

CHAPTER 6 –ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP

This ethnography has documented the field of social economy in Israel, where actors from diverse social positions engage in organized efforts to lift people out of poverty, and in the process restore social solidarity and endorse a more moderate version of economic liberalization. I presented the field: the organizations and agencies that initiate economic empowerment projects, the people who operate the projects hands-on, and the discourse that evolves through these activities. The next three chapters were dedicated to the women who are the addressees of this undertaking; I outlined their vulnerabilities, their experiences of empowerment, and their ambivalent approach to earning money. Drawing all these strings together, in this chapter I set out the different meanings of social inclusion and civil entitlement that emerge through the elaborate cultural production that takes place in the field.

Economic citizenship is an analytical, not an emic concept. Unlike “social economy” or “empowerment” it is not often used as a local term. Yet the ideas connected with it, namely that economic independence is a key to social and civil participation, are directly relevant to the discourses in the field. As shown shortly, in the scholarly literature this concept appears in distinct and sometimes contradictory discourses, conveying diverse understandings of the articulation of economic independence, social justice, and citizenship. Many of these different meanings meet “on the ground” in the Israeli field of social economy, which therefore offers us an empirical opportunity to explore the complexity and potential paradoxes of the concept. In the first part of the chapter, after a brief outline of critical perspectives on citizenship generally I review different approaches to economic citizenship. The review shows how a single idea travels across ideological milieus, paying particular attention to their points of contact. In the second part of the chapter I return to the

ethnography to examine how this globally circulating idea travels cross-culturally and settles in a specific cultural locale.

Citizenship as multi-layered, dynamic, and embedded

The concept of citizenship that I use in this book draws on rich anthropological and feminist traditions that highlight its multi-layered, dynamic, and embedded nature. At its minimum, citizenship designates a formal status, hence is a necessary condition for a range of basic rights, such as the right to live and work in a place or the right to travel across national borders. Yet for large categories of people, nominal citizenship does not automatically imply full, secure belonging to a polity. Without exception, social, political and civil rights in contemporary states are differentially distributed among different ethnic, race and class groups, with the practical result that members of marked categories (the poor, the “dark,” the Others) are systematically less secure, and significantly less privileged (Kandiyoti 1999, Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999a, Mohanty 1999, Joseph 2000). Conversely, for increasing numbers of privileged populations, who hold multiple passports, citizenship is not singular, but plural (Ong 1999).

In contrast to the liberal ideal of civil society as an aggregate of individuals who are rationally motivated to maximize economic gain, who want minimal state intervention in their personal affairs, and who keep their emotional and cultural attachments private, citizenship “on the ground” is shown to operate first and foremost as a moral construct. Collective belongings and deep-seated beliefs about cultural difference inform its very core (Shafir and Peled 2002, Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 2003b, Yuval-Davis 2011). And although they do not necessarily replace individuality and self-interest, they trap them in local modes of social connections and in culturally specific rationalities. For example, in the Middle East citizenries are entangled in concentric webs of belonging – notably families, as

well as religious, ethnic, linguistic, and national communities, which may or may not match the identity of their states. In many Middle Eastern cultures connectivity affects the initial perception of self, to the degree that people feel that they are part of their significant others (Joseph 2005). And because almost without exception the various webs of belonging are patriarchal, citizenship is masculine by default, so that across the region women lack political personhood (Joseph 2000). Alternatively, as is the case among Israeli Jewish women, their inclusion through their roles as wives and mothers of the nation paradoxically blocks the possibility of their inclusion through the universal characteristics of citizenship (Berkovitch 1997).

The cultural implications of citizenship have been discussed mostly with respect to minorities (e.g., Rosaldo 1994, Stephen 2003, Wessendorf 2008) even though culture of course operates along the full ethnic continuum and shapes the hegemonic versions as much as it does the marginalized ones. One way or another, looking at citizenship through a cultural lens helps discern, besides particular forms of belonging and personhood, also the personal agency of subjects, as they maneuver their positions through multiple structures of power and different webs of signification. This dialectics of structure and agency implies, as Aihwa Ong (1996, 737) points out, that people are continuously “self-making and being-made by power relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control, and administration.” So besides a formal status and an ideological construct, citizenship is a lived concept. As such, its implications are never entirely certain. Its practical meanings are not identical to its formal meanings, and the gap between the lived and the perceived provides vital space for an ongoing process of subject making on the one hand and adjustments in the local discourses of citizenship on the other.

Besides social hierarchies internal to the state, the practical meanings of citizenship are also affected by international relations and transnational economies, which produce global

routes of migration, tourism, business, and flight (e.g., Yuval-Davis 1997, 2010, Erel 2012, Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck 2012, Hanafi 2012). Under these conditions of late capitalism, nominal citizenship may remain bound to nation states, but its dividends – or lack of them – are contingent on multiple factors, including formal and informal memberships in more than one state, affiliations with collective entities within each country, or access to privatized health, educational, and security services. Ong, who has mapped the strategic maneuvering of transnational Asian subjects, offers the term flexible citizenship, to capture “the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions” (Ong 1999, 6).

Another important aspect evinced by a multi-tiered paradigm is affective attachment. Carol Johnson (2010) argues that despite the apparent focus on rationality, citizenship has always had a significant affective component. Emotional regimes of citizenship are strongly sexed, gendered and racialized. For example, emotional displays of pride, defiance, anger, or alienation, which are legitimate among members of the dominant groups, are used to dehumanize and criminalize members of ethnic and sexual minorities, as well as women from diverse social backgrounds. By the same token, the question who is a legitimate object of empathy and who is a legitimate object of fear is closely entwined with race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. In this way, the politics of affect has major implications for determining who can pass as good citizens and who are more likely to fail.

Acknowledging the affective aspect of citizenship also immediately directs our attention to care, as a core *practice* of solidarity, cohesion maintenance, human upkeep, and intimacy. Care has always been a sensitive aspect of citizenship, igniting debates about the responsibility of the state as opposed to families and community-based charities, and about the boundaries of “the private” domain. Of course, as feminist scholars now largely agree, the initial idea of separate domains, and the common identification of the private with femininity

and the public with masculinity, is a construct of Western bourgeois culture, not a universal truism. This *cultural* construct, however, is so deeply ingrained that it tends to be taken for granted not only by lay men and women but also by most mainstream political theorists, who conceive of “the private” as extra-political territory. Feminist theorists, by contrast (e.g., Pateman 1988, Walby 1994, Yuval-Davis 1997), argue that the private is political as much as the public is patriarchal, and that both domains have a direct – and combined – bearing on citizenship. In fact, as Hanna Herzog (1999) puts it, the symbolic split itself and the idea that women, but not men, face a role conflict when they step into the public domain serve as powerful ideological mechanisms that exclude women from positions of public power. The relegation of care to the realm of the domestic, a move that was reversed for several decades in socialist and some capitalist welfare states but is now becoming rapidly reinstated, has played a key role in the stratification of citizenship (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002, Zimmerman et al. 2006). In the preceding chapters I discussed at length the disempowering implications of the overlap of care, femininity and minority status. In this chapter I look at the more specific implications of this disempowerment for the women’s shaky and ambivalent citizenship. I will argue that their tendency to use an emotional love–work discourse, which I presented ethnographically in the previous chapter, at once reinforces their marginality and reinstates their agency, as those who voice a vital aspect of citizenship – care, on which the official discourses are largely silent.

Using this general outline as background, I now present three versions of economic citizenship. Two of these – the theoretically oriented feminist version and the action-oriented community economic-development version – echo the initial position that citizenship is inextricably entwined with structures of power and exclusion, primarily gender, ethnicity/race and class. The third, free-market perspective is much closer to liberal platforms that see citizenship as a narrow, individualistic, and highly formalized construct, premised primarily

on economic rationality and relatively detached from other dimensions of social life. Yet all of them see personal agency as pertinent to the actual fulfillment of citizenship.

Economic Citizenship

The idea of economic citizenship connotes several elements, to which different interpreters accord different weight. At the most general level, it means that earning a living is a basic component of citizenship, because it represents the dual essence of a right and an obligation. It represents the right to economic freedom and independence, the right to self-support, and by implication the right to participate in the most important activity of contemporary society. The flip side of the same coin is that capitalist democratic societies generally consider self-support an obligation of individual members of any community of citizens, and require them to be productive and actively to contribute to the overall good. This initial position, however, lends itself to quite diverse, even contradictory, interpretations in different ideological circles. Some focus on economic freedom while others emphasize economic independence; some stress that economic independence is inextricably connected to economic security while others still dwell on the component of self-fulfillment. Whatever the focus, the different articulations of economic citizenship usually acknowledge that the idea entails some basic tensions. The right-cum-obligation to economic independence, freedom, and security brings up dilemmas regarding the desirable balance between individualism and collective responsibility, and the most desirable extent of state intervention in private economic affairs (particularly the issues of welfare and taxation). It touches on boundaries, since contemporary workforces invariably include both citizens and non-citizens. Last but not least, it cannot escape the implications of structural inequalities for women, minorities and the lower classes. The following outline of different perspectives of economic citizenship shows a broad range of preoccupations. The discourses below move between the

abstract and the pragmatic, and stretch from radical through liberal to conservative worldviews. In their highly theoretical versions, these perspectives are anchored in very different ethical and moral positions. Yet as the actors representing them meet each other and collaborate in concrete projects, they engage in subtle but meaningful dialogues about justice, responsibility and entitlement.

Feminist Perspectives

According to feminist historian Alice Kessler-Harris, to attain full citizenship women must have access to wage labor. Paradoxically, she argues, the expansion of women's social rights in the course of the 20th century has hindered their civil inclusion, because it slowed down their integration into the workforce. Not wishing to reverse the wheel and obliterate social security, she nevertheless seeks to create a more comprehensive notion of citizenship that combines economic security and economic freedom. She offers the term economic citizenship to "capture those rights and obligations attendant to the daily struggle to reconcile economic well-being and household maintenance with the capacity to participate more fully in democratic societies" (Kessler-Harris 2003, 168) The idea builds on Thomas H. Marshall's (1964) typology of citizenship as composed of three categories: political (the right to political participation), civil (the right to liberty, freedom of speech, equality before the law, or property ownership) and social (the right to welfare, economic security and education). His primary interest was the relation of citizenship to social inequality, and the seemingly irreconcilable principles of democratic equality and social class. The emergence of modern citizenship closely bound up with capitalism and industrialization, he argued, entailed a deep-seated tension between citizenship rights and the class structure as a system of inequalities. It is against this tension that social rights, a 20th-century addition to the political and civil components of citizenship, emerged as an attempt of citizenship to temper the antagonizing

nature of capitalism by complementing the quest for economic independence with that of economic security. Kessler-Harris endorses this complexity, yet argues that the attempt to integrate economic freedom and economic security must take gender into account, since employment has radically different implications for women and for men. She points out that welfare policies are premised on cultural assumptions of women as natural caretakers, and that protective welfare mechanisms, particularly social benefits that signify the expansion of women's social rights, in effect weaken their economic rights, because they diminish their labor force participation and reinforce their symbolic and actual position as dependent. Rejecting the perceived opposition between the right to economic freedom and the right to economic security, she claims that the idea of economic citizenship offers a synthesis of these two basic rights. Hence the right to a job includes, ipso facto, the right to earn a decent salary, and "family wage" should be attainable by women as well as men. A gender-inclusive definition of economic citizenship, therefore, contains

[T]he right to work at the occupation of one's choice (where work includes child-rearing and household maintenance), to earn wages adequate to the support of self and family, to a non-discriminatory job market, to the education and training that facilitates access to it, to the social benefits necessary to sustain and support labor-force participation. (Kessler-Harris 2003, 159)

Kessler Harris's idea is shared by other feminist scholars, such as Carole Pateman (1988), who in *The Sexual Contract* similarly argued that given the paramount duty of the citizen to work, the restrictions on women's work opportunities and their subjugated roles within the family assign them to secondary citizenship; or Vicky Schultz (2000), who regards the official labor force as the single most important arena of civic participation, not simply because it affords economic independence but because "work is a site of deep self-formation that offers rich opportunities for human flourishing" (p. 1883). According to Schultz,

“everyone” has the right to participate meaningfully in life-sustaining work, with the social support necessary to do so. She writes: “Paid work is the only institution that can be sufficiently widely distributed to provide a stable foundation for a democratic order. It is also one of the few arenas in which *diverse groups of citizens* can come together and develop respect for each other due to shared experience” (ibid., 1885, emphasis added). Like Kessler-Harris (particularly in Kessler-Harris 2001), Schultz is well aware that the emphasis on paid employment may undermine women’s unpaid domestic labor, and may be used to downplay class and racial disadvantages in the official workforce. Still, grounding her analysis in the particular US legacy of “work” as a quintessential component of citizenship, she regards the framing of women as inauthentic workers as a major barrier to their civic participation. Both scholars also hold that it *is* possible to form a concept of economic citizenship that will not perpetuate but will eliminate historical disregard of women’s labor.

Recently the idea of economic citizenship as a basic component of civil rights, particularly among poor and marginalized women, has also been adopted by scholars working on cultures other than North America. Building on Kessler-Harris’ work, Valentine Moghadam (2011) advanced a definition of economic citizenship that emphasizes labor rights, social justice, and women’s equality in the context of Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Moghadam’s comprehensive definition includes, among other things, the right to gainful employment, along with public education, vocational training, fair wages, a healthy workplace, trade union organizing, social welfare, a workplace free of sexual harassment, paid maternity leave, and affordable quality child care. She draws on feminist initiatives from various MENA countries to show that such a discourse is relevant also to that region. For Moghadam, Schultz, and Kessler-Harris alike, full citizenship entails access to economic independence *together with* economic security, which remains the responsibility of the state.

Despite its appeal, this version of economic citizenship has been criticized by feminist scholars in several respects. One line of criticism holds that the concept is not amenable to transposition to political settings other than the US. For example, the emphasis on economic freedom, which is very specific to US political culture, is not as relevant in European countries that have a stronger legacy of state welfare. Arguably, Kessler-Harris's conceptual distinction between economic and social citizenship – and her attempt to collapse them – is irrelevant in Western European countries, where social policies emphasize precisely the interface of welfare and employment (Lewis 2003). Other complications arising from cross-country comparisons stem from the fact that institutional, cultural, and social diversity makes the actual empirical quantification of elements such as job quality or equitable wage hugely challenging (Gillen 2003). As Barbara Hobson (2003) asserts, it is true that supra-national institutions such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labor Organization (ILO) or the European Union (EU) compile databases and devise cross-national surveys that become yardsticks for normative assessments of economic citizenship. These institutions produce epistemic communities, scientific experts, and technocrats that interpret and evaluate policy and make recommendations. Yet implementation still varies dramatically among the different member states of these organizations, whose labor forces include different blends of citizens, expatriates, guest workers, illegal migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

Another criticism holds that larger workforce participation and better employment conditions do not automatically ensure gender equality in pay and overall treatment; additional mechanisms are needed to ensure more jobs that are suitable for women, compensation for women's domestic work, etc. (Lewis 2003). Feminists, lastly, also debate the resistance, conveyed in the idea of economic citizenship, to remunerating homemaking labor, on the presumed grounds that this will reinforce the illegitimacy of women's official

workforce participation and leave them dependent on state benefits and men's wages. For example, Martha Ertman (2002), in a reply to Schultz, disagrees with the initial assumption that wage labor is the most important path to full citizenship, and argues that compensating women for their homemaking work will actually buttress their citizenship claims. Similarly, Patemen, in an interview published more than a decade after *The Sexual Contract* (Puwar 2002), qualified her earlier position and suggested that employment and citizenship should be decoupled. The idea that democratic rights and benefits are contingent on financial contribution, she now stated, unduly underplays the contribution of women's domestic and care work.

Community Economic Development Perspective

Feminist ideas about justice, inclusion, and the value of women's invisible contribution resonate strongly in the discourse of community economic development (CED), of which the Israeli "social economy" is a culturally specific version. As presented in chapter 2, CED refers to bottom-up initiatives to reduce poverty by combining economic self-help projects with mobilization of local communities. Community economic development tends to be strongly holistic and participatory, encouraging the involvement of local businesses, fostering volunteer work, promoting education, and putting much emphasis on ideas such as community solidarity, local knowledge, and social sustainability. Such projects are often also characterized by a feminist perspective. Yet because CED is first and foremost an action-oriented approach, its discourse of economic citizenship is much less abstract or theoretical than the one presented above. Also, despite its radical potential, the strong emphasis on forging cross-sectorial partnerships creates some discursive affinity with the development and the business worlds.

Key concepts in CED discourse, which resonate directly with the idea of economic-independence-as-a-path-to-social-inclusion, are "social capital," "capacity building," and an

urgency to shift from a needs-based to an asset-based approach to poverty alleviation. Because of the pragmatic nature of CED, these concepts tend to act as empty signifiers (Walby 2012), open to radical, liberal and neoliberal interpretations at one and the same time. For example, the concept of “capabilities,” in the sense of opportunities, freedom and the ability to choose, was offered by Amartya Sen (1999) as a humane substitute for the traditional focus on “outcomes” or “achievements.” Yet as Sylvia Walby (2012) points out, despite Sen’s explicit refusal to translate capabilities into fixed empirical measurements, so as not to reduce the value of human life to money and comparable currencies his philosophical distinction between capabilities and functioning withers away when implemented on the ground. While development bodies have found the idea of capabilities attractive, their pragmatic orientation has conditioned them to measure it nevertheless, therefore effectively collapsing this qualitative, open-ended approach with a quantitative, fixed-categories one, and leaving little direct relevance for capability-as-freedom in measurements of justice, fairness, equality and progress.

In a similar fashion, the notion of social capital too has become popular in diverse ideological environments. Among international development agencies, the idea of *social* capital, popularly defined as “local forms of association that express trust and norms of reciprocity” (Rankin 2002), has become widely accepted as pertinent to the accumulation of *financial* capital. The most famous example is “saving groups,” in which women in the poorest regions of the world pool together weekly sums of money to create a collective credit against which they are entitled to receive individual loans from a micro-finance institution. The attractiveness of social capital theory lies in its focus on the assets and capacities, as opposed to the needs, of poor people, and in its recognition of the value of social networks and associational life. It simultaneously acknowledges local traditions and indigenous agency, envisions an investment that is sustainable (as opposed to bottomless), and frames

the poor as potentially self-sufficient. The following paragraph, quoted by Katharine Rankin (2002, 4) from the World Bank website, is characteristic:

Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.

But as Rankin notes, this understanding of social capital is very often blind to structural power. It tends to overlook hierarchies within local families and communities – particularly the subordination of women and members of lower casts – as well as the subordination of these communities within their states and the world capitalist system. Intentionally or not, it therefore often leads to development interventions reinforcing local hierarchies. Also, despite the importance accorded to “community,” interventions guided by such a liberal understanding of social capital commonly continue to conflate development with economic growth and to embrace the rational, utility-maximizing individual as the locus of progressive change.

Alongside this widespread approach, though, CED literature also offers more critical interpretations of social capital and asset building. Alison Mathie and Gord Cunningham (2003) sketch an integrative summary of asset-building community development (ABCD). By their explanation, ABCD differs from World Bank and similar top-down perspectives in its focus on community mobilization rather than institutional reform, and in its linking of localized, community-driven initiatives to macro environmental policies. As distinct from finance-oriented development schemes, it puts great emphasis on *collective* assets and capacities, including cultural heritage and other forms of non-monetary assets. It also encourages collective action, fosters local knowledge, and aims to eliminate stigmatic and

negative collective images by cultivating communities' self-esteem. However, while Mathie and Cunningham mention power inequalities and the need to devolve political power, they acknowledge that the ABCD literature does not offer sufficient answers to economic discrimination based on gender and ethnic oppression.

Such answers are commonly found in more radical approaches. Marxist and feminist understandings, for example, treat social capital as embedded in communal and familial networks that are usually hierarchical and potentially oppressive. Structural inequalities mean that differently positioned individuals experience associational life differently, and the value of their social capital varies accordingly. The benefits and costs of participation are distributed unequally, with some benefitting at the expense of others (Rankin 2002). Interventions sensitive to such power differentials occur mostly on the margins of, or outside the more established industry of international development. They usually combine practical steps to increase the social capital of individual women (through education, vocational training, business initiatives, etc.), with political consciousness-raising regarding the structural and historical mechanisms of their oppression.

We find an example of such an approach in the empowerment project that *al-Tufula* Center implemented in the recently recognized Bedouin villages in Galilee (documented in chapter 4 as part of the Bedouin Village Study). *Al-Tufula's* idea of empowerment gave paramount importance to the role of the community in the lives of village women; it placed strong emphasis on their social and cultural capital (their historical knowledge, their productive contribution, their ingenuity and their capacity to network); it aimed to reverse their framing as needy and passive by persistently talking about their capacities; and it interpreted their multiple disadvantages as a direct corollary of the state's discriminatory policies – the prolonged non-recognition of the villages, and the overall discrimination of the Palestinian citizens. In keeping with the feminist intersectionality perspective, *al-Tufula's*

approach targeted the complex intersection of patriarchal and ethno-national oppression. While it saw the institutions of the family and the village as oppressive to women, it did not aim to obliterate them or free the women *from* them. Instead, it aimed to resurrect the value of these institutions, which have stagnated as a result of oppressive manipulations by the state, and to empower women to become agents of change *within* them. This community-oriented feminist empowerment approach, in other words, acknowledged the political victimization of the community without downplaying its own oppressive agency.

It is possible that the radical and politically explicit tone of *al-Tufula's* initiative is connected to the fact that its platform did not include the term “economic development,” as do other ABCD programs. Although many of the projects' participants did testify to having undergone economic empowerment (they related their decision to join the waged workforce or to enroll in occupational training to the encouragement they received in the project), increasing women's economic independence was not one of *al-Tufula's* direct priorities. It therefore did not attempt to involve local businesses, and focused its fundraising efforts on general donors. By contrast, the common emphasis among CED initiatives on *economic* empowerment entails greater involvement of financial and business bodies.

Among such bodies, the concepts of social capital and asset building again resonate with the more liberal renditions that center on financial attainment and related quantifiable measurements, and reinforce individualistic perceptions of success despite the fascination with the term “community.” Here we encounter the terms “corporate responsibility,” “corporate citizenship” or “financial citizenship.” According to Luis Moreno (2010) corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to a commitment of private corporations to integrate social and environmental concerns in their interaction with their stakeholders and with society more generally. “It is generally assumed that a strong sense of business responsibility towards local communities, by means of formalizing partnerships, together

with respect for the environment, is an important aspect of CSR” (ibid. 684). Corporate social responsibility is premised on an assumed mutual dependency between the well-being of society and the well-being of business. Besides the ethical aspect, it is assessed as a strategic means for optimizing the public image of corporations. In fact, the promotion of CSR as a win-win strategy for optimizing the responsible civil participation of businesses while increasing their competitiveness and potential profitability has become *bon ton* in business training. Donna Wood et al. (2002), who reviewed the curricula of 105 leading business schools in the US, report that corporate involvement in community economic development (CI/CED) has become a popular topic in the discipline. Classifying such involvement as “corporate citizenship,” they see the incorporation of CI/CED into the standard training of entrepreneurs and senior managers as a form of “citizenship studies.” They therefore argue that by teaching managers to become involved and assume social responsibility, business schools effectively engage in citizenship education.

Against the liberal conviction that corporate involvement in community economic development strengthens democratic culture, critics have pointed out the counter-effects of reinforcing neoliberal rationality. For example, Ronen Shamir (2008) argues that the moralization of the market – the increasing involvement of commercial enterprises in tasks that were once considered part of the civic domain of moral entrepreneurship and the political domain of the welfare state – has become an important part of the neoliberal global social order, which essentially grounds the very notion of moral duty within the rationality of the market. With the move away from legalistic, bureaucratic, top-down configurations of authority to a horizontal configuration, the idea of responsibility has become the practical master-key of reflexive, self-regulatory governance. In an ethnographic documentation of a non-profit organization that promotes the idea of CSR, Shamir (2005) shows how the latter is transformed into a managerial tool, designed to enhance employee loyalty and improve brand

loyalty. From a different angle, Adriana Kemp and Nitza Berkovitch (2013) explore the effects the financialization of citizenship on actors at the grassroots level. They find that despite their explicit criticism of the neoliberal outlook, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actually replicate the rationale of finding market solutions to social and political problems. In this respect, the educational turn that many of these organizations have taken (as discussed in chapter 4) proves particularly pertinent to their *active* production of norms and techniques that make the financial and entrepreneurial worlds look natural, necessary and even progressive in gendered struggles against inequality. Kemp and Berkovitch also underscore the major role that micro-finance NGOs play in transforming marginalized women into “financial subjects,” who are competitive, self-reliant, and trained in opportunity-spotting and calculated risk-taking (see also Rankin 2001).

Free-Market Perspectives

Bringing this concise review full circle, ideas of economic citizenship are found also among those who believe that the market is the best regulator of all types of social problems. Somewhat similarly to the feminist discourse led by Kessler-Harris and Schultz, the free-market perspective of economic citizenship tends to be rather theoretical and replete with legalistic rationality. Thematically though, it is dominated by images of individuals as rational actors operating to maximize gains, leaving gender and ethnicity, and to a lesser degree also community, conspicuously out of the equation. To an extent, this discourse too acknowledges the problem of social inequalities, yet concerns about class disparities and economic security remain secondary to the value of individual freedom and economic growth.

A lucid example of a free-market approach to citizenship is found in discussions about the regulation of global work migration. For several decades now, economists in the

US have promoted the idea of selling citizenship rights as a way to allocate immigration certificates and permanent residency (Chiswick 1982, Borna and Stearn 2002). Versions of this idea are traceable back to notable economists such as Walter Adams (1968) or Gary Becker (1997). According to Adams, as long as human capital is free to seek the highest reward, and as long as it bears the cost of its own movement, it will tend to move into those regions and occupations where its productivity is high, and out of regions and occupations where its productivity is low. The combination of requesting immigrants to pay their way into the absorbing country and allowing citizens to sell their share in it is presumed to produce optimal results for all concerned. Operative proposals concerning the US specifically (Borna and Stern 2002, Muaddi 2006) list the following benefits: poor US citizens will be able to “cash in” on the asset of their citizenship; they will use the money to relocate to countries with a lower cost of living, and thereby will relieve the American welfare system of the burden of their support. On the opposite side, among prospective immigrants the financial investment necessary to obtain a green card will put in motion a process of self-selection, attracting candidates who are either able-bodied and highly motivated to work, or wealthy, and discouraging the poor and the needy. Lastly, the federal state will supervise and tax the transactions, thus gaining an additional source of revenue, which at present circulates in the black market of green cards.

Despite their cost-effective and somewhat mechanistic tone, proposals of this sort do not necessarily ignore the ethical or moral aspects of citizenship. For one thing, as several authors note, the idea of selling citizenship rights merely taps into an already thriving illegal industry of visas and green cards. If anything, making the transactions legal and official will encourage a more sincere discussion of how to bring “citizenship” up to date with contemporary tensions between global population flows, vast economic disparities, and very heterogeneous workforces on the one hand, and a persistent conception of citizenship as

bound to nation-states and geographical locations on the other. For another, at least some of the proposals include explicit acknowledgement that citizenship has emotional and collective components and not just calculated and individualistic elements, yet hold that the two aspects can be separated, at least for the sake of discussion. For example, Jawad Muaddi (2006) makes a distinction between alienable and inalienable aspects of citizenship. The right to permanent legal residency and the concomitant right to work, which represents the liberal aspect of citizenship, he argues, is alienable. This component, which is minimalist and individualistic by definition, happens also to be in very high demand in the international immigration market. Other components, by contrast, such as entitlement to social benefits, the right to be elected to high office, or the obligation to serve on juries, are inalienable. These are “republican and communitarian notions of political participation, identity, and solidarity” (ibid., 230), which cannot be sold or bought.

Some free-market approaches to citizenship, lastly, include explicit reference to social inequalities. Francesca Strumia (2011) notes, with respect to EU citizenship, that this supra-national construct entails social inequalities almost by definition. One of the elementary components of this citizenship is the right of legal nationals of the various member states to move freely between them, and to reside, work, and enjoy public services across the union. Yet the economic disparities between the various states – the dramatic differences in unemployment rates and in welfare mixes – give very different meanings to the freedom of movement of their respective subjects. While highly skilled persons largely benefit from this freedom, low-skilled people might more easily find relief from inequality in the right *not* to move, provided it is supported by protective supra-national policies. Another important source of social inequality in EU citizenship is the presence of non-nationals who are economic actors in the union. These people are EU economic citizens in as much as they contribute to the operation of the internal market and benefit from the freedoms offered in it,

yet most of them are denied the safety-net available to legal nationals. This inclination to inequality, argues Strumia, seems to betray a fundamental premise of authentic common citizenship: shared status for the members of a same community.

Localizing Economic Citizenship

Many of the ideas that come up in the international or theoretical discussions of economic citizenship are relevant also to the Israeli field of social economy, and within it to the empowerment of low income women. The sweeping shift, in poverty alleviation initiatives, from welfare- to work-oriented solutions, the restructuring of institutional interventions among poor people, the eagerness of the business community to help poor people transform their social capital into some sort of economic asset, the surging discourse on corporate social responsibility, the novel partnerships between radical grassroots activists and the capitalist and state establishments, or the financialization of the everyday life of low-income women and social change organizations – all testify to a seeming convergence of ideologies of justice and social solidarity on the one hand, and ideologies of economic self-sustainability on the other. At the same time, the assimilation of the globally circulating discourse of economic citizenship into a particular cultural and geopolitical context necessarily entails some measure of translation and adaptation. To understand how this process occurs, I ask first, how can the pecuniary approach to citizenship (Borna and Stearn 2002) be reconciled with the Israeli and Palestinian preoccupations with collective identity, history, and primordial belonging? Then, moving from the ideological to the pragmatic, I ask what are the practical meanings of economic citizenship that evolve in the field of social economy?

Israeli Citizenship as a Category of Collective Belonging

In Israel, the most important determinant of citizenship is national belonging. As detailed in chapter 2, the Palestinians, who are formal citizens of the state, suffer manifold forms of exclusion and discrimination because they do not belong to the Jewish collective (see also Jabareen 2003). Within the Jewish majority group, degrees and forms of belonging are further determined according to local mythologies of contribution to the national good. These contributions are correlated primarily with ethnicity (Peled 2008, Yonah and Saporta 2002), religiosity and fundamentalism (Stadler, Lomsky-Feder, and Ben-Ari 2008) and gender, which in turn intersects in complex ways with the other bases of stratification (Yuval-Davis 1987, Berkovitch 1997, Fogiel-Bijaoui 1997, Herzog 1999, Helman 1999, Swirski 2010). In stark distinction from the globally circulating discourses on economic citizenship, in Israeli and Palestinian local mythologies of contribution, economic productivity has played almost no role. The one exception is the public discourse that blames ultraorthodox Jews for not shouldering their equal share of national burden, which refers to the exemption from military service of men who enroll in *yeshivot* (religious schools), and by implication also exclude themselves from the job market for prolonged periods.

Of course, the liberal component of citizenship is not entirely absent from Israel. A narrative of universal individual rights has existed side by side with the collectivist narratives and has served as the primary framework that allows the Palestinians to become citizens. As mentioned in chapter 2, scholars have debated the relative importance of this component in the Israeli regime. For example, Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled (1998, 417) argue that “The historical trajectory of Israel’s development since 1948 has consisted in the gradual decline of the republican discourse and the gradual transformation of the society from a colonial to a civil society.” Yet they also emphasize the hierarchical and fragmented nature of Israeli citizenship: “...different groups – citizens and noncitizens, Jews and Palestinians, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, men and women, religious and secular – were placed in

accordance with their conceived contribution to the Zionist cause” (Shafir and Peled 2002, 22). Sammy Smooha (2002) has contended that despite consistent and unambiguous domination of the Jewish majority, Israel should still be considered a democracy – an *ethnic* democracy. Opponents of this interpretation have argued that the scope and consistency of the exclusion of the Palestinians, and the overwhelming level of their policing, are such that the liberal component – the fact that they can vote and be elected to the Knesset, and that they fall under the nominal jurisdiction of an array of protective state laws – is too feeble to qualify the state as a democracy. These scholars have therefore termed Israel an ethnocracy (Rouhana and Ghanem 1998, Ghanem 2009, Yiftachel 2006), and an illiberal democracy (Sa’di 2002). Also Peled, who in the late 1990s concluded together with Shafir that the liberal discourse was gaining the upper hand, reversed his conclusion a decade later (Peled 2007, 2008) and argued that since October 2000 the status of the Palestinian citizens has been eroding; while the economic policy is now dominated by the liberal discourse, policy toward the Palestinian citizens is dominated increasingly by the exclusionary ethno-national discourse.

The ethnography presented in this book captures the moment at which, with the rapid penetration of ideas about inclusion-through-economic-participation, such framings of citizenship in terms of collective belonging and particularistic morality begin to undergo an *economic* shift. The offering of economic solutions to problems of social inequalities and social exclusion entails, willy-nilly, a seeming spillover of the liberal discourse, which as Peled (2008) convincingly contends, has taken over economic policies, into the management of ethno-national antagonisms. Recall, for example, the eagerness to include the Palestinian citizens in the economic empowerment projects and the use of terms such as “social” and “diversity” to de-politicize their difference. This “infiltration of market-driven truths and calculations into the domain of politics” (Ong 2006, 4) reflects a larger transformation of the

liberal into a *neoliberal*. However, it does not necessarily mean that the normative logic of ethno-national exclusion is about to disappear. As Ong notes, “[t]he spread of neoliberal calculation as a governing technology is a historical process that unevenly articulates situated political constellations” (ibid., 3). Hence it is more accurate to say that in Israel, as in the Asian settings documented by Ong, the neoliberal logic is incorporated as an exception to the dominant ethno-national logic, which remains as blatant as ever (Yonah and Saporta 2002, Kemp 2004, Ram 2008).

In chapter 2 I mentioned as an example the surge in racist legislation initiatives, which represents a popular sentiment among Jews that the Palestinian citizens are usurping their liberal rights to the point that they threaten to overturn the Jewish character of the state. This sentiment, which has been on the rise since the second Palestinian intifada in 2000, has become so prevalent that Nadeem Rouhana and Nimer Sultany (2003) call it “the New Zionist Hegemony,” noting its traces on government policies, legislation, public opinion and public discourse, and arguing that it has effected significant change in the meaning of citizenship for non-Jews in an ethnic Jewish state. In line with this assessment, one of the popular slogans of the political right during the last two election campaigns (2009, 2013) was “No citizenship without loyalty,” which conveys a demand to condition the civic privileges of Palestinian Israelis upon their declared expression of loyalty to Zionism and the Jewish state. In the 2013 election campaign a slightly different slogan was added: “No rights without duties,” to protest the exemption from military service of both Arabs and ultraorthodox Jews.

The Neoliberal Exception to Israeli Discourses of Citizenship

What are the implications of such heated ethno-national exclusionary sentiments for the seemingly inclusive orientations that flourish through the social economy field? How do this background and atmosphere affect the vernacularization of economic citizenship? As I

was exploring these questions, during the January 2013 election campaign, I googled the “No citizenship without loyalty” and “No rights without duties” slogans, and discovered that even these quintessentially ethno-nationalistic expressions have assumed interesting neoliberal overtones. For example, an Internet newspaper called “Patriotic Israeli – all that is Principled, Zionist, and Jewish” featured an article titled “No Rights without Duties.” Pressing the “about” button revealed that Patriotic Israeli is a business company that defines itself as “A leader and a coach of a business community. This community wants to grow and develop congenially, while bringing livelihood, welfare, and personal empowerment to itself and to thousands of others in the region.”¹ A further exploration revealed that the juxtaposition of economic citizenship lingo – the introductory statement alone contains empowerment, community, welfare and economic prosperity – and nationalistic, sharply exclusionary opinions, is consistent throughout the website. Far from this being a curiosity, a similar amalgam characterizes the public discourse of the *Yesh Atid* party, the big winner of the 2013 elections.² This self-defined center-stage party, whose main ticket is promoting the economic prosperity of the middle class, has nevertheless issued numerous statements that de-legitimize the Palestinian citizens as partners to the coalition, reject territorial concessions in the negotiation with the Palestinian Authority, and similar messages, which align it quite clearly with the political right. It therefore appears that the tendency to address social problems using the lens of economic rationality is spreading throughout the political spectrum, and that in a manner reminiscent of, though not quite identical to, US neo-conservatism, the Israeli versions of free-market economic citizenship are saturated with communitarian ideology.

One of the main characteristics of the social economy field is the space it creates for uncommon encounters and collaborations among actors from the business community, state

¹ <http://www.kr8.co.il/BRPortal/br/P102.jsp?arc=456353> (retrieved January 2013).

² This completely new party, headed by a popular TV presenter with no previous parliamentary experience, came second and promptly became the senior partner to the Netanyahu right-wing government coalition.

agencies, grassroots organizations, and clients of the welfare system, as well as between ordinary Palestinians and Jews (ordinary in the sense that they are not necessarily invested in “coexistence efforts”). As they engage each other during the routine of empowerment projects, these actors bring with them varied understandings of what the projects are actually about, as well as diverse identities and identifications. Well aware of the social distances between them, individuals in concrete situations nevertheless often trust each other enough to develop sincere conversations and to pool together their distinct resources in order to achieve success. They self-censor some of the sentiments or habitual expressions they may use in their other, more segregated spaces, and they do not necessarily cultivate too much romance about bridging gaps and crossing social boundaries. In economic empowerment projects, as in any other work spaces, there are personal animosities, disappointments, focused self-interests, prejudices or misunderstandings. But there *are* also dialogues.

Of the various perspectives presented earlier, the version of economic citizenship that resonates most strongly among government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs) and business-organized nonprofit organizations (BONPOs) is the one that characterizes community economic development. As shown in chapter 2, the notions of corporate social responsibility, asset-based community development, and building social capital are quite popular particularly in these circles. The discourse here is characteristically pragmatic in orientation – most of the actors become interested *through* their actual involvement in the projects, which pushes it away from the ideological extremes. To a degree, the structural conditioning toward mainstream or even conservative worldviews of people well within the established elites gives some edge to liberal, free-market interpretations, yet for the most part these do not assume the calculated, mechanistic tone that was presented in the review above.

For many actors in these circles, the most meaningful aspect of CED is reaching across national, ethnic and class divides. This too is done in a distinctly guarded, de-politicized style, as seen in the use of the terms “social” and “diversity.” The gender component likewise serves as a mitigating factor in the process of reaching across the divides. Low-income women, in contrast to low-income men, are more easily imagined as needy than aggressive. As such, they often evoke a degree of identification among the professional/middle class operators of the projects, who are mostly women. Alternatively, the framing of minority women as bearers of traditionalism and cultural oppression readily replaces their class, ethnic and national oppression with a seemingly less antagonizing narrative.

At the level of grassroots activists, understandings of economic citizenship are much closer to the ideas articulated by feminists such as Kessler-Harris, albeit with some locally specific distinctions. Radical feminists posit that low-income and minority women have a *right* to work, as a counter-argument to popular tendencies to stigmatize them for laziness, traditionalism or parasitism. They also take issue with official tendencies to focus on statistical measurements of workforce participation and argue that efforts should concentrate on getting more women into good jobs, not just any jobs. In other words, local radical feminists’ perspective on economic citizenship is that low-income and minority women are entitled to gainful, sustainable and fulfilling employment, just like men and women of the dominant groups. Considering that the realistic prospects of low-income women rarely go beyond nonstandard jobs (low-paying, unstable, part-time, no benefits, bad treatment, frequent arbitrary dismissals, etc.), these expectations have a distinctly utopian aspect. Not coincidentally, the involvement of many grassroots activists in the projects is often fraught with ambivalence and intense reflexivity. While many of these actors are enthusiastic about the projects, they tend to see them as partial solutions at best. In their understanding, to

achieve true economic security, many if not most of the women will still need long-lasting state support to supplement their independent income. None of the activists I met ever mooted the notion, as Kessler-Harris did, that state welfare should be reduced because it perpetuates women's economic dependence. If anything, most of them watched with alarm the shrinking of social benefits and sought to halt and even reverse the process; many also believed that women should be economically rewarded for their unpaid domestic labor.

Another specific concern of local feminists' discourse on women's right to make a respectable living is its distinctly political tone. Contrary to many of their partners in the BONPOs and GONGOs, who make a point of construing the projects as "social," actors at the grassroots level, as I showed ethnographically in chapter 2, make direct links among what they take to be the class, ethnic, and national oppressions of women. They therefore regard their efforts to help these women improve their income-generating capacities as part of an overall struggle for social justice (*tsedek*), not charity (*tsdaka*). At the same time, there are different shadings among the grassroots activists also. Palestinian activists mostly frame their activity in the social economy field as part of their ongoing struggle against the national discrimination against the Palestinian minority. As shown in chapter 2, the overwhelming funneling of funds in recent years to economic empowerment has left little choice for minority-rights groups but to join the stream. Some of them, coming with a solid socialist and communist background (an outcome of the hegemony of the Communist Party among the Palestinians during the early decades of Israeli statehood), give their participation a more specifically unionistic emphasis. The involvement of these actors in social economy projects is one way or another usually part of their broader involvement in civil society activism for human, minority and women's rights, and of their broader immersion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To some extent this perspective is shared also by a hard core of radical Jewish activists. Yet Palestinians and Jews in grassroots organizations still differ in the level of their hostility to and alienation from the state, as well as in their personal histories of racist persecution. Outside the inner radical left-wing/feminist circles, activists again vary in the degree to which they see economic disempowerment as connected to ethnic or national oppression. In this respect, an important distinguishing factor among the operators of the projects at the grassroots level is age. As explained in chapter 4 (“Empowerment”), younger women, both Jewish and Palestinian, who take on jobs as moderators and coordinators, do not always share the political passion of the older activists and founders of the organizations in which they work. These women are characteristically academically educated, sometimes still graduate students, and for them the feminist organizations are yet another “establishment,” just like the BONPOs and GONGOs. While many of them like the activist character of their job, their professional training and aspirations tend to dominate their approach to the task of “empowering” low-income women. Together with their limited familiarity with the recent history of radical feminist activism and their strong individualistic career orientations, these attributes cause many of the younger NGO actors to veer away from the highly politicized discourse and move closer to mainstream interpretations. And while their discourse may sound akin to that of the grassroots environment in which they work, their perceptions of economic citizenship are often much less critical of “the neoliberal imaginary that seeks to subject all socio-cultural practices to the law of the market” (Rossiter, in Urciuoli 2010, 164).

This captivating effect of the neoliberal “imaginary” brings us, finally, to the clients of the projects. Like many of the other partners, their interpretations of the idea of wage-work as a right and a gateway to civil inclusion grow from their actual participation in the courses and workshops. The ethnography showed that low-income women are very keen to have a

paying job. Their narratives and conversations revealed that beyond their obvious need for money, they wanted a job for a whole host of reasons. They imagined that in addition to economic independence it would give them identity, self-fulfillment and respect, and that it would make their lives more interesting. This was striking, considering that most of these women had cumulative experiences of jobs that were plainly unfulfilling, often outright humiliating, with ridiculously low pay and a taxing work that won them very little appreciation, if any. Interestingly, more than these attitudes echo the discourse of the activists who run the projects, they seem to tap into the ideas of feminist theoreticians such as Kessler-Harris or Schultz, who despite full awareness of the manifold structural barriers awaiting low-income and minority women in the workforce, still see it as the foremost crucial arena that they need to conquer in order to realize their citizenship.

Another evident point in which the women's narratives differed from that of local grassroots activists was that their approach to economic citizenship was distinctly apolitical. They never discussed or analyzed government policies, for example. Also, in all the events that I witnessed, which brought together Jewish and Palestinian women, relations between the two communities or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were consistently glossed over. With some exceptions, even Mizrahi identity politics, which is today widely consensual among low-income Mizrahim, came up mostly in response to remarks of workshop moderators, and was only rarely part of women's spontaneous talk. For the women, the quest to improve their economic situation was primarily a personal, individual journey. While they welcomed the companionship of other women who shared similar circumstances, they had no tendency to politicize it.

Within this generally apolitical approach, there was a fairly clear distinction between Jewish and Palestinian participants. Among the Jewish women, particularly the Mizrahiyot, identification with the state and with Zionism never came into question. Even though they

were bitterly angry about the cutbacks in social benefits, they never expressed alienation from or hostility toward the state. Rather, the taken-for-granted political position in the workshops during my participant observations was center / right-wing, with occasional spontaneous expressions of explicit national sentiments. As for the ultraorthodox and recent immigrants, while their identification with the state was somewhat less obvious, this did not usually lead to any expressions of political criticism. The attitude of the Palestinian participants to the state was categorically different. The state, the Jews, and the Hebrew language were crucial factors to reckon with as they represented “hard facts” on the way to economic and workforce participation. Yet the state, let alone Zionism, evoked no identification. If anything, it was seen as hostile and threatening. At the same time, the women did not necessarily share the discourse of the moderators and project operators, who tended to be intellectuals and very political. They did, of course, share the basic defiant-proud sentiment of Palestinian belonging. In this close-knit society, the social distance between any individual woman and persons who are politically involved is never too wide, and none of the women was a stranger to Palestinian political discourse. Still, the dominant orientation among the workshops participants was first and foremost pragmatic.

Lastly, as shown in chapter 5, the discourse of the women during the workshops was replete with emotional references. Talking about their involvement in waged work, participants abundantly voiced the words love, care and giving, and at the same time eschewed comments on the practicalities of making money or on aggressive emotions. In my analysis of this discourse I pointed out more than one possible interpretation. On the one hand, I noted that this discursive style marked the women as unsophisticated and their attitudes as self-defeating; for while it resonated strongly with broader discourses of emotional capitalism, it also seemed to entrench even deeper their popular image as natural caretakers, hence as outsiders to the official workforce. I also noted, though, that the

women's discourse may have had multiple effects, including subversive, nonconformist, and otherwise unsettling ones. Among other things, I suggested that it might have the capacity to enchant, inspire and energetically recharge them during the dreary and often daunting process of "economic empowerment." Linking this to the topic of the present chapter, it is possible to add that through their emotional discourse, the workshops participants vocalize a component of economic citizenship that is conspicuously absent in the different versions that circulate in the field.

The discourse on economic citizenship that is evolving in the field of social economy creates intriguing "dialogues" among radical, liberal and ethno-nationalistic perceptions of citizenship. On a different level, it also articulates the forces of separation and attachment, an elementary pair in the constitution of self and concomitantly also of citizenship. Separation and individuation are represented in the emphasis on economic *independence* and on money, the typical symbol of negative exchange and abstract relationships; attachment is represented in the counter-emphasis on economic *security* and communal solidarity. The clients of the projects, by steering away from the explicitly ideological components that all the other partners seem to be preoccupied with, talk directly to this other, more universal, dilemma of citizenship. In their focus on relationships of support and intimacy, they express in no uncertain terms the relevance of care and emotional attachment to the practice of active citizenship.

So while to the hegemonic ear the women's excessive talk about love and care may sound off-key, and therefore seem to reinforce their marginalization, it does not necessarily represent failure to grasp and internalize the "right" narrative of economic success. Such an interpretation, to borrow Jane Goodman's (2006, 206) perceptive observation, would "presume that positive agency under neoliberal regimes can only be construed in terms of a transparent and singular alignment between politics, social conduct, and subjectivity."

Instead, the ritualistic emotional talk of the workshop participants can be said “to demonstrate a flexible and pragmatic sensitivity to the imbricated social contexts” in which they find themselves (ibid.). In a still deeper symbolic sense, this pragmatic sensitivity may also be said to render them agents in bringing the conversation on citizenship to bear on the uncanny elements of mundane vulnerability (as opposed to heroic sacrifice) and plain neediness, which the self-important, official renditions prefer to leave out of the discussion.

Conclusion: Affective Citizenship, Low-Income Women, and Claims for Inclusion

Economic citizenship can be thought of as a conceptual vessel, which contains a mixture of attitudes to strategies of inclusion in the contemporary moment of late capitalism. This moment entails increasing polarization on several fronts – social, economic and political, which leaves mounting numbers of people vulnerable, and a minority fantastically rich. The chance of the latter releases an avalanche of messages that promise opportunities for growth and prosperity, and creates acute pressures to engage in perpetual self-invention. A corollary of these contradictions, organized efforts to empower the poor and the marginalized feed simultaneously on the seemingly contrary narratives of justice, charity and self-sufficiency. It cultivates images of self-sustained individuals comfortable in the embrace of supportive communities. In the field of social economy, abstract intellectual ideas about “giving fishing rods to the poor” or radical demands to grant women due opportunity to become truly independent translate into pragmatic action plans. The result is a hybrid discourse of entitlement, with dialogues across political, sectorial and social boundaries.

I have identified several strands of this discourse as it appears in the scholarly literature – feminist, CED, and free-market, and then examined the correspondence between

these and the bottom-up ideas that evolve in the field. I showed that in the process of its localization, the general notion of economic self-sufficiency as a route to civil participation is ultimately supplemented by certain aspects of citizenship – embedment, attachments and essentialized differences, which are absent from scholarly discourses on economic citizenship. I concluded that in the Israeli case economic citizenship as a neoliberal position is an exception to, not a substitute for, the cultural blueprint of citizenship, albeit one that agitates it and challenges it to accommodate. Not surprisingly, the process of accommodating the exception generates tensions and paradoxes, which the different participants handle according to their particular standpoints.

Actors in the BONPO and GONGO sectors primarily endorse the ideas of social capital, social corporate responsibility, asset building and community building, which are milder versions of free-market perspectives of economic citizenship – unapologetically capitalistic yet relatively moderate. Their appeal lies in their distinctly apolitical ring, which makes it easier for people firmly within the state and business establishments to collaborate with grassroots activists despite their sharp and critical language which purports to take hegemonic power relations to task. The apolitical discourse also facilitates their collaboration with low-income Mizrahim and Palestinians, who embody the attractive–scary outer circumference of their social world. Where free-market lingo blends with that of social solidarity, the operation of BONPO and GONGO actors is favored; it is a reasonably reassuring place, although it exceeds their customary comfort zone. They employ words such as “social” and “diversity” to neutralize potentially explosive encounters.

Grassroots activists generally endorse a much more justice-oriented and explicitly feminist version of economic citizenship, one reminiscent of what I called the “theoretical” feminist position on economic citizenship, to which they nevertheless add some locally specific ideological elements. Their language is explicitly political, setting them apart from

both the English-speaking feminist theoretical discourse and that of BONPO and GONGO actors, which frame economic empowerment as “social.” Another point on which they part company with feminist theoreticians such as Kessler-Harris and Schultz is their wish to see a revival, not the elimination, of state welfare. Lastly, activists' holding that work and economic independence should be conceived as *rights* may further complicate matters, as discourses on rights risk backfiring (see, e.g., Choo 2013, Joseph 2000). Applying rights narratives to local feminist struggles may unintentionally trap women in essentialized versions of “culture,” or may have the opposite effect of imposing on them an unduly universalistic perception. As Ong (2006, 31) writes, “mantras from the north like ‘women’s rights are human rights’ propose global human standards without regard to other moral systems and visions of ethical living.” The language of rights has a powerful grip, particularly on activists who are also academically educated and professionally trained – recall the component of legal advocacy in the local feminist and workers’ rights scene, documented in chapter 4. So has the language of capacities and assets. Indeed, activists are aware of the potential slippages, and as mentioned try to offset what they perceive as biases by keeping busy with political and social-protest activism.

However, for the grassroots activists and for actors in the BONPO and GONGO sectors alike, I should note that despite the ideological distances and symbolic “breaks” that they each use to keep their worlds in order, their involvement in the social economy field tends to make them flexible. Through their routine contacts in the field, these actors are continuously challenged to mold and adjust their perspectives on economic citizenship.

And lastly, the women at the receiving end: Kessler-Harris encourages us to use the category of economic citizenship as a way to begin to imagine an equitable and fair society “that can effectively meld care-giving interests (for children as well as elderly and ill relatives and partners) with market-driven self-interest” (2003, 158). As the mapping of the various

versions of economic citizenship that circulate in the social economy field revealed, the one closest to this interpretation was that of the women who participated in the workshops. In their unapologetic interweaving of words like love, care and giving into the very training that aimed to make them more adept economic actors, these women brought their own understanding of the type of work that is valuable and the type of participation that should count. They thereby tapped at once into a distinctly local attitude to citizenship – one highly emotional and oblivious to detached economic rationality, and they added a markedly universal layer – care, which was entirely their own. So from their standpoint on the margins, and with their somewhat discordant discourse, these women shed light on the aspect of citizenship that official discourses prefer to evade: the practice of care and the unmediated contact that it generates with messy, bodily, and emotional needs. These uncanny practices – uncanny because they represent the innermost part of “the private” and therefore the alleged antithesis of “public” civility, and because they are potentially unruly – are readily marginalized; much like the women who perform them. However, as Yael Navaro-Yashin (2012) argues, the uncanny is in some way a species of the familiar.

The incorporation of care into discourses of citizenship poses a theoretical dilemma. It seems to aggravate the already existing tension between universalism (the principle of personal equality and freedom from primordial ties, which is premised on separation) and particularism (the passion for difference and group identification, premised on attachment). The vocabulary of care, moreover, is not identical to the emotional vocabulary already in use in particularistic discourses, with their stress on *collective* belonging and loud masculine overtones. The incorporation of care into discourses of citizenship also poses a political dilemma for feminists, who struggle to acknowledge women’s care-work, but also to liberate them from its essentializing grip (e.g., Walby 1994). Nira Yuval-Davis and Prina Werbner, in an attempt to overcome this impasse, invoke the idea of encompassment, and argue that while

attachment should not eliminate universal individual rights, it needs to be encompassed by an ethic of care, compassion and responsibility.

For democracy to work, universalism must transcend difference, defining all subjects in abstract terms as equal before the law. But difference is then *reinstated* as a higher-order value, which encompasses equality through a relational and dialogical ethic of care, compassion, and responsibility. This higher-order stress upon difference therefore encompasses and subsumes universal and inclusive ideas about equality within it, without denying them. Hence, rather than a model that posits opposition between... a 'liberal' individualist and a 'republican' communitarian – feminist scholars seek to formulate models that highlight citizenship and civic activism as dialogical and relational, embedded in cultural and associational life. (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999, 10)

By insisting on a vocabulary of care, and ultimately succumbing into the non-profitability of the caretakers' position, the women therefore present an interpretation of economic citizenship that resists the attempt of the *economic* to overtake the *civic*, and urges restoration of the broad, humanistic sense of citizenship.