

ARAB STUDIES JOURNAL

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Discourses of Culture and Power in Israel

Lital Levi

Where Have All the Families Gone?
Egyptian Literary Texts of the 1990s

Samia Mehrez

SPECIAL SECTION

SUCCESSION IN THE ARAB WORLD

Succession, Legitimacy, and Regime
Stability in Jordan

Oliver Schlumberger and André Bank

The President, the Son, and the Military:
Succession in Egypt

Muhammad Abdul Aziz and Youssef Hussein

... escaping monopolies of thought

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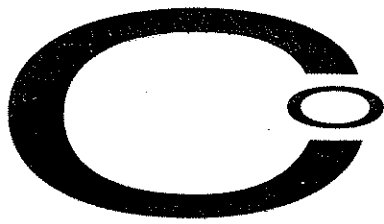
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Citizenship, Gender, and the State

Reviewed by Özlem Atlan

Citizenship and State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications

Nils A. Butenschon, Uri Davis, and Manuel Hassassian, Editors

New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000

(xix + 449 pages, bibliography, index) \$39.95 (paper)

Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East

Suad Joseph, Editor

New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000

(xxxii + 400 pages, bibliography, index) \$29.95 (paper)

The complementary books *Citizenship and State in the Middle East*, and *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East* cover the numerous theoretical and practical facets of the notion of citizenship as they are continually defined, negotiated, and challenged in the Middle East. In their entirety, the articles contribute significantly to our understanding of how relationships between citizens and states can be complicated by varying definitions of what it means to belong to a society, what constitutes a governing organ, and the set of mutual rights and obligations “traditionally” established for members. They move beyond monolithic, liberal notions of citizenship as well as naive cultural explanations for differences.

The first book brings together theoretical articles on citizenship approached from a variety of perspectives and a series of related case studies on Israel and Palestine. The second book focuses on the various ways citizenship is gendered through case studies about states in the region. The overarching claim, as stated by Nils A. Butenschon in his introductory article to the first volume, is that

[c]itizenship is not something that exists only in the form of legal regulations, institutional mechanisms, and ideological or cultural constructs. As a prime criterion of membership, it belongs to the core dynamics of any politically organized society and should also be understood in that context (6).

The writers in the first half of the book most often anchor their discussions in relation to the ground-breaking and much criticized work of T. H. Marshall's *Citizenship and Social Class*, published in 1950. I will organize my discussion of these essays in terms of their positioning with respect to this model. In doing so, I aim to bring together the books' important contributions as well as the further questions they evoke. I am aware that by using this approach I risk the likelihood of not including every important contribution made by the writers.

In a nutshell, Marshall argues that the extension of citizenship rights in Europe evolved over a period of three centuries, each evoking a different phase. According to Marshall, rights related to individual freedom and security were consolidated in the eighteenth century. He refers to this phase, contextualized in the events of the French revolution, as the introduction of "civil citizenship." In the nineteenth century came "political citizenship," that is, the incremental extension of the right to political participation to larger segments of the population. The final episode of this model, which largely took place in the twentieth century, was the establishment of "social citizenship" that included economic security to members of a nation-state.

Whereas the Marshallian notion of citizenship implicitly assumes that there is a universally accepted, unchanging, territorially defined group of people whose relations with the state are to be determined incrementally, Butenschon argues that who constitutes "the people" is determined as a result of struggles between groups and elites (4). Thus, citizenship is as exclusionary as it is inclusionary because it draws a distinction between members and non-members (11). Uri Davis further maintains that because conventional international relations terminology has generally equated "the people" with "the nation," discussions of citizenship in multi-national contexts have largely failed (60). Relevantly, he analyzes the cases of Jordan and Israel, where the institutionalization of a two-tier model of citizenship has enabled the systematic exclusion of Palestinians (54). His main argument is that unless issues of nationality and citizenship are clearly demarcated, a widespread breach of human rights will be inevitable. Legal arrangements imposing membership in communities that should be voluntaristically defined result in oppression because they can be enforced "by resort to the state monopoly of violence (police, army, taxation)" (67).

The second question that this model brings to mind is how exactly the rules of this membership are enacted. One of the definitions Butenschon poses for citizenship is "a contractual relationship between the state and the inhabitants under its jurisdiction" (4). Although he maintains that this does not necessarily imply equality or democracy, the eminent liberal connotations of the term "contract" may conjure unrealistic assumptions of equally powerful parties that agree on a list of rules by mutual consent. In fact, the significance of unequal power relations is exemplified very clearly by

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Rania Maktabi, who argues against Arend Lijphart's description of consociational democracy in Lebanon. Lijphart contends that the National Pact of 1943 signaled a consensus between elites of different sects and paved the way for political stability for more than thirty years. She maintains that the Lebanese state has employed citizenship policies in such a way as to assert the continuous dominance of Christian groups (Butenschon et al, 154) despite the large numbers of Muslim citizens and residents. Her article contributes to the necessity of problematizing the notion of a contract so that we are able to see the potentially rigged way membership "contracts" may be formulated.

One distinct focus of *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East* is how family functions as a site through which gender relations are articulated, with a significant impact on state-individual relations. Several writers argue that women's relationship with the state is mediated through their definition as members of patriarchal families. This focus highlights how the idea of a contract between an independent individual and a state cannot be taken for granted. Mervat F. Hatem explains the legislative history of republican Egypt by focusing on the changing nature of the idea of fraternity. One may argue that the continuum in the idea of fraternity has always worked in a way that articulates women's participation in and contribution to the political and social life in terms of their familial roles even under the best of circumstances.

Membership does not necessarily entail equal distribution of rights and obligations, either. As Brian Turner makes clear in his sociological approach to citizenship, the term has two, sometimes contradictory, roles: on the one hand, by issuing membership, it forms the basis of a shared cultural identity for members who are likely to see themselves committed to a political community (Butenschon et al, 39). On the other hand, citizenship also has an allocative function; it is determinant in the distribution of scarce resources to the members. Because of the competitive nature of this second aspect, citizenship "... is necessarily a contradictory force. It creates an internal space of social rights and solidarity, and thus an external, exclusionary force of non-membership" (Butenschon et al, 33). To this end, Rebecca Kook demonstrates how Israeli citizenship includes "ethnonational structures of inequality," thereby perpetuating them (Butenschon et al, 264).

Similarly, in her discussion of gender and citizenship in Jordan, Abla Amawi makes use of Tilly's distinction between thick and thin citizenship in understanding the gendered differences in Jordanian citizenship legislation and its practice. She argues that whereas men have an unmediated relationship with the state, several arenas such as the right to citizenship, a passport, family registry, marriage, and notions of equality show us that women's relationships with the state are mediated by male members of their families (Joseph et al, 159). Moreover, their corresponding rights as citizens of Jordan are most of the time contingent upon the consent of these intermediaries. She argues that this is mainly due to the political and social acceptance of the patriarchal family as the unit of analysis, instead of independent individuals.

Another specificity of the familial relations in the Middle Eastern context that several writers draw out, is the significance of extended kinship ties. Mounira M.

Charrad compares the cases of Algeria and Tunisia to argue that although these countries are similar in terms of their culture, language, and religion, women in Tunisia have many more legal rights than women in Algeria because of the difference in the importance of extended patrilineal family (Joseph, 70-71). In a sense, this article challenges the notion of an essential culture as being statically determining in the nature of political organization; the different outcomes in two countries that are seemingly similar to each other bears witness to this observation. I think the question that this challenge begets is how this difference has come about and whether the specificities of the secular track in Tunisia had anything to do with it. Relevantly, Marnia Lazreg discusses how charters of postcolonial Algeria were instrumental in severing the ties between civil and social rights and political rights, and in denying women the former by defining citizenship in male terms.

One can say that Raymond Hinnebusch follows from here by drawing out the implications of the teleological nature of the modernization theory that underlies Marshall's work. He argues that the specific way capitalist accumulation takes place has an impact on the democratization prospects of a country (Butenschon et al, 124). In his study of Egypt and Syria, he says that although post-populist strategies of Middle Eastern states have caused some political liberalization, their limited nature has precluded an alliance between the bourgeoisie and "the masses," and has thereby diminished the chances for an equal distribution of socioeconomic rights (Butenschon et al, 124). His powerful analysis enables us to see that a democratic unfolding of citizenship rights and an extension of capitalist modes of production do not necessarily go hand in hand. However, he stops short of further elaborating on this relationship, perhaps because his underlying presumption is that these are exceptions caused by "delayed dependent development and the struggle against imperialism" (Butenschon et al, 128-129).

Anh Nga Longva's study of Kuwait challenges Marshall from a relevant angle. The sequence proposed by Marshall has taken place in reverse order in this country, with extensive social rights followed by "somewhat ambivalent" civil rights and universal political rights, only recently becoming a viable prospect (Butenschon et al, 184). She maintains that embedded in this "reversal" are two competing definitions of citizenship, *jinsiyya* and *taba'iyya*, held by urban Kuwaitis and tribes, respectively. While *taba'iyya* basically denotes allegiance to the ruling family, *jinsiyya* is closer to the idea of a horizontal community where people have political rights as well as social ones (Butenschon et al, 192). Her study is noteworthy in its criticism that the teleology behind Marshall's analysis may be too reductionist to account for realities in diverse geographies. Yet, one may also question whether the article may be oversimplifying the negotiation of citizenship in "the West" by assuming a monolithic definition of "Western conceptualization of citizenship" (Butenschon et al, 193).

Another important notion absent from Marshall's modernist theory is religion's significance in constructing citizenship. Sondra Hale argues that the process of "Sudanization" is concomitant to building an Islamic nation (Joseph, 88). She maintains that this conversion is implemented by constructing an ideal Islamic woman

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whose “authenticity” helps legitimate the state (Joseph, 91-92). Homa Hoodfar discusses how Iranian women take up similar definitions and argue for extended rights for women by reinterpreting Islamic texts (Joseph, 312). Similarly, Yeşim Arat delineates how secular and Islamist women’s movements in Turkey challenge the gendered nature of citizenship rights from different perspectives. The elucidation of these different movements enriches our understanding of the ways in which different conceptions can converge with each other at certain junctures.

Haya Al-Mughni and Mary Ann Tétreault take the idea of patriarchal families and discuss it together with the neo-patriarchal organization of the Kuwaiti state. This article helps us to further question the Marshallian teleology by showing how even the reversed sequence operates by disadvantaging one gender indefinitely. Their main argument is that the promotion of neopatriarchal principles serves to guarantee loyalty to a state that is fast losing its domestic legitimacy, while at the same time placing women in a disadvantageous position in terms of their citizenship rights (Joseph, 239). The question that remains is how to negotiate this citizenship in a state, internationally perceived to lack domestic legitimacy.

We can say that among other factors that Marshall has overlooked are the global processes of economic liberalization. Turner takes up this question and redesigns Marshall’s historical model of citizenship to include the period of global capitalism, in which the citizen is replaced by the human, and the social rights provided by the welfare state are augmented with universally accepted and reinforced human rights (Butenschon et al, 33). Although the notion of universalism that underlies this model is highly important, we need to refrain from overlooking the conflicts created by global capitalism. One such problem is that states are no longer as powerful as they potentially were in protecting their citizens against the agitating circumstances created by capitalism. Another is introduced by Tétreault, who questions whether external sovereignty provided to states by international organizations can obstruct the enhancement of citizenship rights in otherwise weak states (Butenschon et al, 85). Sheila Carapico and Anna Wuerth’s case study also demonstrates how changes in the global context can have a discriminatory impact on women’s citizenship rights (Joseph, 261).

Jacqueline S. Ismael and Shereen T. Ismael’s article on Iraq is also relevant in exploring the international context. Their argument is that while women have been working to challenge the conventional boundaries of patriarchy, the institution itself has been transformed: in this new global form of patriarchy, they argue, the primacy of public roles supersedes those of the family (Joseph, 191). As a result, in the international arena oppressive regimes are kept intact because “[s]uch is the nature of international patriarchy that state rights are sacrosanct and inviolable (except by more powerful states)” (Joseph, 196). This article draws our attention to the fact that states operate not in a vacuum but in relation to one another and to global structures. It would be even more useful if the writers included in their analysis the economic forces that underlie what they refer to as modern patriarchy.

The second half of the first volume is devoted to the precarious notions of citizenship in the case of Palestine and Israel. These articles enable us to test theories of citizenship at the margins. That is to say, we can position these articles with respect

to the Marshallian framework according to the variety of ways they destabilize its underlying assumptions about the presence of a universally accepted state with a defined area of jurisdiction. As Anis F. Kassim states, "To be a Palestinian means not to have a formal citizenship . . . the legal status of a Palestinian in the Middle East is always in doubt and left to the political exigencies of each host country" (Butenshon et al, 202-203). His main argument is that the first task awaiting the Palestinian National Authority is to resolve the ambiguous status of Palestinians in several Arab host states in the region and to reintegrate them within one constituency (Butenshon et al, 219).

Davis also discusses how statelessness exacerbates the precarious nature of the lives of Palestinians. He argues that all Palestinian refugees should be provided with citizenship in their host countries, not as a political solution but as a basic human right (Butenshon et al, 240). He bases this on the contention that notions of democracy and human rights have attained universality and should no longer be regarded as values specific to "Western" culture (Butenshon et al, 228). This is a remarkable statement that is prepared to face critiques of modernization theories. However, he assumes at the same time that democracy can be present even in a dynastic or one-party setting. This is reminiscent of Turner's formulation of passive versus active citizens, which is problematic because it naturalizes uneven distribution of certain rights by resorting to voluntaristic explanations.

Hassassian takes up the *intifida's* potential for institution building and civil society formation. He argues that the case of Palestine proves to be an exception in the Middle Eastern context because grass roots organizations expand the potential for democratization (Butenshon et al, 246) by "rais[ing] awareness and protect[ing] the individual from blatant abuses of power" (Butenshon et al, 251). Although the multitude of grass roots organizations may have potential for democratization, it is necessary to analyze how "civil society" is situated in relation to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). This is what Beverley Milton-Edwards and Christopher H. Parker question in their articles. Milton-Edwards draws attention to the strength of militarism in the PNA and the reliance on the use of force in determining what constitutes a security issue and its implementation (Butenshon et al, 342). Parker argues that this ironically stems from the PNA's powerlessness in the post-Oslo phase. The PNA distributes scarce resources through clientelist networks that demand political obedience, yet the resulting control over the streets has the unintended consequence of reducing the PNA's bargaining power with Israel (Butenshon et al, 372). As a result, these articles are significant for understanding the complexities of exploring citizenship policies for a stateless group of people, who are either scattered in the territories of other states or are under the jurisdiction of a governing body that lacks external powers but is capable of exercising militaristic domestic control.

All in all, these books are noteworthy contributions to citizenship theory and social science in general. They not only challenge various readily accepted assumptions emanating from Western dominance in the area, but also suggest valuable ways in which we can reopen debates on citizenship. One reservation I had when reading these books had to do with their organization of the material that analyzes

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gender as a separate issue. This, of course, is part of a more general dilemma in women's studies. By devoting one book to gender and family-related issues about citizenship as distinct from the theoretical framework introduced in the first book, can we be contributing to the definition of women as only gendered subjects under law or, more generally, to the marginalization of a feminist approach to citizenship? For this reason, it is useful to read these books together. These articles relate to each other in ways that could prompt other modes of organization. For instance, such significant problems as who comprises *the people*, the shortcomings of Marshall's teleological model, and understanding citizenship not only in terms of legal regulation but as a dynamic reality that is at the heart of politics are in fact elucidated extensively by the articles in the second volume. Moreover, the articles on gendered citizenship that frequently refer to patriarchy and women's relatively limited rights to passing their nationalities could be enriched by the discussions of the connections between ideas of nationhood and citizenship. Nevertheless, these two volumes are exceptional, in terms of both breadth and focus in enhancing the rigor and usefulness of approaching citizenship and in allowing for a greater understanding of the political realities of a world organized in terms of nation-states. ♦