

1.03-AU10-4812

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

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ABSTRACT

Social solidarity is an unfinished area in the research on rights theory. My research interprets it in the sense of citizenship which provides an important solidarity resource for a society full of differences. Citizenship, related to the problem of how to define the relationship between citizens as well as the relationship between citizens and state, is a concept of intersubjectivity. It is, in essence, an exclusive concept, but this exclusion bears a kind of solidarity illusion with the concept of inclusion. This inclusive illusion strengthens social solidarity through the configuration of rights and obligations and identity construction. In our day, the nation–state system and its ethnic cultural background are the boundaries between the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of citizenship. Therefore, to ensure more people can obtain citizenship, we must break through the nation–state system and update citizenship to accord with human rights.

Keywords: Citizenship, Social Solidarity, Relationship

INTRODUCTION

In both the field of thought and the practice of history, there exists an essential theme that seems to be common sense. The theme is the relationship between self and others, individual and society, unity and alienation – namely, how we live in harmony with each other. The theme in question is actually about social solidarity, focusing on how the transformation from “I” to “We” can ensue.

The central question of social solidarity is: how can we co-exist? The issue presses heavily on us in the 21st century for an answer. In most countries and regions, the issue manifests itself as the following aspects: the problems of social inequality and injustice caused by the unfair distribution of social resources; the problems of ethnic identity caused by ethnic differences and immigration politics; the problems of class differentiation caused by the gap in wealth and different degrees of education; the problems of cultural identity caused by multicultural conflict and collision; the problems of body and gender politics caused by sexism and homosexuality; the problems of the insufficient rights of livelihood and democracy caused by different access to social, economic and cultural resources; and the crisis of confidence between governments and citizens, or between citizens, caused by power rent-seeking and market competition in our transformational society. So many such differences exist today; is there one “SOCIETY”? How can social solidarity be possible? The differences in question are expressed in the language of rights and obligations, even of citizenship, which demands the recognition and redistribution of social resources. We, as legal philosophers, have the responsibility to respond to such issues.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY: THE UNFINISHED AREAS OF RIGHTS RESEARCH

Society is the basis of the study of rights. Rights can make sense only in the context of social relations and social systems. It is necessary to study the issue of identity, which belongs to the field of social relations and social systems, because the identity of the right subjects affects the acquisition and enjoyment of rights. The law is the study of the rights and obligations resulting from the relationship of identity (social relations). The struggle and

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conflict of legal rights are in essence the struggle and conflict of the identity, because of the fact that rights are based on identity. In this sense, it is safe to say that where there is no identity, there are no rights. In pre-modern times, identity was characterised by inequality, such as the relationship between aristocrats and slaves, feudal lords and vassals, kings and subjects, and so on. In modern times, the identity relationship between human beings has gradually been becoming equal. Equality characterises the identity between citizens. The identity of the citizen is the premise that a man can acquire citizenship.

Social solidarity has always been an important subject in political philosophy, sociology and anthropology, and is also a significant theme in legal sociology. legal philosophers focus on the issues of whether society can be united and how society is united. In the fields of political philosophy, sociology and anthropology, the resources to realise social solidarity may be some kinds of ideas, ideology, religious norms, ethics, social customs and institutions, etc. (Marshall, 1950; Turner, 1994; Mann, 1996; Bingzhong, 2006; Xiaozhang, 2009). In the field of legal sociology, it is through the social control of law that social integration and solidarity can be achieved (Hongyi, 2000; Quanying, 2009). But in the study of social solidarity, few scholars study the issue of social solidarity from the perspective of citizenship. And the social ties or social relevance between individual and society established through citizenship are ignored to some extent by scholars.

Citizenship is one of the core concepts in political philosophy, and many scholars have probed into this issue deeply. Among them, both Parsons and Turner have explicitly mentioned the issue of the relationship between citizenship and social solidarity, but it is a pity they have not pursued systematic, in-depth research on it. Alexander (1992, p. 289) offered a criticism of sociology in which the issue of solidarity in civil society was raised:

“Sociologists have written much about the social forces that create conflict and polarise society, about interests and structures of political, economic, racial, ethnic, religious, and gender groups. But they have said very little about the construction, destruction, and deconstruction of civic solidarity itself. They are generally silent about the sphere of fellow feeling that makes society into society and about the processes that fragment it.”

The issue of civic solidarity is actually the issue of social solidarity, which should not and cannot be ignored.

THE BASIC THEORIES OF CITIZENSHIP

The brief review above indicates that few scholars have conducted special or systematic studies on the relationship between citizenship and social solidarity. This paper attempts to study the relationship between social solidarity and citizenship that recognises and requires the redistribution of social resources. The traditional studies of civil rights do not effectively respond to the issue of social solidarity. The current research on citizenship and civil right protection practices mainly focuses on the issue of how to satisfy the rights of individual citizens from vulnerable groups, which usually is a kind of temporary satisfaction for them, because satisfaction of the rights in question does not mean that citizenship is achieved. As a result, the citizenship of vulnerable groups is not recognised in their community, and the vulnerable groups are still marginalised. This intensifies the solidification and division of social classes. This is actually a kind of palliative approach and appeasement that neglects both the social aspect and social integration function of rights; the latter refers to the social solidarity dimension of citizenship. Social solidarity is a central proposition in social theory. It respects social diversity, and at the same time maintains the unity of society so that society does not divide.

This article, therefore, redefines citizen rights according to the meaning of citizenship which provides an important element of solidarity for the existence of a society with

diversity. Parsons (1971, p. 22) understands citizenship as full membership of the community, and points out that there is a kind of relevance between the citizenship and social solidarity: “The development of modern institutions of citizenship has made possible broad changes in the pattern of nationality as a basis of the solidarity of the societal community. In early modern society, the strongest foundation of solidarity was found where the three factors of religion, ethnicity and territoriality coincided with nationality. In fully modern societies however, there can be diversity on each basis, religious, ethnic, and territorial, because the common status of citizenship provides a sufficient foundation for national solidarity.” Turner (2000, p. 37) has a similar opinion: “Citizenship provides a form of solidarity, if you like a kind of social glue, that holds societies together which are divided by social class, by gender, by ethnicity and by age groups. The solidarity of the political community of modern societies is provided by citizenship, which works as a form of civic religion.”

Citizenship does not just involve civil rights. From the perspectives of legal sociology and political philosophy, it also refers to the institutionalisation of the relationship between citizens on the one hand, and between citizens and nation on the other; it consists of the membership and legal identity of one citizen within a nation, and in the rights and obligations that closely connect with the membership and identity in question. “Citizenship gives individuals and groups access to resources in society. These legal rights and obligations, once they are institutionalized as formal status positions, give people formal entitlements to scarce resources in society, basically economic resources such as social security, health-care entitlements, retirement packages, or taxation concessions, but also including access to culturally desirable resources (within a traditional liberal framework) such as rights to speak your own language in the public arena or rights relating to religious freedoms. These resources therefore include both the traditional economic resources of housing, health, income, employment and so forth, and also cultural resources such as education, religion and language. There are also political resources, which are related to access to sources of power in society, rights to vote, rights to participate politically and so forth. In summary, it may be conceptually parsimonious to think of three types of resource: economic, cultural and political” (Brown et al., 2000, p. 36).

This article regards this kind of civil rights as a force for social transformation and examines how the relationship between citizenship and social solidarity has evolved over time. This evolution includes two aspects. On the one hand, it reveals the conditions under which the state’s allocation of citizenship will lead to social schism, and the conditions by which the state’s allocation of citizenship will lead to the promotion of social solidarity. On the other, it shows how social schism and social solidarity are counteractive to citizenship, so that citizens’ rights and obligations are evolving. That is to say, this article probes both into how citizenship smooths the way for social solidarity, and also how citizenship hinders social solidarity. Namely, the article examines the interplay between citizenship and social solidarity, the effect of citizenship on social solidarity, and the influence of social solidarity on citizenship.

In the west, it is a central theme in the fields of philosophy and politics. Shklar (1991, p. 1) believes “There is no notion more central in politics than citizenship, and none more variable in history, or contested in theory.” Citizenship focuses on what a citizen can do, and it is a concept of democratic practice in action. There are “two traditions and interpretations of the nature of citizenship. There are the civic republican style, which places its stress on duties, and the liberal style, which emphasises rights. Now, despite the former’s origins in classical antiquity and therefore its longevity, it is the liberal form that has been dominant for the past two centuries and remains so today” (Heater, 1999, p. 4). Habermas (1995, pp. 261-262) also summarises these two seemingly contradictory traditions from the perspective of legal philosophy: “The role of the citizen is given an individualist and instrumentalist reading

in the liberal tradition of natural law starting with Locke, whereas a communitarian and ethical understanding of the same has emerged in the tradition of political philosophy that draws upon Aristotle. From the first perspective, citizenship is conceived in analogy with the model of received secure membership in an organization which secures a legal status. From the second, it is conceived in analogy with the model of achieved membership in a self-determining ethical community. In the one interpretation, the individuals remain external to the state, contributing only in a certain manner to its reproduction in return for the benefits of organizational membership. In the other, the citizens are integrated into the political community like parts into a whole, that is, in such a manner that they can only from their personal and social identity in his horizon of shared traditions and inter-subjectively recognized institutions. In the former, the citizens are no different than private persons who bring their pre-political interests to bear *vis-à-vis* the state apparatus, whereas in the latter, citizenship can only be realized as a joint practice of self-determination.”

The core of citizenship is inclusion and exclusion, which are different in different historical periods. The connotation of inclusion and exclusion is expressed through whether citizens have the right to participate in the political affairs of the polis. In modern times, through a membership system based on nationality in a given nation–state, citizenship elevates human beings from a feudal hierarchy to equality; universal and homogeneous citizens come into being, and being and/or not being a member of the nation–state is therefore the sign of inclusion and exclusion. In contemporary times, the basis, body and nature of modern citizenship are challenged by globalisation, post-modern tendencies and multiculturalism. Citizens are no longer an expression of a universal and homogeneous identity, but individual citizens with various differences expressed through a number of aspects, such as ethnic group, race, culture, and so on. These differences turn the minority with some specific features regarding ethnicity, race or culture into “second-class citizens” or the underlying subaltern. Then new changes take place in the criteria of inclusion and exclusion, and nation–states no longer undertake the mission of tolerating all members of society and become the main basis for exclusion.

THE CONTEMPORARY PARADOX OF MODERN CITIZENSHIP

Paradoxically, the extreme development of modernity and the advent of the era of individualism have led to the disintegration of social solidarity. As Mayhew (1990, p. 296) points out: “Modernization, then, becomes a process of dissolving communal. Social mobility, Population density, secular attitudes and above all, the market nexus destroy face-to-face personal ties and loyalties and replace them with the more tenuous, brittle, selfish interpersonal interests created by trade, urban life, and large-scale association.” The basic symbol of modernity is the acquisition of subjectivity and the birth of the self. This makes “ego” an “abstract legislator”, which excludes “everyone” outside the “ego” as an alienated “Other”. Therefore, “the interpersonal relationship becomes a kind of the mutual objective relationship of each other, from which it is impossible to establish a solidarity of mutual recognition between the subjects” (He, 2007). The objective logic that distinguishes extreme “self” from “Other” becomes the most hegemonic ruling principle in modern times, deconstructing the “We”. It is the secret of the schism of modern society.

“Various struggles based upon identity and difference (whether sexual, ‘racial’, ‘ethnic’, diasporic, ecological, technological, or cosmopolitan) have found new ways of articulating their claims as claims to citizenship understood not simply as a legal status but as political and social recognition and economic redistribution” (Isin and Turner, 2002, p. 2). In other words, in modern times, rather than merely focusing on citizenship as a legal right, there is now agreement that citizenship must also be defined as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights. Being

politically engaged means practicing substantive citizenship, which in turn implies that members of a polity always struggle to shape its fate (Isin and Turner, 2002, p. 4). This shape provides actually contemporary pluralistic society with a new form of citizenship in the background of modernity, globalisation and multiculturalism, to rebuild political community and social solidarity relationships. This new form of citizenship must have the capacity of tolerating and recognising differences, and the ability to respond effectively to differences. This raises the question of what kind of citizenship is needed in contemporary society.

Kiymlicka and Norman (1994, p. 369-370) said: “Citizenship is not just a certain status, defined by a set of rights and responsibilities. It is also an identity, an expression of one’s membership in a political community. Marshall saw citizenship as a shared identity that would integrate previously excluded groups within British society and provide a source of national unity. He was particularly concerned to integrate the working classes, whose lack of education and economic resources excluded them from the ‘common culture’ which should have been a ‘common possession and heritage’ (Marshall 1965, p. 101-2). It has become clear, however, that many groups – blacks, women, Aboriginal peoples, ethnic and religious minorities, gays and lesbians – still feel excluded from the ‘common culture’, despite possessing the common rights of citizenship. Members of these groups feel excluded not only because of their socioeconomic status but also because of their sociocultural identity-their ‘difference’.” This cultural difference is expressed as the language of citizenship requiring recognition; we call it “multicultural citizenship”. Multicultural citizenship “signals a general concern for reconciling the universalism of rights and membership in liberal nation–states with the challenge of ethnic diversity and other ascriptive ‘identity’ claims” (Joppke, 2002, p. 245). In other words, “How can we construct a common identity in a country where people not only belong to separate political communities, but also belong in different ways – that is, some are incorporated as individuals and others through membership in a group? Taylor calls this ‘deep diversity’ and insists that it is ‘the only formula’ on which a multination state can remain united (Taylor, 1991). However, he admits that it is an open question what holds such a country together. Indeed, the great variance in historical, cultural, and political situations in multination states suggests that any generalised answer to this question will likely be overstated. It might be a mistake to suppose that one could develop a general theory about the role of either a common citizenship identity or a differentiated citizenship identity in promoting or hindering national unity (Taylor, 1992b, pp. 65-66; Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, p. 377). The realisation of social solidarity has no universal solution in the world and must be combined with the practice of the struggle for citizenship. Inclusion and exclusion are two sides of the citizenship system, so that we cannot ignore one side when we discuss the other. However, this does not mean that citizenship in practice will be equal and balanced in the social consequences of inclusion and exclusion. Citizenship is, in essence, an exclusive concept, but this exclusion bears a kind of solidarity illusion with the concept of inclusion. This inclusive illusion strengthens social solidarity through the configuration of rights and obligations and identity construction. In fact, the nature of citizenship is exclusion; citizenship is only the result of enlarging citizenship coverage to the population through state grants or underlying struggles. That is to say, inclusion only strengthens and overcomes exclusion, and the exclusive nature of citizenship has not changed. But the significance of inclusion in citizenship is that it regulates and leads the development direction of citizenship. Here, we can see there is a tension characterised simultaneously by conformity and conflict between the exclusive essence of citizenship and social solidarity (the inclusive orientation of citizenship).

CONCLUSION

The fact that the nature of citizenship is characterised simultaneously by inclusion and exclusion results in the fact that citizenship is rigidly limited within the modern nation–state system. It treats citizens as citizens of a nation–state rather than as citizens of the world. Both the exclusion of citizens by national boundaries and through the ethnic culture’s discrimination against and exclusion of heterogeneous cultures as the foundation of one nation–state impede the progress and development of citizenship. I believe that the development of the citizenship system should transform from the nation–state to the world, from citizenship to human rights, and ultimately actualise the solidarity of human society as a whole. This is not an unattainable utopia, but an urgent need and an inevitable choice for the realisation of the harmonious coexistence of human beings as a whole.

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