or injust state is one that is itself expressly political'[40] is based on two wrong assumptions: first, it assumes apriori that no derivate links can be made between maternal thinking and care (which, according to her, are non-political) and the political sphere;[41] secondly, it assumes that, even if such links could be made, nothing of relevance could be said. I have argued above that such links can be made, hence what remains to be pointed out is the fact that relevant claims can be made based on such links. An obvious example, specifically in response to her claim, are arguments care theorists make about an insufficient and therefore unjust welfare state.[42] Note, however, that Dietz's challenge is based on a very narrow definition of politics as about the state and political institutions. Whilst I am

38 Ruddick (1989).

39 See notes 26 above and 42 below.

40 Dietz (1985), p. 34.

41 See her first argument.

42 See Tronto (1993), Bubeck (1995).

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happy to concede that some of the values in the political sphere may be specific to this sphere, notably those concerned with the evaluation of political institutions themselves, I do not think her narrow definition of politics should be accepted: politics is as much about the state as it is about political decisionmaking, and the latter is always based on more general values, some or most of which may be informed by maternal thinking or care theory. Also, the question of relevance is difficult to settle independently of specific arguments, since a claim to relevancy is obviously part and parcel of any specific linkage care theorists and maternal thinkers make (which in itself might challenge established definitions of the political[43]). In conclusion, then, Dietz's objections against links between mothering or care and the political sphere do not hold, but the burden of elaborating these links clearly lies on maternal thinkers and care theorists.

Lastly, in order to reinforce her argument about the strict separateness of the two spheres of mothering and politics and the activities associated with them, Dietz points to the differences in the relationships that obtain between mothers and children and between citizen: the former are unequal and characterised by exclusive love, whilst the latter are equal and characterised by Aristotelian friendship or mutual respect.[44] Now nobody could possibly deny that there are such differences, although the extent and content of the differences is socially and historically variable, of course.[45] I also share with Dietz the unease about the power

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43 See my argument in section II.

44 Dietz (1985), p. 31f.

45 It may be worth noting in this context that the Aristotelian friendship and equality between citizens was no doubt possible in the Greek city states because of the very exclusiveness and hence homogeneity (and relatively small size) of the group of citizens, comprising an elite of fairly wealthy men only. Real equality, as opposed to formal equality, has become a problem ever since democratic citizenship has been widened to include most or all adult members of a political community, that is, ever since social divisions have come to

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hierarchy implicit in a mothering relationship, if this is taken as a model for relationships and inferences in the public sphere. It is furthermore possible that the emotions connected with mothering may be too strong and too exclusive to allow a transfer, although it may be argued that too exclusive a type of mothering, and certainly of caring, represents a corruption of the practice rather than the ideal type.[46] These points, however, do not imply that 'private' practices and relationships cannot serve as resources for political reflection, but simply that mothering may be inappropriate.[47] I think they represent good reasons for choosing care rather than mothering as the basis for a feminist approach to citizenship, since care neither presupposes the relatively lasting power inequalities, nor the close emotional bond that mothering presupposes.[48] Care, in other words, whilst sharing many characteristics with mothering, is more general a practice than mothering — mothering being a particular type of caring — and therefore better suited for making the link with citizenship. Whilst endorsing to some extent Dietz's objections against mothering, then, I do not think these objections hold against caring, hence leave the care theorist free to develop her approach to citizenship.

In conclusion, although Dietz's arguments fail, the onus probandi lies on the side of care theorists (and maternal thinkers): their work has to show how the translation from care or

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counteract the political and legal equality of citizens. Modern democratic theory has not been able to deal with this problem, it seems to me, because it posits equality where there is obvious inequality. Hence looking at the morality of hierarchical but dynamic relationships such as mothering, and at equality as an end-result and hard-won achievement in such unequal relationships — rather than falsely assuming equality — may not be such a bad theoretical strategy after all! (See also note 47.)

46 See Bubeck (1995).

47 But see Held (1993) for quite a challenging defense of mothering.

48 Bubeck (1995).

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mothering into citizenship is possible. In the following section, I shall indicate how such translation can be done.

IV — Care as a resource for citizenship

Four different types of translation from care to the sphere of politics and citizenship strike me as important. I shall present them and give examples from the theory of care or mothering. None of these different types are exclusive, and are likely to be found combined.

First, private concerns or contents may be translated into public ones.[49] Carers may claim their concerns to be, and argue for them to become accepted as, public ones, hence what is on the political agenda may change as a result of the intervention of carers in politics, based on concerns derived from their experience as carers. These may, but need not be, specific or sectional concerns.[50] Carers may, for example, refuse to accept any longer

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49 I use 'private' here to refer to the experiences, concerns, values, virtues and conceptions which form part of the caring practice of individual carers or mothers, and 'public' to refer to the sphere of politics and citizenship, without, however, wanting to imply a fixed dichotomy between private and public. Note also that similar experiences, concerns, etc. form part of public care (Bubeck 1995).

50 Phillips (1993) seems to think that feminist interests are necessarily sectional interests — hence that feminist politics are necessarily interest group politics — by contrasting these with the general point of view that citizens should take, and affirming the latter. I do not think that concerns which may be derived from the experiences of a particular group, in this case women, are necessarily sectional, that is, not general: if a society has solved a given social problem by making one particular group responsible for dealing with it, members of this group will have a particularly good grasp of what the problem is and may make it into one of their political priorities (apart from also having an interest in it being seen as a general social problem). The problem, however, has always been a general one. The provision of day-to-day care for those in need, and the upbringing of children more specifically, are cases in point: feminists may have a specific interest in

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that problems they have with combining paid work with unpaid care are their private problems and call for public support for their efforts, or even for society to take more responsibility for the provision of care to those in need. Likewise, the gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work, which burdens women with most of the unpaid care, may be claimed to be an issue of social justice.[51] It might also be argued that the practice of care should be acknowledged as and made into a general citizen's obligation: no society can survive, let alone flourish, without the care that all citizens need at various stages in their lives and in various ways. Given that care is so central to any society, and given, furthermore, that the practice of care may function as an education in important virtues which are also important for citizens to have, all citizens should contribute their fair share of care to the general welfare of society. This type of translation, then, will often follow the general feminist impulse of re-politicising what are now perceived to be wrongly or even oppressively de-politicised rather than truly private issues; or it may simply bring to public awareness issues that would relatively easily be accepted as political but are not widely known or even actively suppressed, as the example of the Argentinian and Chilean madres protesting against the 'disappearances' of their children or that of the German mothers protesting against contaminated food after Czernobyl illustrate.[52] In principle, there is no topic, and no concern, that can, and in a democracy may, apriori be excluded from the political agenda (short of the domain of those things that it is beyond human capacities to change), and

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pressing these issues politically, but the problem of the provision of care for those in need is a general social problem that all societies have to solve in one way or another, and that some solve better, more humanely and justly than others.

51 Boling (1991), Bubeck (1995).

52 See Ruddick (1989) and Stopzcyk (1989) respectively.

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this in turn implies that translations from private into public will always be possible.

Secondly, private values may become public ones, hence the values which inform political reflection and by which political alternatives or decisions are judged may be derived from values endorsed by carers and informing their practice of care. Ruddick's work on how maternal thinking translates into peace politics is a good instance of how carers' or mothers' values, notably the preservation of life, can be translated into a commitment to peace and a general suspicion of the 'imperative' to arm and of easy justifications of war.[53] Also, the value of meeting needs, which guides any form of care, can be seen as a more general value which informs not only one's understanding of the point and functioning of society and social interaction, but also underpins the philosophy of the welfare state.[54] Lastly, the value of openness in a carer to the demands made by those in need can be translated into a value that should inform political interaction and the nature of democratic political institutions: openness and accessibility of a political system to all who want to voice their concerns, and the openness of participants in public discussion to different points of view and different needs and interests, as

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53 Ruddick (1989). Davion (1990) has argued against a link between pacifism and care. I do not find her argument convincing, though, partly because she uses the kind of paradoxical dilemmas that arise from any doctrine — such as situations where mothers are only able to save their children's lives, or only able to bring about peace, by using violence (these dilemmas being comparable to those about the toleration of anti- or illiberals in liberalism) — and partly because her interpretation of pacifism is too strict. Mothers or carers can be pacifists by tendency, without having to abjure all use of violence. If understood as implying claims about pacifism as a general tendency or a general disposition rather than an absolute principle, Ruddick's argument holds against Davion's critique. Regardless of what in the dispute one finds plausible, however, the implication in both Ruddick and Davion is that such translations are at least in principle possible.

54 Bubeck (1995).

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opposed to narrowly sectional lobbying and politicking may change the nature of politics, both of discussion and of outcomes, considerably. Whether and how the values of care can be transferred from private to public, then, depends mostly on whether the values implicit in the practice of care are generalisable, and whether a valid interpretation for them can be found in the sphere of politics.

Thirdly, private virtues and skills arising from and informing the practice of care can be argued to be relevant and important in citizens, too. Thus the attentiveness to another person's reality, needs and interests which characterises a good carer may be crucially important in modern democratic political communities in which social divisions lead to radically different realities, needs and interests:[55] substantive equality can only be achieved if such differences are truly understood and taken into consideration in political decisions. Real attention to others, that is, the capacity to listen and take in what others, different from us, say in the political process, is a necessary precondition of any such efforts. Furthermore, the ability to acknowledge such different realities is as important between carer and cared for as it is in public discourse: such acknowledgement creates a sense of shared understanding and shared reality, as opposed to desperation about not being heard on one side and anger about others continually 'going on about something' on the other, and thus allows truly consensual solutions which deflect tension and conflict. Such acknowledgement may be especially important politically in a situation where part of the oppression of some groups consists in public silence, marginalisation or even suppression or criminalisation of their lives.[56] Lastly, the ability to respond creatively and imaginatively to seemingly impossible

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55 Tronto (1993).

56 This point seems particularly relevant in the case of 'differently abled', cultural and sexual minorities.

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dilemmas which is crucial in a good carer may equally well inform more imaginative and creative political solutions. Dilemmas arise from seemingly incompatible principles, claims or interests, in political negotiation and conflict resolution as much as in day-to-day care, and the ability to remain flexible about the interpretation and application of one's deeply held principles and values, together with an imaginative and creative approach to such situations, may make for better politics than most of us are used to. Whether and how the virtues of care can be transferred into the political sphere, then, depends on whether their relevance and usefulness can be shown. Generally, there seems to me a fairly strong case for most carer's virtues being understood as political virtues, too, because both care and politics are 'muddling through' types of activities which involve the welfare of others, hence whose outcomes are crucial: it is hardly possible to make a perfect job of either, but a lot depends on how well people know how to 'muddle through', and that in turn depends on their having acquired certain interactive and problem solving skills or virtues.

Lastly, private understandings may become public ones. Feminist standpoint theorists have claimed for a while that the fact that the practice of care is more or less exclusively relegated to women via the sexual division of labour allows women access to a type of experience and knowledge that is closed off to those who do not engage in this practice.[57] Carers, according to this type of argument, have an intimate knowledge of human need and the dependency such need invariably creates, a knowledge which contrasts strongly with, and throws doubt on, the assumption of autonomy and independence characterising both mainstream political theory and politics. Also, models of conflict resolution derived from mothering may look quite different and be more

57 Hartsock (1987), Harding (1987), Ruddick (1989), Boling (1991), Held (1993).

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adequate than those of strategic realists.[58] More generally, the wealth of human experience and the sources of knowledge which carers can bring to the political sphere might, if spelt out more systematically, alter considerably the way politics, the nature and purpose of the political community, as well as citizenship itself are conceived of. Reflection about these topics is at least mediately influenced by our implicit or explicit theories of human nature, society, social interaction and moral beliefs and values. If there is reason to believe that those of carers are systematically different from those of non-carers, there is also reason to believe that carers as citizens — provided they do not leave their knowledge as carers behind when entering the public sphere, as Dietz, like many civic republicans and also liberals would want them to do — will bring to the polity an important and valid contribution that is only starting to be realised as a potential resource in political theory.

In conclusion, much work remains to be done to flesh out a feminist approach to citizenship based on a theory of care. I have only been able to sketch some preliminary argument, making a case for the 'thick' shape such a theory should take (section II), defending the possibility of translation from care to the political sphere (section III), and pointing out four types of such translation (section IV). I hope that further work on citizenship drawing on the theory of care will advance the general project which I hope I have shown to be worthwile. In the last section, I will look in more detail at a specific example of a translation of the care perspective into the sphere of citizenship.

V — Care as a citizen's obligation

One of the suggestions I made when discussing the possibilities of translating private concerns, values, virtues and

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58 Ruddick (1989).

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perspectives into public ones was that of a revised conception of citizenship in which the performance of her or his share of care has become a general citizen's obligation.[59] So far, I have argued that a feminist conception of citizenship should be thick rather than thin, and that the theory of care provides an interesting and challenging resource for conceiving of citizenship thickly and in new ways. The suggestion of a general citizen's duty to care can be seen as the converging point between my argument in this paper and the feminist critique of existing conceptions of citizenship. Two main points of this critique which can be found in most feminist writings on citizenship are the following. First, women have historically been excluded from citizenship, and even though this exclusion has formally been ended, they remain excluded in more subtle ways.[60] They remain excluded in these more subtle ways because, secondly, the concept of citizenship retains a patriarchal bias or remains based on the male citizen.[61] This male and/or patriarchal bias has its historical origins in the exclusion of women, of course, but the question now is how this bias should be dealt with. Pateman has represented this problem as the same already faced by Wollstonecraft in her Vindication of the Rights of Woman and therefore termed it 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma'. Given the patriarchal, male bias in conceptions of citizenship, feminists and women seem to have two equally unacceptable choices:

either women become (like) men, and so full citizens; or they continue at women's work, which is of no value for citizenship.[62]

Now the way out of dilemmas is always the same: since there are only unacceptable conclusions, one has to reject the premises from

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59 The terms 'duty' and 'obligation' are used interchangeably in this argument.

60 Pateman (1989), Vogel (1991).

61 Pateman (1989), Hartsock (1984).

62 Pateman (1989), p. 197.

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which they are deducted, or the terms on which the whole argument or presentation of the dilemma is based. The crucial term in question in Wollstonecraft's dilemma is the patriarchal conception of citizenship. Hence Pateman concludes that the important point is to reconsider 'women's contribution as citizens and the meaning of citizenship'.[63] She does not make any more specific suggestions, however, as to what such reconsideration might lead to.[64]

In the light of Wollstonecraft's dilemma, my argument in the last two sections can then be understood as preparing the ground for and making some suggestions towards just such a reconsideration of citizenship on the basis of the theory of care. Whilst I am not claiming that this would be the only possible route, I do want to propose that it is a very promising route. Many of the suggestions in the last section could be followed up to be composed into a new conception of citizenship. Instead of doing so, however, I would like to pursue one central idea in more detail which, among other things, would certainly allow us to escape Wollstonecraft's dilemma: that of conceiving of care as a general citizen's duty.

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63 Pateman (1989), p. 203.

64 She has also subsequently focused on women's differential *incorporation* as quasi or second-class citizens in virtue of their motherhood: as mothers, they are to bear, give birth to, and raise future citizens, whilst also being subjected to men as heads of households (Pateman 1992). The conclusion of her argument here is not anymore the need for a changed conception of citizenship, but the need for citizenship to be of 'equal worth to [both sexes] as women and men' (Pateman 1992, p. 28). By this she means that free relations between the sexes have to replace patriarchal relations which subordinate women and that sexual difference has to be compatible with substantial equality (p.29). She thus seems to have taken a completely different turn which leads her to focus on social relations rather than on citizenship itself.

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What would it mean to conceive of care as a general citizen's duty? It would mean that the performance of care is part of what it means or what is implied by being a member of a political community. Thus minimally and rather abstractly, it would be expected of each adult citizen that she or he engage in their share of care at some point in her or his life. Now so far, this idea might not be very controversial since even most men will, on some minimalist understanding of care, engage in care.[65] If we restrict care, however, to those kinds of activities which meet basic human needs in other persons who depend on others to meet those needs — such as those for food, physical comfort, security, human warmth and understanding, in short all those activities which make life livable for those not able to fight for themselves[66] — we have to face up to the current gendered reality of such care: most of this kind of basic human care is to date performed by women.[67] Moreover, as has been suggested often enough, it is precisely the fact that women perform this care in the private sphere that also explains why women have not been able to be as present as men in the public spheres of paid work and politics, hence why they are at a disadvantage with regard to their role as active citizens. Care, therefore, because it is such a gendered practice, lies also at the

65 Tronto (1993), e.g., defines care as a practice 'aimed at maintaining, continuing, or repairing the world' (p. 104). According to this definition, men who, very gender stereotypically, do repairs in their home, must be admitted to be engaging in care. According to my own much narrower definition of care, however, care consists of face-to-face activities which meet needs that those in need could not possibly meet themselves (see Bubeck (1995), ch. IV). Hence men doing repairs and women cooking meals for their husbands would be providing services, but not care, whilst those looking after children, infirm elderly, sick or otherwise needy people, e.g., would be engaging in care.

66 'Those not able to fight for themselves' is not a fixed category: it includes all of us at various periods and points in our lives.

67 Parker (1990).

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heart of the problem of women's citizenship.[68] The conception and implementation of care as a general citizen's duty, however, would change the social and political parameters of citizenship as well as of care very dramatically: it would make the performance of care a public question instead of a private problem, and it would make it the responsibility of all citizens, instead of burdening some — that is, mostly women — with it and freeing others — mostly men — from it. This conception of care as a general citizen's duty is also obviously part of a thick conception of citizenship: it puts a stress on citizens' obligations and the performance of certain activities (in our case, care), it transcends prevalent notions of the political by making the performance of care in general a political issue and by linking care to the very meaning of membership in a political community, and, as we shall see below, it perceives the state as having an enabling and supportive role in this respect, actively endorsing care as a good for the community. It also conceives of the provision of care as one of the preconditions of the flourishing of any political community, hence makes it a valid topic for discussing citizenship.

Why, though, should care be a general citizen's obligation? Does it not really and properly belong into the private sphere, as an activity that is fitting and appropriate to the more or less intimate relations of members of a family or friends? Why should it be 'torn away' from that sphere? Since I have responded to this question elsewhere,[69] I shall only point out here that there is already a lot of public care in most advanced, industrialised

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68 As mentioned in note 64 above, Pateman (1992) has suggested that the problem is not simply that women have been excluded as citizens (as she argued in Pateman 1989), but also that they have been inscribed into a secondary and privatised form of citizenship as mothers. Responding to this argument would lead too far afield from the present train of thought, but it seems to me at any rate that agreement to these points does not vitiate any of the arguments I am making below.

69 Bubeck (1995), ch. V.

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societies, hence that we have already come to accept the idea and the validity of such care. Moreover, the acceptability of my proposal will largely depend on the extent and the details of the changes implied by a general citizens' obligation to care. Before addressing such detail below, I shall give a general defense of the proposal first. This defense is based on the following considerations.

First, note that, in the past, but also to date, the most prominent citizen's obligation — apart from the obligation to obey the law[70] — has been the defense of one's country in the case of war. This obligation was and still is gendered, since women are generally not called upon to fight, and are not admitted into combat even if they are admitted into the army. Citizenship, therefore, given that its meaning is at least partly determined by what are seen as a citizen's obligations, has clearly excluded, and still does exclude, women in a very straightforward sense and thus makes them into lesser citizens: citizens who will not be allowed to perform what are generally agreed to be citizens' duties. Moreover, given that women are on the whole excluded from this responsibility, the inclusion of this responsibility into the conception of citizenship also biases its meaning against women. Whilst men are publically praised and celebrated for performing their duties, women do not get mentioned at all. Why, however, should the excellence of war heroes in the defense of one's community be publically celebrated and the service even of the nameless many in war be publically recognised, if the service of those who contribute every day to the welfare and flourishing of all members of the community remains unsung? It might be objected, of course, that the latter kind of service is recognised on mother's day. But, first, it is not seen as a citizen's obligation, hence not comparable to that celebrated in soldiers, and secondly,

70 But see Parekh (1993) for an interesting argument that the obligation to obey the law should not be understood as a *political* or a citizen's obligation.

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it cements women's place in the home and hence retains and perpetuates the deeply gendered division between the 'true' male citizens whose service is celebrated as a citizen's service, and the lesser female citizens whose service may be recognised, but does not carry with it the same public valorisation and privileges.[71] Thirdly, it also recognises mothering only — which is a specific form of care and certainly very important — but leaves out other, equally valid and important forms of care. The inclusion of the performance of care into the conception of citizenship as an obligation of all citizens, therefore, changes two very important things: First, it transforms care from a 'handicap' for women into a general requirement, and secondly, it thus 'unbiases' or rebalances the male bias still inherent in conceptions of citizenship. By contrast, the full admission of women into the army and even combat would 'unbias' citizenship only in that it would endorse the first alternative of Wollstonecraft's dilemma, that of women being allowed to become (like) men, but it would not tackle the distribution of care as a public issue. Arguably, the latter will be at least as important a change as the former.

Secondly, by including care into its conception of what it means to be one of its members, a community also gives care the public recognition as a necessary activity that it rightfully should have. Thus the traditional distinction in the celebration of citizen war heroes and private mothers also indicates something about the values held in such a community: its defense is important enough to be made into a public duty, but the welfare of its members is not. Should any community not value both types of service at least equally, however, or rather value caring more than warring, since its very survival depends on care for its future generations, and its flourishing depends mostly on the quality of life its citizens are able to assure not only for themselves but also for one another? If a community does value both equally,

71 Pateman (1992).

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however, this should be expressed in its conception of citizenship, hence care should as much be an obligation of citizens as war has always been recognised to be. Seen from a historical perspective, it is only the continued burdening of women with care whilst excluding them from citizenship at the same time that can explain why care has not been given the central place in conceptions of citizenship that it rightly deserves. Making care central to citizenship, then, is for any community an expression of its recognition of the central importance of care to its own survival and flourishing, and through this recognition also a recognition of women's traditional contribution.

Thirdly, making care into a citizen's obligation would also allow the beginnings of a solution to the sexual division of labour which distributes unpaid care and paid work very unevenly between men and women and thus leads to distributive injustice with regard to both free time as a resource and material resources.[72] Given that men and women would then have an equal obligation as citizens to care, unpaid care could then not hinder women specifically from participating in the public sphere: if care were to take men's and women's time equally, it would create an equal starting position for both men and women with regard to their engagement in other activities, be they public or private, paid or unpaid.

Fourthly, as an implication of the third point, the distributive injustice of women's unequal burdening with unpaid care and comparable lack of opportunity to engage in paid work could thus be tackled, too: the most important hurdle to have taken in this respect would have been the transformation of care into a public issue and the recognition of women's unequal burdening with it. The recognition of the existence of an unjust situation is always the most important step. How it is to be remedied remains, of course, open at this point, but the presumption of making care a

72 Bubeck (1995).

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general citizen's obligation would be that men and women should share in the care that has to be done in a society equally.[73]

Fifthly, it educates women and, more importantly, reeducates men in virtues and skills which are crucial to the creation and maintenance of social cohesion, the general welfare of society, and, according to my argument in the preceding section, even their participation in the political sphere. As such, it would also contribute to the correction of the worst effects of the possessive and competitive individualism and atomism that has characterised modern capitalist democracies[74] and reduced the understanding of citizenship to an exclusive focus on rights.[75]

Sixthly, depending on its implementation, care as a citizen's obligation may also help to solve the crisis of the welfare state and problems of youth unemployment.[76]

If there are so many good reasons for endorsing the inclusion of care in the concept of citizenship, the further question is how it would have to be implemented in order to have those beneficial effects. Now it is clear that a mere inscription of care as an obligation into the concept of citizenship is not strong enough

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73 It may thus also be seen to solve the problem of women's subordination as carers that Pateman (1992) stresses as most central: by making care a general responsibility, women are equally burdened as men, and hence equally free (or unfree) to engage in other activities.

74 See Held (1993).

75 Communitarians have criticised modern liberal democracies in a similar vein, but have sought the source of new and alternative values in the community, which is not necessarily a source of liberating values for women: see Friedman (1989,1991) and Frazer and Lacey (1993), but also Walzer (1994) for a communitarian response.

76 German welfare services, both in the public and voluntary sector, depend heavily on the contribution of conscientious objectors who perform two years of a kind of 'caring' service instead of 15 months of service in the army. See also Piachaud (1991) for an argument that one response to the crisis of the welfare state is to 'conscript labour as a social service support staff' (p. 213).

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to bring about much change.[77] If all the beneficial effects presented above are to occur, there have to be ways of implementing this obligation which make the performance of care a reality for both men and women. My suggestion, therefore, is the creation of a caring service into which adult men and women are conscripted upon reaching majority or at some other point in their lives. This caring service might exist alongside or as an alternative to service in the army, or be the only citizens' service whilst the army is professionalised. What such a service would achieve in any society, apart from its educating aspect for those who perform it, would be the possibility of public provision of care as an alternative any carer can rely on as and when needed. Care would thus become much more visibly part of the public life of a community, and also solve the injustice of unpaid carers' exploitation.[78] We might think about whether it would be admissible for some to buy themselves out of their obligation, or whether some might be made to perform alternative types of service — such as, e.g. community maintenance and improvement services — instead if there is some doubt as to whether the welfare of vulnerable human beings can be entrusted to them. The 'voluntary social year', during which volunteers work in welfare institutions to provide care, exists already in various European countries, and the idea of alternative, community oriented types of national service has been voiced by others.[79] Nobody has yet dreamed up the idea of a caring service, but what would be wrong with it if so much could be got right through it?

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77 Men in the former GDR had the obligation to contribute an equal share of domestic work according to the GDR constitution. This obligation did not prevent a fairly marked and very traditional sexual division of labour to continue in GDR families.

78 Bubeck (1995).

79 Piachaud (1991), Smith (1993).

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