

The Epistemological Development of Citizenship: A Critical Assessment

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Abstract

The notion of citizenship is dynamic and multidimensional, and it's changed throughout history. The ancient conception of citizenship has changed over time; recently, the idea of citizenship has become more than a permanent legal status. For an understanding of citizenship and its evolving nature, a nuanced description is essential. The concept of Citizenship is widely prevalent, but there is a lack of systematic studies on the epistemological development of citizenship. The study aims to explore the historical and theoretical foundations of the concept of Citizenship through an interpretive analytical methodology. This article examined the paradox between the contemporary notion of global citizenship with the psychological dimension and a pragmatist legal approach to citizenship. Also highlights the nuanced understanding of the epistemological development of citizenship, explaining the connotations of the evolving nature from a closed to a pluralistic conception. In the era of globalization, the concept of citizenship is not merely a legal status or a full membership of a political community, but rather it is also recognised as the identity of being human in global society. Thus, the changing trajectories of the notion of citizenship have become a major concern for statecraft. This study explores a balanced and pragmatic approach that will be effective for state mechanisms in recent times.

Keywords

Epistemological Development, Psychological Dimension, Pragmatist Legal Approach, Pluralistic, Globalization, Balanced and Pragmatic approach.

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Introduction

The concept of citizenship is fluid and versatile; over time, the nature of political community and the eligibility required to be a citizen have changed. The notion of citizenship derived from the classical antiquity Greek and Roman Republic, where citizenship is identified as a cosmological order, a moral duty, and a polis identity.

The ancient Greeks developed the idea of citizenship, where a free, wealthy man living within a city-state (polity) controlled and regulated his life- political, economic, social, and cultural. In a polity, every wealthy male person was a citizen, and they all formed the legislature. All of them met together in the open forum, the Agora, discussed political, economic, social, and cultural problems, and voted for this or that policy or programme and elected the small group that was to run the government. Thus, the Ecclesia operated on direct democracy, and every citizen was directly involved in statecraft. Indeed, direct governance made active citizenship an inherited duty and virtue. The Greek model of citizenship was largely inspired by the writings of Aristotle. And Aristotle's 'Politics' first portrays a systematic study of citizenship and he defined a 'state' as a collective body of citizens. A citizen according to Aristotle was the 'one who enjoyed the right of sharing in deliberative and judicial office for any period fixed or unfixed. Citizens were all who shared in the civic life of ruling and being ruled in turn' (Aristotle, 1992). Epistemologically, ancient Greek citizenship was an experiential epistemology by which citizenship was recognized through phronesis (civic wisdom) and activism (duty or active participation), and the nature of ancient Greek citizenship was exclusionary because women and slaves were epistemically disqualified from citizenship, and it was mainly confined to a privileged few and was hierarchy-based.

The ancient Greek conception of citizenship was a privileged status, which was associated with the idea of political participation, but the ancient Roman Republic developed the idea of citizenship as a legal status with an inclusive nature. According to D. Heater, Romans developed a form of citizenship which was both pragmatic and extensible in application. (Heater, 1980). Epistemologically, the ancient Roman citizenship was known through legal status (civitas) with systematic, structured forms around Roman Law, citizens' rights (six types of rights: four public rights and two private rights), and imperial obligations.

After the decline of ancient antiquity in the West, the value of citizenship was eclipsed. In medieval times, Western political thought was moulded by the church, and the papacy became powerful; the practice of citizenship converted to a search for personal salvation and citizenship sustain in town or guilds with few

freedoms and privileges, as a commercial and civic form. However, Machiavelli countered this conception of citizenship and favoured the ideals of civic virtue and participation. Gradually, the idea of the nation-state started to evolve, and town- or guild-centered citizenship converted into the modern idea of nation-state citizenship. The shift from passive citizenship to the modern idea of citizenship was influenced by the French Revolution (1789) and the slogan “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,” which helped to drive the notion of natural rights. Epistemologically, the idea of citizenship in this phase changed and was framed as an equal identity rather than a birth-based identity or status. And the official document, Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), became a defining path for constitutions around the world. Thus, the concept of citizenship was reframed, and different intellectual traditions also influenced this conception.

As Durant points out that ‘but whatever the Greeks thought and achieved, whatever knowledge and wisdom they had developed, all that passed on, along with Roman experience, into the modern Western culture. In it, the classical Greek culture reappeared, including political democracy and free citizenship, through a gradual socio-political evolution.’ (Durant, 1926).

Over time, the Greek democracy developed a new dimension through representative government but the concept of free citizenship remained the core basis of modern democracy.

The era of enlightenment expressed the concept of citizenship as reason and contract. In the 17th century, the social contract tradition of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau shifted the idea of citizenship from duty to abstract reason. At that time, citizenship became an intellectual status and was considered not natural but socially constructed through mutual agreement. Epistemologically, the conception of citizenship becomes a rational entity or state – centered national citizenship where a citizen is aware of the natural rights and gives consent to an authority for protection.

The age of modernity basically 19th century explored the epistemology of citizenship through the nation – state. The modern age provides a nation-state-oriented concept of citizenship and stresses the idea of state-centered citizenship as its epitome. In this era, citizenship includes voting rights, state obedience through national identity, and the acquisition of social rights. The understanding of citizenship became a matter of belonging, such as race, history, and language and *jus soli*, *jus sanguinis*. For this change in citizenship, the decline of feudalism, the rise of capitalism, and the advocacy of liberalism were the main reasons. T. H. Marshall’s argued that Citizenship stands for full membership in a community, identified by a typology of the rights and the notion of citizenship developed through different stages. (Marshall,

1950). Marshall explores three distinct stages in the development of citizenship based on material and legal perspectives, and also argues that citizenship in west specially in Britain emerged as a tool to mitigate the crisis of capitalism. Citizenship is identified by a systematic historical evolution of three distinct types of rights, which are as follows;

(i) Civil Rights (18th century)

Such as liberty, freedom of speech, thought, and faith even also supported the rise of a competitive market by provide right to own property. The core theme of this stage was to identify as a free entity.

(ii) Political Rights (19th century)

The right to vote and actively participate in political power, empowered through the franchise, has enriched citizenship in this century. The era advocated the idea of being a part of politics.

(iii) Social Rights (20th century)

The 20th century is marked as the modern welfare era; during this period, citizenship was shaped by different social rights, such as the right to economic welfare, social security, and a dignified livelihood with civilized standards. And the promise is for public education, healthcare, housing such type of supports provided by the authorities to reduce the inequalities which are created by capitalism. Modern times highlight the notion of social security and recognized as a secure social being. The modern understanding of citizenship based on three interlinked elements; legal status, political participation, and community membership. Epistemologically, this changing conception explains that citizenship is not merely a philosophical abstract or a political entity, but is also becoming a material reality through welfare schemes provided by the state.

In contemporary times, the notion of citizenship has been changed through globalization, mass migration, digital innovation, technology, and cybernetics. The traditional state - oriented idea of citizenship has been challenged in this postmodern era and has developed a new conception of citizenship. Epistemology of this era highlights that contemporary thinkers argue that boundary-based citizenship provides whole narratives which are based on an exclusion strategy; thus, marginalised ethnic groups face challenges and also identify that human rights, transnational, ecological, and digital, and different global identities have become more prominent which blurs the idea of nation-state-centered citizenship.

Flowingly, a diagram points out the different perspectives of the epistemological development of citizenship;

Era	Key Theme	Major Form
Classical Antiquity experiential epistemology	Civic Virtue, Duties, Native law, Natural order	Direct participation: Polity, defense, and Justice
Medieval epistemic conservatism	Papacy, Personal Salvation	Submissive , Subject
Enlightenment Naturalized epistemology	Universal Reason, Natural Rights	Consent, Contract
Modern social epistemology	National identity, Social rights	Voting rights, Social Securities.
Contemporary standpoint epistemology	Globalization, Cybernetics, Pluralism, Human Rights, Migration, Ecology	Activism, Digital discourse, Global phenomenon

The epistemological development of the concept of citizenship describes a historical trajectory with a broad knowledge, especially the changing dimensions from a philosophical perspective to an expansive one. Over time, the notion of citizenship has shifted from rigid to open.

Indian citizenship, the epistemological traditions can be traced, focusing on the transition from a post-colonial, Universalist form of *jus soli* to particularistic, closed forms of *jus sanguinis*. Basically, these three epistemological foundations arose from the trauma of partition, legislative shifts, and contemporary identity politics.

The epistemic standards of Indian citizenship have been shifted over time.

Timeline	Key theme	Major form
Ancient	Moral, Dharma	Social role and duty
Medieval	obedience	tax payer and loyal
British phase	Subject	imperial travel paper
Post colonial phase	<i>jus soil</i>	soil and secular based
Contemporary	<i>jus sanguinis</i>	identity status

The above-mentioned chart identifies the evolutionary shifts of Indian citizenship and highlights that the notion of citizenship is not static, but rather it is changing in nature over time and regimes.

At the edge of the study highlights that the idea of citizenship is a dynamic and dependent concept; over time, it has changed. Citizenship relies on different realms of understanding, including empirical viewpoints as well as the influence of cultural identities and contemporary enactment. This study will be effective for the enactment of citizen epistemology, which enlightens individuals and makes them more active in public life. Enlightened citizenship is important and highly relevant

in a democratic country. The success of democracy depends on citizens' active role, meaningful participation in public life, navigating political division, and critically assessing public information. Thus, this study's ultimate aim is to convey an understanding of the citizenship epistemological development for an active and enlightened citizenship.

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