Citizenship

Citizenship is a status granted to all integral members of a community, as it is defined in the classical study of T.H. Marshall (1963), "Citizenship, Social Class and Status". Citizenship is a general principle of justice that has a normative function in the organisation of the political system and it is contemporary to the development of the modern state and the capitalistic mode of production. In the modern state, power is exercised on behalf of citizens who must legitimate political authority. The expansion of citizenship is part of the process of democratisation of the political system. It is considered as a central attribute to democracy since *equality is increased inasmuch as the scope of citizenship benefits is enlarged and more people have access to this status.

Paradoxically, the political status of citizenship was spread out in conjunction with an economic system founded on class differentiation, based on property. While social class is a system rooted in economic inequalities, the status of citizenship assures the same rights and duties to all that have been granted it. Marshall's thesis is that the two systems are compatible because, although citizenship represents a principle of equity, it also legitimises the inequalities of class structure. Therefore, citizenship could remodel the class system.

Equality is neither based on human nature - where differences exist - or on the economic situation of modern societies. Common identity is a political and juridical construct necessary to assure social cohesion among individuals integrated in the political community and hence legitimise the exercise of political power.

There is no universal principle which could define citizens attributes, their rights and duties. Therefore, citizenship is, more precisely, a political and juridical hypothesis which can be generically translated as "the right to have rights". Each society defines the criteria for *inclusion and, consequently, for *exclusion in the status of citizenship, as well as the package of benefits and obligations associated with it. The more generic criteria are linked to nationality, since citizenship status is only attributed to those whose nationality is that of a particular country. Citizenship has proved to be an effective means of securing national identity and of creating a new principle of collectivism that is nationalism. Thus, citizenship rights have played an important role in the state-building process. Citizenship served the purposes of the state insofar as the increasing administrative power came to depend less on the use of force and more on co-operative forms of political control.

Citizenship is a complex concept which comprises several dimensions or components. The civic component of citizenship presumes the existence of a political national community where the individual is included and shares with others the same system of beliefs and attitudes towards public powers and rules, as well as the same set of rights and moral or legal obligations. It also includes the feeling of belonging to a community and generates a link of the individual with this particular community. Citizenship identity is made up of civic virtues such as the generous and sympathetic attitudes towards those in the same condition. It

also includes the public responsibilities of each individual in the civil society towards the political system and the state.

As a public dimension of the individual, citizenship postulates a model of integration and sociability. It is based on trust and confidence in the rules and institutions. Whereas in small communities trust is a product of personal relations, in complex societies it is acquired via the mechanisms of socialisation, through the transmission of civic values such as public responsibility and tolerance. Confidence in the institutions and efficacy of the system of incentives and sanctions are also required to enforce social reliance. In addition, a balanced distribution of basic information and political resources is essential to generate a more inclusive public sphere.

A natural value is attributed to political participation since active citizenship is seen as the core of democracy, as well as an output of the actual democratic participation. Nonetheless, nowadays the predominance of individualistic values of consumption may reconsider this republican ideal of political participation. Political participation, on the other hand, is currently understood as the necessary cost to preserve private life, thus threatening the fundamentals of social cohesion and solidarity. Since the traditional bases of sociability and solidarity, namely religion, family and community structures are undergoing rapid decline, there is a current trend to reduce the civil society capacity of articulation.

The civic dimension of citizenship also presupposes the existence of a basic degree of political *equality and freedom among those included under this status. Citizen equals citizen. Nevertheless, there is no agreement about a common meaning for equality and freedom. While some rate freedom prior to equality, equality precedes liberty to others. For liberal thinkers, liberty is the most important value and equality is only desirable if it does not represent a restrictive boundary to individual freedom. Therefore, equality remains limited to natural conditions (e.g. born equal) and to opportunities to develop individual potentialities (e.g. primary education) because both are compatible with liberty. Social democrats, on the other hand, defend an assured minimum vital to all citizens, under the principle of equality of results, which is totally denied by liberals. This redistributive compromise requires state intervention through public policies. Critics argue that the application of this principle through *social policies has resulted both in the creation of bureaucratic structures and a heavier fiscal burden which restrains individual liberty and reduces stimulus to invest and work. Moreover, it has created a culture of dependency which generates passive clients who rely on bureaucratic protection.

Sen (1992) introduced the notion of capacity in order to dissolve the false opposition between equality and liberty, since one can only talk about freedom when there are instruments to achieve it as well. Also equality requires the necessary resources to be achieved. Therefore, liberty is inserted into the possible application fields of equality the same way as equality is part of the possible distributive frameworks of liberty.

The citizenship egalitarian ethos took an explicitly normative character, at first, against the institutionalised inequalities of the *anciens régimes,* as part of the bourgeoisie demands for new productive and commercial rules*.* Furthermore, it

surpassed the self-interested radicalism of the bourgeoisie. Citizenship and liberalism then merged irreversibly, thus establishing the rule of law as essential to effective equality.   The concept of citizenship equality was progressively located within a legal framework and amalgamated to the notion of possession of rights. Indeed, the same contradictions between liberty and equality loom when considering citizenship rights. Norbert Bobbio (1990) identifies an antinomy in the core of the citizenship concept, between rights that imply liberty and rights that demand powers.

Civil rights, also identified as first-generation rights, are evenly applied to all citizens and connote a set of individual liberties such as owning property, freedom of speech, thought and assembly, among others. Considered as negative liberties, these were set as part of the process of the bourgeoisie revolution and represent limits to state intervention and authority's arbitrary measures. They are a territory the state cannot invade.

The second-generation rights, i.e., the political rights, guarantee the individual liberty of organisation and the right to be represented in the political system. Both civil and political rights represent universal claims which are amenable to formal expression in the rule of law.

Social rights are also called third-generation rights. Rather than individual freedom they demand public intervention in order to assure users' access to and utilisation of social services. The social rights are claims to benefits guaranteed by the state and provided by its administrative apparatus. Moreover, in this case, concrete people are being considered - e.g. children, women, and elderly people - instead of a generic individual.

Furthermore, social rights are fiscally constricted and require distributional decisions. In addition to that, they are not compatible with massive disparities of wealth and income. These are the reasons why social rights have never been broadly disseminated across the globe, as were civil and political rights. Bobbio stated this difference in terms of the antinomy between equality and liberty, that is, the more you increase people power the more you reduce individual liberty.

Recently, with the emergence of the fourth-generation rights, known as diffuse rights, there was a rupture within the individualistic perspective of citizenship. These rights, related to environment preservation, have a collective nature and can not be personally appropriated. Since they are diffuse, they can not be limited to a specific national territory either. Therefore, they require a new institutional supra-national framework. So far, citizenship has been defined as the membership of a national political community and citizenship rights have been expressed in nationally specific laws. Only human rights overcome this national context and give a moral framework to politics.

Critics identify the reduction of civic culture – passive citizenship - as a consequence of downgrading the original status, since it would merely mean the portability of some rights. Critics also point out the *welfare state as responsible for transforming the citizenship political status in the condition of a client eligible to some package of benefits. This phenomenon, known as the clientalisation of the citizens' role, is particularly attributed to the expansion of social rights.

Nonetheless, the introduction of social rights as part of the citizenship status has deeply transformed this liberal concept by introducing elements of popular interests in the political arena and assuring the state guarantee of social benefits. The trajectory of citizenship development alludes to its institutional dimension. Each element or right included in this status required the addition of an institutional component to the political system. Tribunals and the judiciary system were necessary to guarantee civil rights; massive political parties and electoral systems correspond to the expansion of political rights; and public social services were developed to assure the exercise of social rights. These institutional components of citizenship were also responsible for a profound transformation in the state apparatus as well as its expansion towards new areas of intervention.

Therefore, the amplification of citizenship represented an expansion of the state and an enormous change in the relationship between state and society. In this process, many interests of dominated classes were incorporated to the state agenda and new services and sectors became under state control, regulation and/or provision. Consequently, there is a historical dimension of citizenship, since it is always in a process of construction.

Nonetheless, the stress on the historical dimension will vary according to two distinct conceptual approaches to citizenship. The first approach claims that citizenship has a normative legal and political content that is universal, although it recognises the context of emergence as linked to the process of modernisation and the experiences of the Enlightenment. The second approach describes citizenship as a result of practical experiences of peculiar people. Rights are seen as a result of a particular history and represent an expression of values, culture, class struggle and institutional framework. Nevertheless, it is not easy to harmonise the two approaches. In spite of their differences, both of them - the normative and the particular- consider, in a certain way, the historical dimension of citizenship. Nevertheless, there is not an inexorable and ascendant evolution of citizenship.

Based on the English case Marshall states that civil rights were stabilised in the 18th century, political rights were expanded through universal suffrage in the 19th century and universal social rights were only assured in the middle of the 20th century. The first measures of social protection for the poor were considered in contradiction to the citizenship status, since the free individual was not supposed to receive any kind of protection that could generate dependency. Consequently, the protected poor lost the right to move out of the parish where they worked, which generated a phenomenon named "second servitude" (Polanyi, 1944).

In other countries, with a different political culture, it was easier to establish social rights for workers. But, in many cases, social rights were defined by the person's insertion in the labour market, thus generating a "regulated citizenship" (Santos, 1979). In this case, social rights were assured to workers to prevent their increasing of political power.

In any case, the development of citizenship is conjugated to the expansion of the national state sovereignty and the process of building its administrative power. Nonetheless, the conquest of citizen's rights and the fight for inclusion in the political community is a historical process where different groups, classes and

movements were involved. The first forms of legal citizenship were often elitist in constitution and restricted in scope. Moreover, in many situations citizens enjoy equality before law but are not actually able to use it. Therefore, differences between rights-in-principle and rights-in-practice must also be considered (Foweraker and Landman, 1997). However, this gap only matters if the normative content of citizenship is taken into consideration.

The normative approach tends to see civil and political rights as universal and, thus, normative, whereas social rights are particular to each society. Nevertheless, in any case, the discourse of citizen rights serves as a source of bounding and a set of tools used to forge unity, required for social struggle.

Considering the actual demand for deliberative democracy, one can see it as another political right that could be incorporated into the citizenship status. The combination of representative and deliberative democracy requires new operational instruments and call for a further development of the institutional apparatus.

As pointed out above, there is a permanent tension between the components of citizenship as a consequence of differences in its philosophical foundations. Recently, the cut down on welfare state expansion, as part of the economic measures to downsize the state and reduce fiscal crisis, shows the conflictive dynamics of citizenship development. Inasmuch as citizenship is deeply embedded in the democratic political culture, the present reforms do not represent a danger of regression. Notwithstanding, in those countries where citizenship is less rooted in the political culture, there is actually a tendency to lower citizenship expansion.

Presently, a crucial challenge to citizenship is due to the recent colossal changes in the role of the national state, as a consequence of the economic process of globalisation. Commodities circulate more freely each day in spite of national boundaries while citizenship remains a national status limited to the political domain of each country. With the creation of regional blocks, this issue is being partially resolved at a regional level. Political power increasingly circulates in supra-national structures. However, there is an inverse movement in this case: while citizenship demands increase and expand in content and coverage, the political power of national states becomes more and more limited. The crescent gap between the national character of citizenship and the international dimension of political power poses new challenges to democratic governance. Thus, there is an increasing claim for a new international institutional and legal framework in order to achieve a new balance among citizenship, national states and international institutions.

The possibility of building a global civil society with its correspondent global citizenship can also be visualised as an effect of globalisation. Transnacional social movements are seen as the germ of the formation of a global civil society.

Citizenship faces another critical defiance related to the construction of a plural and more inclusive public sphere, capable of going beyond tolerance towards reciprocity and inclusion. The necessity to consider the differences within society is postulated as the possibility to reinvigorate citizenship and rebuild democratic proceedings. However, citizenship was developed both as an egalitarian concept

and as a base for the construction of a shared identity whereas the individual vested with citizen's rights is nothing but an abstract figure, a political construct. The claim for a new foundation for citizenship, based on differences, turns this construction upside down. Instead of generic individuals, the inclusion based on differences discusses underprivileged groups and the indispensable specific procedures to assure their inclusion.

Critics of universal citizenship argue that universality implies treating homogeneously people with distinct social and economic positions and resources. Consequently, universal treatment favours one group in detriment of others whose interests are excluded from the political arena. The proposal is to accept, instead of denying differences in order to assure citizenship in an inclusive democracy. Since groups have differentiated situations, they require differentiated citizenship (Young, 1989). Defenders of differentiated citizenship sustain the indispensability of taking positive actions to promote the inclusion of people marginalised by the formal democratic process.

The claims for differentiated citizenship threaten the fundamentals of citizenship, which is a mechanism to obtain social cohesion. If each group is centred in its specificity, it is difficult to foresee how to build a community with shared proposals. Claims for differentiated citizenship comprehend special rights of representation for underrepresented groups, rights of self-government for national minorities and multicultural rights for immigrants and ethnic or religious communities.

For Kymlicka and Norman (1994), while claims for multiracial rights and special rights of representation are demands for inclusion in the national community, rights of self-government imply potential conflicts to the integrative function of citizenship. In the latter case, the overlap of citizenship, over national community and the self-government, might generate conflicts of identity and therefore threaten the national community.

No matter what dimension of citizenship is considered there will always be permanent stress and contradiction between the intents of political control and the struggle for autonomy, developed by different groups.

See also: Welfare State, Social Policy, Social Exclusion and Inclusion, Equality.

Further reading

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