



The Concept of Citizenship in Confucian Heritage Societies: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

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Introduction

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The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Two models: The republican and the liberal

● The republican model:

- Originated from the Mediterranean tradition of Greek and Roman poleis.
- Featured with civic self-rule equalizing practices such as the rotation of offices.
- Exclusivity and unequal status: Citizens had a much higher status than non-citizens: Women, slaves, or “barbarians”.
- Citizens are primarily those who share in the government (Aristotle), and obedience to the prescribed law is freedom (Rousseau).



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Two models: The republican and the liberal

● The liberal model:

- Originated from the Roman Empire which extended citizenship rights of smaller communities to the whole empire which also included conquered peoples.
- Reduced to a judicial safeguard with a legal status rather than a fact of everyday life (Walzer, 1989).
- Political liberty as a means to protecting individual freedoms primarily exercised in private associations, instead of in government offices.
- Potentially inclusive and indefinitely extensible.



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Marshall's definition of citizenship based on the republican and the liberal (Marshall, 1950):

- The **civil** element: a legal status, defined by civil, political and social rights.
- The **political** element: political agents, actively participating in a society's political institutions such as parliament/congress.
- The **social** element: membership shared in a political community that furnishes a distinct source of identity.
- The relations among the three: complex, trilaterally interwoven and centered on the civil element.
- Measure: whether or not contribute to social integration.



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Distribution of legal rights from universalism:

- A “horizontally identical” set of civil, political and social rights are secured to each and every member in a polity for social integration, i.e., equal expansion of social rights such as welfare policies aimed at softening the impact of unemployment, sickness and distress (Marshall, 1950).
- But universalism is exclusionary in many cases, as it requires (1) the transcendence of the particular, situated perspectives to achieve a common, general point of view and (2) the formulation of laws and policies that are difference-blind (Young, 1989).



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Distribution of legal rights from differentialism:

- Opposite to universalism, a “vertically identical” set of varied civil, political and social rights are secured to meet individual needs of members in a polity for social integration
- Differentialism is based on open dialogue among different social, ethnic or religious groups, and requires high levels of understanding among diverse groups of people.
- But how are individual groups to develop their interests to participate in a common forum? The implementation of differentialism easily weakens the integrative function of citizenship.



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Integrative role of citizenship from liberal nationalism:

- It is the common political system that brings together everybody including strangers as citizens, so citizens need a large, overarching political system to govern them and a large governing body is needed to create strong ties among citizens.
- This political system is needed to mobilize the public and engender public trusts among citizens. The commonality, collective identity, or nationalism, is often supported by a shared culture, history, religion or language, and achieved through specific forms of political practice (Miller, 2000).



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Integrative role of citizenship from post-nationalism:

- Agree the key role played by the nation in making modern nation-states, but imposing “collective culture” upon minorities has negative impacts on how they construct their identity in the nation-state and weakens its legitimacy.
- Democratic politics can, in principle, free itself from its historical moorings, and this dissociation is possible and necessary for moral and pragmatic reasons.
- Nationalism should be replaced by a **thin** “constitutional patriotism” with **thick** “concrete universal” principles of human rights and the rule of law developed and agreed by individual political communities (Habermas, 1998).



The Concept of Citizenship in Western Tradition

Key features of the Western concept of citizenship:

- Based on legal status of **individual citizens** and law-making for protecting it
- To legitimize the relationship between individuals and the state/public
- To prescribe the function of citizenship and citizenship education from a bottom-up perspective
- Emerged and established from Western history in different sociopolitical contexts at different stages



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

**Is there any equivalent concept of
Western citizenship in Chinese tradition?**



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

公民 (*gongmin*):

- The terminology *gongmin* has never existed in Chinese language until the late 19th century when China was forced to open its door.
- It was a neologism from Japan adopted by China in the late 19th century

公民 gōngmín 取得某國國籍，並根據該國法律規定享有權利和承擔義務的人。
圖日 公民 kōmin [意譯英語 citizen]

漢語外來詞詞典

編者——劉正埙 高名凱 麥永乾 史有為

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- Gongmin composes one of the key meaning of 民 (*min*) in Chinese tradition



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

民 (*min*):

- 士、農、工、商：“士農工商四民者，國之石，民也。”

《管子·小匡》

- 三教九流：儒家、道家、陰陽家、法家、名家、墨家、縱橫家、雜家、農家。

《漢書·藝文志》



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

Individual citizens and the state:

- Zhonggong asked about benevolence. The Master said: “Beyond your door, conduct yourself as if meeting a great guest. In employing the people, conduct yourself as if making great sacrifice of offerings; not to do others as you would not wish done to yourself.”
(仲弓問「仁」。子曰：「出門如見大賓；使民如承大祭；己所不欲，勿施於人」。)

The Analects, 12.2.



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

Individual citizens and the state:

- Duke Ching of Qi asked the Master about governance. The Master replied: “Let the lords be lords, the officials be officials, the fathers be fathers, the sons be sons.”
(齊景公問政於孔子。孔子對曰：「君君；臣臣；父父；子子。」)

The Analects, 12.11.

- The common people are the most valuable in a nation; the land and grain are the next; and the sovereign is the lightest. (民爲貴，社稷次之，君爲輕。)

The Works of Mencius, 14.14.



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

Individual citizens and the state:

- It is said: “The sage-king is like the boat and the people are just like the water. Water supports the boat but also sinks it.” Hence if the sage-king wishes to be secure, there is nothing as good as a just government and love for his people. If he wishes to have glory, there is nothing better than exalting rites and respecting intellectuals. If he wishes to have achievement and fame, there is nothing as good as honoring the talented. (傳曰：“君者、舟也，庶人者、水也；水則載舟，水則覆舟。”此之謂也。故君人者，欲安、則莫若平政愛民矣；欲榮、則莫若隆禮敬士矣；欲立功名、則莫若尚賢使能矣。)

The Works of Xunzi, 9.4.



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Individual citizens and the state:

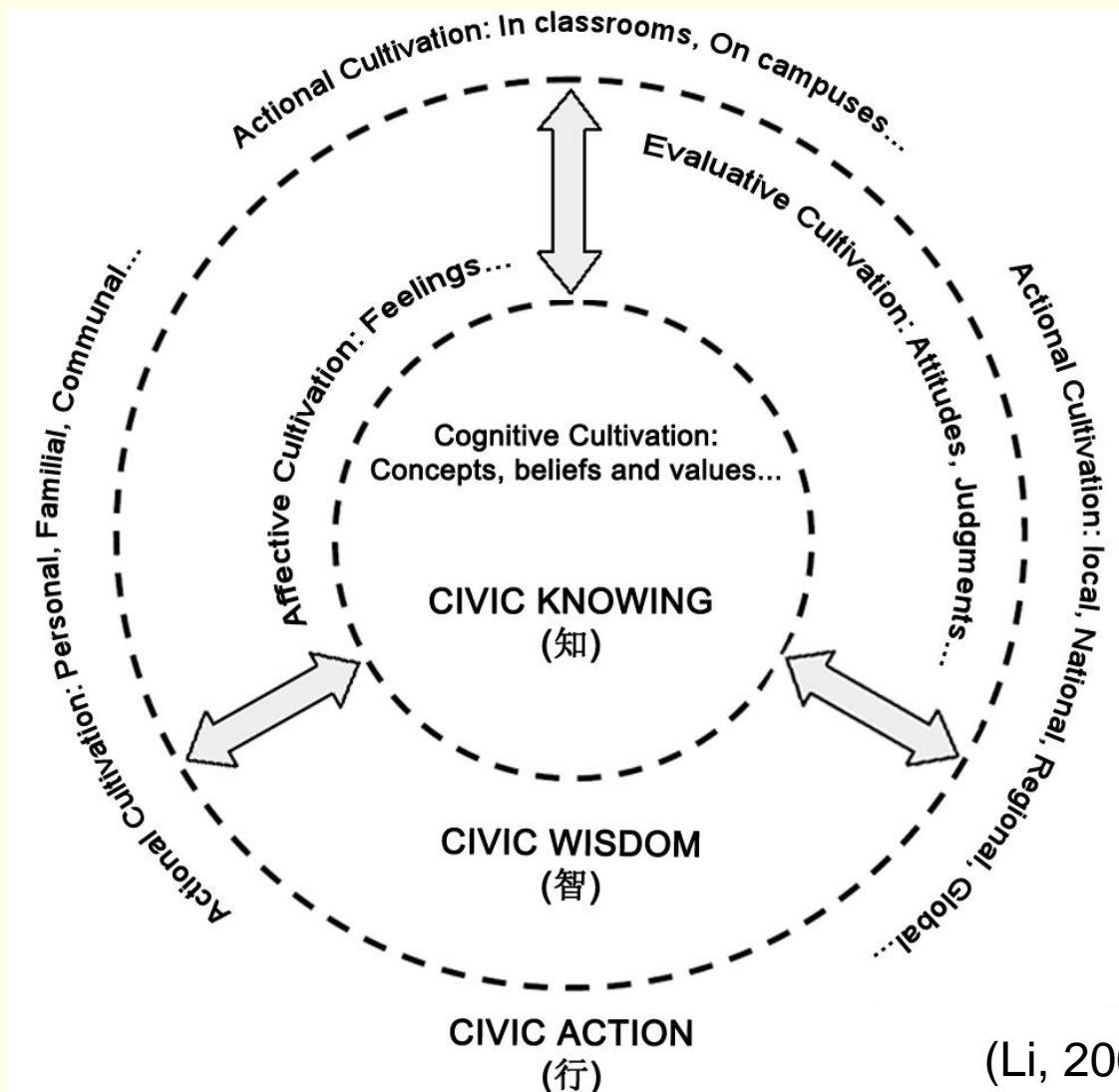
- Three Principles and Eight Guidelines (三綱領八條目) of *The Great Learning*:

The guiding principle of higher learning is to let one's innate virtue shine forth, to renew the people, and to rest in the highest good....only when things are investigated is knowledge extended; only when knowledge is extended are feelings sincere; only when feelings are sincere are hearts rectified; only when hearts are rectified is morality cultivated; only when morality is cultivated are families in right order; only when families are in right order are states well governed; and only when states are well governed can the world be at peace. (格物致知、誠意正心、修身齊家、治國平天下)



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

Individual citizens and the state:



(Li, 2009; 2010; 2011)



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

The ethical model of the concept of citizenship:

- Three key elements:
 - Based on ethical codes of **individual citizens**, enhanced by social rites and laws
 - Political participation in political institutions/agencies, enhanced by a meritocratic system, i.e., the Imperial Civil Service Examination
 - **“Thick”** collective rights and individual responsibilities with **“thin”** individual rights for social integration



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

The ethical model of the concept of citizenship:

- Key features:
 - Community-oriented and relation-centered: from the self to the community, the public, the state, and to the world
 - To prescribe the function of citizenship and citizenship education from a top-down perspective
 - Emerged from Chinese history but established with the Western concept in modern times.



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

Distribution of legal rights:

- Vertical rather than horizontal
- Based on differentialism with open dialogue via ethical codes among different social, ethnic or religious groups, and requires high levels of understanding among diverse groups of people.



The Concept of Citizenship in Chinese Tradition

Integrative role of citizenship from the ethical model:

- Confucian values and ethical codes serve as a commonly accepted identity or culture for bringing together everybody, so the Chinese need an authoritative, overarching political system to govern them while it is legitimized to create strong ties among citizens.
- The collective identity or nationalism is often enhanced by Confucianism.

For example, “everybody has an obligation for the well-being under Heaven” (天下興亡，匹夫有責, Gu Yanwu, *Rizhi Lu*, 13.), has been commonly accepted as a key civic value in the long Chinese history.



Conclusion

The Chinese ethical and Western models

- Citizenship and ethics are one to Aristotle. Ethics is from the standpoint of the individual. Citizenship is from the standpoint of the group. The moral character of an ethical person is the same set of characteristics or virtues needed to be a good citizen.



Conclusion

