

## **Searching for the absent citizen: enabling and disabling discourses of disability**

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Citizenship discourses are powerful ways in which individuals may be accorded or denied human rights and social justice in socio-cultural and political-economic realms. Dominant theories of liberal citizenship (for example, Marshall 1963) highlight individualism and rights. Civic republicanism and communitarianism (for example, Oldfield 1990) stress obligations, participation and community. These hegemonic ideologies of citizenship have offered a dichotomy of rights versus participation with space only for the able-bodied subject engaged in market participation. In response, feminist theories (for example, Pateman 1992; Young 1998; Lister 2003) have presented a variety of alternatives informed through themes of private versus public, inclusion versus exclusion, and have expanded the range of participation from the market to care-giving and attempted to offer the subject as embodied. However, even in the most radical of reconstructions, dichotomies remain a central tenet and the continuous reference point is always that of the able-body, leaving no space for disabled subjectivity. In this article, key citizenship discourses are delineated through the lens of disability. The objective of drawing upon these theories is to explicate that while citizenship discourses offer an influential framework for positioning human rights and social justice, as currently envisioned and practiced such discourses are inadequate to promote the full and equal participation of people with disabilities. It will be argued that a theory of citizenship which accounts for rights and justice may be developed by drawing upon Nancy Fraser's theory of justice.

### **Introduction**

It is estimated that across the world there are at least 650 million persons with disabilities, or approximately 10 per cent of the global population (United Nations 2005). In the majority of countries, at least one out of 10 people has a physical, mental or sensory impairment (Despouy 1993). Millions of people with disabilities experience profound socio-cultural and political-economic exclusion in a number of human rights areas. These include high rates of poverty (Bradbury, Norris and Abello 2001; Morris M 2004; Saunders 2006); disadvantages in employment and

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labour market programs (Oliver 1990; Barnes 2000; O'Reilly 2003; Wilkins 2003); inadequate social security benefits (Dixon and Hyde 2000; Parker and Cass 2005; Carney 2006a); transportation and housing barriers (Zarb 1995; Wittenburg 2003); discriminatory social attitudes (Davis 1997; Barnes 1991; Abberley 1993; Longmore 2003); disadvantages in international and national legal systems (Jones and Marks 1999; Carney 2000; Meekosha 2000; Parker 2006); and higher vulnerability to abuse, institutionalisation and imprisonment (Marks 1999; Thomas 1999; Longmore and Umansky 2001; Frohmader 2002; Block 2002; Dowse 2004). In sum, across the world people with disabilities remain one of the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups in all areas of daily living.

International literature has concluded that it is systemic barriers in socio-cultural and political-economic realms that have led to conditions of marginalisation and disablement (Oliver 1996; Hahn 1997; Fleischer and Zames 2001; Waddington 2001; Pawlick and Stroick 2004; Barnes and Mercer 2005). These issues have been placed within wider debates of citizenship, human rights and social justice. While conceptions of and policies for disability in the post World-War II period have shifted from a paternalistic welfare approach to an acknowledgment that people with disabilities have full and equal rights, they remain less than full and equal citizens. People with disabilities are denied the status of equal citizenship, as well as the means and opportunities of equal citizenship. This occurs in both international and national policy/legislative discourse and practice. At the international level, despite over 50 years of an entrenched rhetoric of rights by the United Nations, the principles underpinning human rights discourses are often implicitly steeped in disablist assumptions — that is, discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that people with disabilities are inferior to others. Unlike sexism or racism, the word 'disablism' is not part of policy discourse. Yet it describes an all-too-real issue. Even in advanced liberal welfare states like Australia, federal disability policies are entrenched in contradictions and tensions, and impede rather than facilitate social and economic participation (Parker and Cass 2005; Carney 2006b). This has been exacerbated in recent years as neo-liberal reforms have further constrained participation opportunities for people with disabilities and have repositioned what it means to be a citizen.

Citizenship discourses are powerful ways in which differently abled individuals may be accorded or denied rights of recognition, redistribution and participation; however, most accounts of citizenship systematically neglect people with disabilities. Given the relative absence of disability in citizenship debates, the question can be raised, can human rights and social justice for a person with a disability be realised through accomplishment of citizenship? Voet (1998, 73) states: 'Instead of seeing citizenship as the means to realise rights, we should see rights as one of the means to

realise equal citizenship.' This is a critical point for people with disabilities and their advocates. Obtaining equal socio-cultural rights (for example, through full and equal human dignity attainable with adequate social security benefits), and obtaining equal political-economic rights (for example, through full and equal justice attainable with an accessible labour market), are mutual goals of disability policy, although they are currently constructed as contradictory. This is particularly evident in Australia, where federal disability policies are underpinned by discourses of disability bifurcated by dominant citizenship debates that revolve around participation versus rights, private versus public or inclusion versus exclusion. Within these models, a person with a disability is an oxymoron.

This article will explore key discourses of liberal citizenship, civic republicanism and various feminist approaches to citizenship through the lens of disability. It will argue that while citizenship theories offer an influential framework for positioning human rights and social justice, as currently envisioned and practiced such theories are inadequate to promote the full and equal participation of people with disabilities. Nancy Fraser's (1997; 1998; 2003) theory of social justice will be drawn upon, as it is suggested that this framework has the potential to offer a more enabling theory of citizenship for differently abled people. Although Fraser does not specifically refer to disability in her work, it is argued here that a two-dimensional conception of justice (embodying the twin policy principles of redistribution and recognition) is imperative, as people with disabilities simultaneously experience misrecognition (for example, marginalised status) and maldistribution of resources (for example, disabling structural barriers) in all socio-cultural and political-economic spheres.

### **Liberal citizenship theory and disability**

Contemporary theories of liberal citizenship often begin with an analysis of T H Marshall's post-war conception of citizenship that focuses on according people a number of citizenship rights. According to Marshall (1963), citizenship is a matter of ensuring that everyone is treated as a full and equal member of society. He offers a tripartite view of citizenship — civil, political and social — that is concerned with notions of liberty and equality achievable through civil and political rights which grant full and equal membership. Citizenship is defined as:

A status bestowed to those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizen against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed. [Marshall 1963, 87.]

For Marshall (1963), the fullest expression of citizenship requires a liberal-democratic welfare state so that civil, political and social rights can be guaranteed to all. The welfare state in Marshall's view ensures that every member of society feels like a full member and is able to participate in and enjoy common life. When any of these rights are withheld or violated, people will be marginalised and unable to participate.

Critics of liberal citizenship have argued that the contemporary contractual nature of a social welfare conditional upon the welfare recipient's duties and obligations is inconsistent with the Marshallian notion of a 'right'. Braithwaite, Gatens and Mitchell (2002), however, argue that Marshall's account does match rights with duties and obligations. In their analysis, Marshall's notion of citizenship is conceived within a genuine framework of reciprocity that is in part constructed with the values of freedom, mutual respect and dignity. They provide clear examples from Marshall where he explicitly refers to one's duties and obligations to a number of various responsibilities. As Marshall states:

If citizenship is invoked in the defence of rights, the corresponding duties of citizenship cannot be ignored ... acts should be inspired by a lively sense of responsibility towards the welfare of the community. [Marshall 1963, 17.]

Despite Marshall's allusions to a number of obligations in his understanding of citizenship, this liberal model is commonly referred to as 'passive citizenship' (Kymlicka and Norman 1994), due to the alleged absence of any obligation to participate in public life. However, a closer reading of Marshall reveals that he argues there are obligations attached to receiving welfare benefits. He (1963) states that social rights imply an absolute right to a certain standard of civilisation which is conditional on the discharge of the general duties of a citizenship. While Marshall did not specifically engage with disability, he believed that social rights enabled what he termed 'the disadvantaged' to enter the mainstream of society and effectively exercise their civil and political rights. Social rights for Marshall range from the 'right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society' (Marshall 1963, 74).

But the liberal view of the citizen-subject is inherently problematic for people with disabilities. The key site for rendering the disabled subject invisible is the universal notion of citizenship as a 'status' and as a set of 'rights', which posits that the citizen-subject can be equal outside of societal structures. This poses problems for people with disabilities because it is often the societal structures which render them oppressed. An individual cannot achieve full participation if

the means to achieve such participation are contributing to the very exclusion they wish to overcome. In other words, Marshall's notion that to withhold rights renders the individual unequal and unable to participate as a citizen-subject (therefore no longer possessing the necessary full status) assumes that equality precedes the rights universally granted, and only by removing such given rights does a person become marginalised. Furthermore, Marshall's notion is underpinned by assumptions that once such rights are granted, the status itself is free of both socio-cultural and political-economic inequalities. This is problematic for the individual who is unable to participate in any citizenship realm due to his or her citizen 'status' being inherently bound in socio-cultural and political-economic injustices. What of the individual who is further marginalised by policies and practices supposedly intended to grant his or her full participation? People with disabilities within a liberal framework cannot achieve full and equal rights to participation and citizenship if they are impeded by a disabling society which embodies policies that, while intended for amelioration of marginalisation, are in fact embedded in structural and attitudinal barriers. This is evident in the ways in which significant reforms to the Australian social security system for people with disabilities contractually link the provision of social security (or in Marshall's terms, 'social rights') to labour force participation, thus further perpetuating the inequalities of an already socially and economically marginalised group.

Liberal welfare regimes in general have seen a move towards a post-welfare policy environment and this 'new welfare', rather than tempering discrimination and injustice, is embedding structural disadvantage. The research literature on contemporary welfare reform in a number of welfare regimes points to the ways in which income support has been redesigned as conditional and contractual, in contrast with previous principles of social rights and entitlements (Pierson 2001; Sainsbury 2001; Macintyre 1999; Harris 2000; Moss 2001; Shaver 2002). It is argued that the welfare policy shift has led to a repositioning of the social contract between citizen and government, placing predominant obligation on the recipient/citizen, rather than on government investment in institutional capacity-building which would facilitate engagement in education, training and labour force participation (McClelland 2002). Furthermore, these policy transformations are underpinned by a shift in the moral and political assumptions embedded in the welfare system such that employment is now considered to be the primary gateway to citizenship and dependence upon income support is seen to be incongruent with citizenship (Yeatman 2000; Moss 2001). This 'new welfare' has largely neglected a commitment to human rights and social justice for people with disabilities, and is promoting an individualised model of citizenship that systematically ignores social, economic and labour market conditions (Parker and Cass 2005).

To hinge social security on labour force participation further perpetuates the inequalities of an already socially and economically marginalised group. People with disabilities within a liberal framework cannot achieve value-free justice or full equality, nor can they ever achieve the status of citizen-subject, as long as the reference point remains an unproblematised individual with capacities assumed to be equal. Within such a framework, the granting of social rights (which assumes the ability to participate equally in civil and political rights) is problematic, because such rights overlook the fact that it is societal structures themselves which are a site for injustice. In the example of social security — which is a social right according to Marshall and a necessary adjunct to rights in the political and civil realms — the ability to access and obtain social security benefits does not remove the multiple and complex barriers which a person with a disability faces. Social rights therefore do not in themselves enable the disabled citizen-subject to compete equally in civil and political society, nor in the economic sphere.

### **Civic republicanism/communitarianism and disability**

An alternative to liberalism is civic republicanism (or communitarianism) and there has been a revival of these philosophical perspectives in response to the rights-based notions found in liberalism. These discourses view citizenship as an activity or as practice, not just as a status. Central to the civic republicanism notion of the citizen is a conception of the individual as not logically prior to society (Oldfield 1994). In civic republican discourse, it is believed that a citizen should undertake certain duties and responsibilities and be loyal to the state rather than to individual interests. Communitarians object to the asocial concept of the self in liberalism, since they view the self as both socially constructed and embedded in a cultural context (Delanty 2002). Civic republicanism has focused on the need to create a political community and a common bond between citizens which closes the differences of class, religion and culture (Siim 2000). This discourse claims that identity is shared within a political community and this identity is seen to stem partly from self-determination and partly from a common history (Oldfield 1990).

Ruth Lister (2003) states that the modern civic republican ideal is of citizenship as an active ongoing engagement in the formal political process. For civic republicanism, political activity is not a means to an end but an end in itself, associated with the pursuit of a common good. Lister notes how some feminists (for example, Young 1990; Phillips 1993; Voet 1998, cited in Lister 2003, 25) have been attracted by civic republicanism's portrayal of citizenship as active political participation and involvement in decision-making; by its potential for collective deliberation in the public sphere for the articulation of the interests of women and 'minority groups'; and by its potential for debating and confronting difference.

Despite this appeal, Lister also notes how feminist writers have largely seen this model of citizenship as problematic, with their critique centring around three key areas: its narrow definition of the 'political' and of the 'citizen', which is underpinned by a rigid separation of public and private spheres; its appeal to universalism and the common good; and the demanding nature of the obligations. Lister argues that the latter criticism of civic republicanism has particular implications for women as they occupy different or competing spaces from men within the public realm. Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that, further to this, there are many other members of civil society (for example, migrants) who do not share the same hegemonic value systems with the majority of the population in sexual, religious and other matters.

This critique is also pertinent for people with disabilities. For people with disabilities to achieve parity of participation and citizenship, what is required is the recognition of both difference and commonality. If the (theoretical and policy practice) space for claiming rights to citizenship involves seeking 'common bonds' among identity of individuals, what then of the differently abled individual? The civic republicanism discourse of citizenship remains an inadequate framework in which to achieve socio-cultural and political-economic rights for people with disabilities. Human rights and social justice cannot be based upon a discourse of identity politics — particularly one that adheres to a 'common trait' — as this ignores not only the differently abled citizen, but also important differences within the category of people with disabilities. Furthermore, as Meekosha and Dowse (1997, 53) argue, the civic republicanism principle of 'active citizenship' requires people to take on responsibilities as well as claiming their rights, and this poses problems for people who have different or competing communities, such as people with disabilities.

In addition, civic republicanism's requirement for duties and responsibilities is underpinned by a large moral component. As Oliver and Heater (1994) note, a citizen is someone who feels moral commitment to the state and to performing the duties associated with the status. This is supported by Dagger (2002), who suggests citizenship is primarily a matter of responsibilities. He argues that there is an ethical dimension to civic republicanism, as the 'good citizen' places the interests of the community ahead of personal interests. Furthermore, inherent in the civic republicanism concept of the citizen is a set of moral standards stressing the public nature of the citizen. These moral components inherent in a model of citizenship are reflected in the ideologies underpinning welfare reform in liberal welfare states like Australia, which has re-emphasised and re-oriented the need for welfare benefits as an individualised 'problem' (or as 'deserving' and 'undeserving'). The citizen is also positioned as having contractual obligations contingent upon participation in the labour market. Thus, the recent shift in welfare ideology, emphasising a moral and

ethical component whereby the citizen has this particular 'obligation' to the state, defines the 'moral duty' of the citizen in a way that is unavailable to people with disabilities.

Civic republicanism cannot account for the disabled citizen. This is most clearly highlighted though the assumption that citizens 'possess the knowledge and skills, the level of wellbeing, amount of time, and the freedoms of speech and association that are all necessary for the practice of citizenship' (Oldfield 1990, 156). This statement is reflective of how a person with a disability would find it difficult to achieve citizen subjectivity, as the tenets within this discourse are founded upon the unproblematised subject. This is further highlighted through the way in which civic republicanism assumes a rough economic equality among citizens (Oldfield 1990, 156). While liberal welfare states such as Australia use income support as one avenue for redressing economic inequalities of marginalised citizens, for people with disabilities it remains an insufficient means to achieve equal participation unless specific measures, such as the extra costs of disability, are taken into account. Additional costs occur in a range of areas — medical, transport, assistive technology, housing and personal assistance, among others. A number of Australian commentators (for example, Cooper 1993; Clear and Gleeson 2002; Parker and Cass 2005; Saunders 2006) have illustrated how these costs are often overlooked in the welfare system, and this hinders the capacity for economic and social participation of persons with a disability. It is evident that both recognition of equality and difference in rights are necessary to achieve social justice for people with disabilities. Policies and discourses that attempt to homogenise citizens will further impede rather than facilitate participation and citizenship.

It is argued here that it is the appeal to commonality among and between citizens that remains a fundamental problem with this discourse for people with disabilities. To use the example of current labour market structures, it is highly unlikely that employment history or the bonds experienced within the workplace would be similar for workers with disabilities and for able-bodied workers. The economic operation of the labour market and the social organisation of work play a crucial part in producing the category of 'disability' and in determining the response to people with disabilities. Oliver (1996) argues that, in the quest for expanded markets and higher profits, capitalists set rigorous standards of physical ability, which result in the exclusion of marginalised groups from areas of community and economic participation — the very same areas that civic republicanism advocates as the realms for the attainment of equal citizenship. By entrenching a notion of full participation in the labour market as the essential basis for adult citizenship, the current policy environment in Australia has paradoxically



marginalised those who are differently abled. In such an environment, the civic republicanism discourse of citizenship will find it difficult to create a space for disability, or for a person with a disability, because the genesis of the 'citizen' is an undifferentiated individual.

### **Key feminist theories of citizenship and disability**

In response to both liberal and civic republican views of citizenship, the feminist literature has made valuable contributions to citizenship discourses and created embodied spaces in which to deconstruct the universalist, male notions. The range of feminist work on citizenship is quite varied and complex, and it is not the aim here to contribute to general feminist debates on citizenship, as there is a large range of valuable feminist literature addressing such an area (for example, for a comprehensive literature review on feminism and citizenship, see Voet 1998; or for discussion on the important issues of ethnicity, race, globalisation and citizenship, see Crenshaw 1991 and Yuval-Davis 1997). Instead, this section attempts to contribute to the citizenship debate by incorporating the neglected area of disability into several key feminist accounts, so as to demonstrate how they remain incomplete for people with disabilities and, in particular, for women with disabilities.

In her explanation of patriarchal institutions, Carol Pateman (1992) offers a radical critique of the concept of universal citizenship in classical political theory. Her work has been widely influential in enabling spaces within citizenship discourses to be inclusive of women. Pateman suggests that women are excluded from politics as a result of the fact that the private/public divide is based upon a male norm. She notes how welfare state legislation was underpinned by the assumption that women contribute through the provision of private welfare — therefore, women from the beginning were denied full citizenship. Pateman argues that the difficulties women face in obtaining full citizenship stem from the 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma', whereby the dual avenues available to women for accessing citizenship are mutually incompatible. For Pateman, the patriarchal understanding of citizenship requires either that women become like men — and so full citizens of the ways in which international and domestic policy discourse and practices deal with the citizenship rights of people with disabilities — or that they continue with private caring work, which is considered to be of little value for citizenship. In her view, within a patriarchal welfare state neither demand can be met.

Pateman believes that a sexually differentiated citizenship which distinguishes between men and women as different but equal individuals is ideal. She states that if both sexes are to be full citizens, 'the meaning of sexual difference has to cease to be the difference between freedom and subordination' (Pateman 1992, 28). Pateman

maintains that women should be included as citizens based upon their caring work and that women should be incorporated into citizenship discourses as 'women' — rather than having a gender-neutral citizenship. The deconstruction of hegemonic patriarchal notions of the citizen-subject by Pateman was a distinctive shift in how citizenship was theorised, as she places the theoretical focus clearly on an embodied subject, markedly different to that of the universal (male) subject.

While this theory has begun the important process of embodying the citizen-subject within citizenship discourses, it remains problematic for people with disabilities — and in particular for women with disabilities, as it presumes that women are a homogenous category, capable of 'caring' tasks, and willing to do such work. This point has been taken up by Mary Dietz (1992), who states that, as long as feminists only focus on social and economic concerns around children, family, schools, work or wages, etcetera, they will not articulate a truly political vision or address the problem of citizenship. This point is also pertinent for people with disabilities, who require equality in both socio-cultural and political-economic realms if they are to achieve parity of participation and citizenship. Citizenship cannot be reformulated to 'fit women', but rather should be deconstructed from the dichotomies upon which it is constructed. A gendered discourse of citizenship is problematic for women who do not fit into the normalised gender, such as women with disabilities. The double oppression which women with disabilities face has been documented in the literature (for example, Asche and Fine 1988; Morris J 1991; Garland-Thomson 1997; Meekosha 1998) and, subsequently, such a gendered theory of citizenship contributes further to the injustices which people with disabilities experience. Meekosha and Dowse (1997) argue that feminist analysis which identifies the separation of the private from the public has not incorporated an examination of people with disabilities. Women with disabilities often inhabit a unique space somewhere between the private and the public, while seen as remaining a 'burden' in both. Further to this, women with disabilities are subject to compulsory sterilisation; experience discrimination in reproductive rights, in motherhood and in family policies; and are often considered to be asexual. Studies have shown these issues to be prevalent in a number of different countries, including Canada (Prilleltensky 2003), Brazil (Block 2002), the United States (Morris J 1997) and Australia (Dowse 2004). People with disabilities are conceived as having neither familial responsibility nor public presence and are not constituted in traditional 'masculine' terms or embraced by feminist critique, which equates care-giving responsibilities as a form of citizenship.

The tensions in feminist scholarship have been addressed by Siim (2000), who states that within citizenship discourse, the debate between gender equality and sexual difference is prominent. This point has been taken up by Kathleen Jones (1998), who

believes that feminists have not articulated a coherent theory of feminist citizenship. She argues that many of the studies on women and citizenship use traditional definitions and measures of political participation which are based on liberal universal notions of the 'male'. Dietz (1992) maintains that feminists need to declare citizenship to be a value which would enable feminists to pursue social and economic concerns through active engagement as citizens in the public world. In Dietz's view, feminist critiques of liberalism which focus on the idea of 'equal access' are problematic, for while they open up some avenues of discourse, they remain linked to the liberal concepts of rights, interests, contracts, individualism.

Ruth Lister (2003, 29), in support of Dietz, suggests that, for an active participatory notion of citizenship to be realistic for women and other groups traditionally marginalised in the political process, it needs to embody a notion of 'the political' which incorporates activities in the public sphere. She offers an alternative view of citizenship premised upon her claim that citizenship is a process not just an outcome, where the struggle for rights is equally as important as the rights obtained. This perspective envisages citizens as active participants in political and welfare institutions rather than passive holders of rights. Lister maintains that the balance between rights and obligations and the nature of each is at the heart of mainstream debates on citizenship. She argues that, while citizenship rights are represented as essentially abstract and universal, it is possible to incorporate notions of diversity and difference into the conceptualisation without sacrificing the principle of common and equal rights which is also necessary for the accommodation of difference. Lister proposes that citizenship should be re-conceptualised through synthesising the rights and participatory traditions via the notion of human agency. She feels that, by embracing elements of the two main historical citizenship traditions, citizenship can emerge as a dynamic concept in which 'process and outcome stand in a dialectical relationship to each other' (Lister 2003, 37). Lister suggests that the idea of human agency as citizenship be conceived as both a status involving a wider range of rights, and a practice involving political participation. To be a full citizen means to be able to enjoy the rights of citizenship necessary for agency and social and political participation, and to act as a citizen involves fulfilling the full potential of the status.

This theory certainly looks promising for people with disabilities because it begins to address the question of how it is not just the outcome of rights that is important (as in the case of liberal and civil republican views), but also the means through which full citizenship is achieved. The disability movement is engaged in a constant struggle to obtain and reaffirm rights and the means for participation. Lister also importantly begins the process of incorporating notions of differentiation into citizenship discourses. Despite these achievements, however, when assessing this

theory through the lens of disability, problems become evident. For people with disabilities, the notion of human agency is problematic. While Lister appears to imply that human agency is a given and constitutes the means for attaining full citizenship, for people with disabilities the ability to exercise human agency is at the core of the struggle for full citizenship and therefore a deconstruction of it is necessary preceding its use to attain citizenship. Furthermore, the concepts of 'status' and 'participation' which Lister utilises have not been sufficiently extricated from their original flawed meanings within the liberal and civic republicanism traditions. It is questionable whether the socio-cultural and political-economic injustices which underpin such concepts can be overcome through binding them with human agency. It is also debatable that the synthesis of two historically problematic theories will actually create one unproblematic theory. For people with disabilities who have been excluded from the very definitions of status and participation, and whose human agency is challenged and constrained and often denied by a range of barriers, more than a synthesis of existing citizenship discourses is required in order to enable a space for their subjectivity — and one that embodies principles of rights and justice.

It is the structural conditions that contribute to rendering people with disabilities less than full citizens, and this is an area which has not been given sufficient attention by feminist theories. Models of citizenship which privilege 'female tasks' such as motherhood and care-giving in the private sphere, or privilege an unproblematised notion of human agency, remain homogenised around an able body and exclude important intra-category differences. This exclusion from key citizenship debates of the historical and social circumstances of individuals has been taken up by Iris Marion Young, who offers a radically alternative view of citizenship. In Young's (1998) view, citizenship requires the development of a framework based not on the assumption of an undifferentiated humanity, but rather on the assumption that there are group differences and some groups are actually or potentially disadvantaged. Young believes that the best way to realise the inclusion and participation of everyone in full citizenship is by the concept of differentiated citizenship. This approach to citizenship has been widely acclaimed by other feminists (for example, Fraser 1997; Siim 2000; Lister 2003), as it offers a rearticulation of citizenship which is inclusive of diversity and difference. Young's theory can be useful as it attempts to be inclusive not just of women, but of other oppressed groups — namely, people with disabilities.

Importantly, Young (1998) raises the point that rights and rules which are universally formulated are blind to differences of race, culture, gender, age or disability and thereby perpetuate rather than undermine oppression. This is the problem evident in both liberal and civil republican discourses of citizenship. Young believes that the universal notions found in contemporary theories of citizenship are problematic as

they place citizenship above particular group and individual differences. In Young's view, there are two key meanings attached to universal citizenship. First, universality is defined according to what citizens have in common as opposed to how they differ. Second, universality presupposes that the laws and rules apply to everyone equally and is therefore blind to individual and group differences. As previously noted, for particular groups such as those with disabilities, it is the norms and laws which can perpetuate rather than eliminate injustices.

The inclusion and participation of everyone in social and political institutions, Young suggests, requires the articulation of special rights which attend to group differences. In seeking a differential theory of citizenship, Young is aware of a contradictory problem that can occur, which she refers to as 'the dilemma of difference'. Young (1998) notes that oppressed and disadvantaged groups seeking full inclusion and participation must continue to deny that there are any essential differences, in order to rule out any justification for being denied equal opportunities to participate in the socio-cultural and political-economy realm. However, Young notes that such groups have also found it necessary to affirm that there are often group-based differences, and that these make the application of a strict principle of equal treatment, especially in competition for positions, unfair because such differences put those groups at a disadvantage. She gives the example of the limited success in winning special rights for people with physical and mental disabilities in the past 20 years, and suggests this is a clear case for attending to the particular needs of different groups when promoting equality in participation and inclusion.

While Young's differentiated citizenship theory has much to offer oppressed groups and individuals — and for people with disabilities it offers a substantial base for obtaining an enabling discourse of citizenship — some key problems persist. Fraser (1997) has been critical of Young's earlier writing for having an essentialist notion of the 'groups' she identifies; for privileging cultural groups; and for attempting to include both cultural and political-economic phenomena. Fraser maintains that a single conception which attempts to encompass several disparate modes of collectivity (such as gender, race, ethnic groups, sexualities and social classes) may result in the loss of important conceptual distinctions. This view is also articulated by Crenshaw (1991), who argues that the key problem with identity politics is that it conflates or ignores intra-group differences. Yuval-Davis (1997, 18) similarly argues that Young's approach can 'easily fall into politics, in which the groups are constructed as homogenous and with fixed boundaries'. For a person with a disability, the assumption of homogeneity overlooks differences within disability. Often disability is wrongly viewed as an overarching category, despite the fact that there are significant variations in the type, degree and experiences of disability, and that these distinctions are underpinned by differences in gender, class, race and/or

sexuality. Fraser (1997) suggests that a group differentiation perspective can mean that one of the modes of collectivity implicitly becomes dominant in the sense that its characteristics will be projected as the characteristics of all social groups. This latter point is crucial for a person with a disability, because it is often the disability which is seen first and foremost while other characteristics, such as gender, sexuality or class, are pushed to the background. An inclusive theory of citizenship for people with disabilities cannot rest upon simple 'group differentiation' and so while Young offers us a hopeful theory, it is only the first step and remains incomplete. As Lister (2003, 82) so aptly states: 'A group differentiated politics, which asks the individual to identify with just one aspect of her identity, runs the same risk of fragmentation at the individual as well as at the group level.'

Fraser (1997) applies Young's theory to African Americans, women and working-class non-professionals, and finds it problematic because disadvantaged social collectivities differ from one another not just in the kinds of disadvantages, as Young maintains, but also in the bases of their differentiation and in the roots of their oppression. Fraser suggests that in some cases, political-economic restructuring entails group de-differentiation, while in other cases it does not. She points out that for non-professional workers, the politics of difference is not as useful as it is for gays and lesbians (where it is crucial for remedying oppression). The most difficult cases, Fraser argues, are those in which both redistribution of resources and recognition of difference which accords parity of respect are required to overcome an oppression stemming from multiple sources of injustice. This is certainly the case for people with disabilities, who suffer from both socio-cultural injustices and political-economic injustices. For people with disabilities, the dilemma of difference that Young draws attention to (while offering no solution) is something which needs to be addressed. It is clearly evident that special rights for particular groups are warranted. However, citizenship discourses need to be detached from notions of identity before they can successfully be rebuilt to be inclusive of people with disabilities. What is needed, then, is a combination of particular rights, as well as restructuring of key justice areas (such as the labour market and social security benefits), to ensure the recognition not just of difference, but of difference that is differently abled. The 'enabling' theory of justice, it is suggested, holds the prospect of partially achieving this.

### **An enabling theory of citizenship**

Fraser's (1997, 1998, 2003) work on redistribution and recognition promises to fill some of the absent spaces that can be found in the above citizenship discourses. Although Fraser overlooks disability, her theory of justice can nonetheless be drawn upon and utilised by people with disabilities and researchers in developing an embodied theory of citizenship. She (1998) proposes two broadly conceived,

analytically distinct understandings of justice. The first is socio-economic and stems from the political-economic structures of society. Injustice on this understanding involves the maldistribution of material resources, and examples include exploitation and economic marginalisation and deprivation. For people with disabilities, a key area of injustice is reduced access to the labour market, and those outside the labour market are marginalised and deprived. The second type of injustice Fraser notes is cultural or symbolic, and this stems from social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Examples include cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect — that is, misrecognition. Both forms of injustice, maldistribution and misrecognition, are pervasive in contemporary societies (although there are differences between them), and both are inherently bound up with processes and practices that systematically disadvantage some groups of people. While Fraser does not include people with disabilities in the groups discussed, it can be argued that people with disabilities are clearly and most obviously systematically disadvantaged through the twin processes of socio-cultural and political-economic practices. Fraser notes that her distinction between economic injustice and cultural injustice is purely an analytical one, and in practice the two are intertwined.

It is Fraser's view that the remedy for economic injustice is political-economic restructuring, which could involve redistributing income, reorganising the division of labour or transforming other basic economic structures. Collectively these are referred to as 'redistribution'. For people with disabilities, the achievement of full and inclusive citizenship cannot be realised without labour market and social security issues being addressed, as these form the twin pillars of disability policy and of justice and citizenship (or injustice and marginalisation) for people with disabilities. In the case of cultural injustice, Fraser believes that the remedy is cultural or symbolic change, which could involve revaluing disrespected identities or recognising and valorising cultural diversity. Collectively, these are referred to as 'recognition'. For people with disabilities, the stigma, ignorance and fear of disability require redressing. While the disability movement has made valuable contributions to promoting differently abled views and interests, it is unfortunate that (as of yet) these have not translated into a full and equal recognition of disability.

Fraser (2003, 36) argues that the normative core of her conception of justice is the notion of parity of participation. According to this norm, 'justice requires the social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers'. For parity of participation to be possible, she argues that at least two conditions must be satisfied: the 'objective' condition and the 'intersubjective' condition. The former condition precludes those institutionalised social arrangements whereby some people are denied, through material deprivation or

exploitation, the means and opportunities to achieve equal citizenship. The latter condition precludes those institutionalised social norms whereby some people are denied the status of equal citizenship (for example, through being perceived as possessing inferior qualities/traits, or by not having their 'difference' acknowledged). People with disabilities are denied both the means and the opportunities to achieve equal citizenship, and the status of equal citizenship. Fraser suggests that the objective condition of participation highlights the political-economic structures of society, and brings into focus concerns associated with discourses and policies of redistribution (or maldistribution). Conversely, the intersubjective condition highlights culturally defined hierarchies of status, and brings into focus concerns associated with the discourses and policies of recognition (or misrecognition).

This article argues that if people with disabilities are to achieve parity of participation and citizenship, the twin principles of recognition (via difference) and redistribution (via social equality) are necessary simultaneously, which can be potentially problematic for policy discourse and practice. Fraser (1998) states that recognition claims often take the form of calling attention to the specificity of some groups and thus tend to promote group differentiation. In contrast, redistribution claims call for abolishing unequal and inequitable economic arrangements which underpin unequal access to resources (both material and symbolic) by specific groups, and thus tend to promote group de-differentiation. This means the politics of recognition and redistribution have mutually contradictory aims to the extent that the former promotes group differentiation whereas the latter undermines it. Fraser rightly notes how the two kinds of claims thus stand in tension with each other and can interfere with or even work against one another. However, she believes that this is a false antithesis and that the tension can be resolved by a re-framing of redistribution and recognition.

The contradictory aims of redistribution and recognition mirror the tensions currently constructed by government policy in employment programs and social security benefits for people with disabilities. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2003, 3) constructs these as 'twin but contradictory goals' and acknowledges that 'how to reconcile these twin goals has yet to be resolved'. This inherent problem is also recognised by Fraser (although not in relation to disability), who states:

The redistribution-recognition dilemma is real. There is no neat theoretical move by which it can be wholly dissolved or resolved. The best we can do is try to soften the dilemma by finding approaches that minimise conflicts between redistribution and recognition in cases where both must be pursued simultaneously. [Fraser 1998, 451.]



Rather than minimising these policy tensions, the current restructuring of the welfare state in Australia has further entrenched such policy tensions. In one of the few qualitative studies that has been undertaken in Australia with recipients of the Disability Support Pension, Alan Morris (2006) found that people experience a number of difficulties in attempting to enter (or re-enter) the labour market, including discriminatory attitudes, difficult architecture and inflexible workplaces. Morris argues that the recent welfare-to-work reforms are likely to reduce labour market participation and increase reliance on income support — which is at odds with both the intentions of the reform and the principles of social citizenship and justice. By aiming to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying social arrangements that generate them, the welfare system in Australia fails to be inclusive of measures in the social security arrangements that redress the causes of poverty or that account for the extra costs of disability. This problem is being further exacerbated under the welfare restructuring of the current conservative federal government, which has increasingly placed emphasis on independent market participation as the essence of adult citizenship — a condition that may be very difficult for people with a disability to attain, particularly if structural barriers to labour force entry are not addressed and workplace conditions are not adapted to take account of differing abilities.

Fraser's framework of justice is useful for locating issues of disability and citizenship, because a two-dimensional conception of justice is imperative if people with disabilities are to achieve parity of participation and citizenship. People with disabilities simultaneously experience misrecognition (for example, discriminatory attitudes) and maldistribution (for example, unequal access to the labour market) in all socio-cultural and political-economic spheres. If policy responses are to redress effectively the marginalisation of people with disabilities, then such policies must aim to ameliorate injustices at the objective (structural) level and at the intersubjective (status) level. Neither alone is sufficient. One means of achieving this is via the twin policy principles of redistribution and recognition: where welfare reform and human rights practices integrate principles of social equality with a recognition of difference. In addition, policies and legislation for people with disabilities must address the underlying causes of maldistribution and misrecognition if parity of participation and citizenship is to be achieved. Fraser (2003) argues that the key problem with affirmative strategies (such as social security and anti-discrimination laws) for redressing injustices is that they aim to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying social arrangements that generate them. People with disabilities experience human rights violations and injustices in a number of participation areas, and affirmative policy strategies, while necessary, are insufficient in themselves if they fail to also address the underlying injustices which constrain parity of participation and citizenship.

This is what is missing from the welfare agenda in Australia. People with disabilities require income support arrangements that are accompanied by strong and sustained investment in education, training and subsidised employment programs, and by policy action to establish workplace practices which take account of the particular circumstances of employees with disabilities. Without such additional facilitative policies, welfare reforms that encompass increased stringency in disability income support law and its administration as a means for increasing labour market participation are most likely to exacerbate social and economic exclusion, rather than promote participation. It is evident that (in Fraser's terms) the new social security arrangements in Australia contain principles neither of recognition (recognising, respecting and giving legitimacy to differential abilities for market participation), nor of redistribution (having social security arrangements that allow for an equal standard of living and compensating for the extra costs of disability).

## **Conclusion**

While history has demonstrated a clear shift in attitudes about and policies for disability, a person with a disability remains less than a full and equal citizen. The rapidly changing political environment to be found in advanced capitalist societies like Australia is demanding that all citizens in the post-war welfare state be self-reliant. This is problematic for people with disabilities, as the socio-cultural and political-economic realms are experienced through differently abled subjectivities. Conceptions of citizenship are influenced not only by changes at the national level, but also by international shifts in disability discourse and practices. This is evident in United Nations human rights treaties/instruments, which have been drawn upon to accord symbolic and material rights for people with disabilities both internationally and domestically. While an analysis of disability and citizenship within the UN system is beyond the scope of this paper (and has been undertaken by this author elsewhere: see Parker 2006), it is important to note here briefly that international norms concerning people with disabilities are useful only to the extent that they can set common standards for domestic disability legislation. Both international and national policy discourse and practices must account for multiple sources of discrimination and injustice if the rights and citizenship of people with disabilities are to be advanced within a social justice framework.

As highlighted in this article, citizenship discourses can be powerful ways in which individuals may be accorded or denied rights of recognition, redistribution and participation. But these discourses are inextricably linked with notions of discrimination and marginalisation and, for the most part, societies have not done enough to enable those with disabilities, who have a clear capacity for moral freedom, to exercise their obligation (and their right) of self-determination. As

Meekosha and Dowse (1997) note, major citizenship debates are influenced by race, ethnicity, class or gender identity, but all neglect disability and people with disabilities. While citizenship theory offers an influential framework for positioning human rights and social justice, as currently envisioned and practiced such theories are inadequate to explore and establish signposts towards the full and equal participation of people with disabilities. The key citizenship discourses outlined in this paper are theoretically and practically limited for people with disabilities because they are underpinned by a notion that all individuals have an equal capacity for self-sufficiency. The citizen is situated as an abstract and unproblematised subject with inherent human rights preceding the citizen-status. However, for people with disabilities, rights can be one means in which to realise equal citizenship. People with disabilities require a combination of particular human rights as well as a restructuring of key social justice areas (such as labour market and social security) prior to equal citizenship.

If parity of participation, citizenship, human rights and social justice are to be achieved for people with disabilities in all socio-cultural and political-economic realms, then policy discourse and practice must begin by redressing injustices at the objective (structural) and intersubjective (status) levels simultaneously. One means of achieving this is via the twin policy principles of redistribution and recognition (adapting and extending Fraser's theory of social justice). Despite decades of reform and restructuring — which have seen the introduction of disability rights, anti-discrimination and social security laws and policies both internationally and nationally — and despite efforts by disability advocates to promote parity of participation and citizenship, people with disabilities continue to be subjected to widespread discrimination and marginalisation. The dismantling of structural and attitudinal barriers that constrain human rights and social justice for people with disabilities requires laws and policies that enable defensible claims to be made successfully against misrecognition and maldistribution. However, the trajectory of welfare reform in Australia poses significant challenges to enabling the promise of equality, rights and justice for citizens with a disability to be realised. ●

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