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## Citizenship through the ages

Citizenship bestows upon individuals legal, political and social dimensions. Access to citizenship was illustrated by how membership was determined. Ancient society witnessed the restriction of the access to citizenship as certain groups were not entitled to participate in activities belonging to citizens. The access to citizenship was extended in modern societies. It must be established that the concept of citizenship varies from time to time - ancient citizenship was more about political circles while citizenship in most modern societies rarely involves strongly participatory elements or vigorous democratic practices. In fact, the concept of citizenship is linked closely with political spheres as the rights and liberty of citizens vary with forms of government.

Arguably, the certain political system could better accommodate the protection of rights and liberties as the core of citizenship than one another. The restriction of the access to citizenship undermines legal political and social standing which form part of citizens' identity and causes the disparity based on class, gender or ethnicity. Under-representation of the groups will ultimately lead to the failing of state functioning and the loss of stability of the states. While the disparity of access to citizenship served as the dominant factor having an impact on the working of the state, it is exaggerating to claim that it was the sole cause of the failings of the ancient societies. Other key aspects distinct to ancient or modern society as specific forms of challenges also need to be assessed. This essay examines the way in which the state works in the process of providing the access to citizenship and the way legal, political and social elements, with each usually being conceptually inseparable from one another, are attached to the status of citizenship in ancient modern and contemporary era.

The essay will also assess how those elements affect the functioning of the state in a particular polity. Finally, such concepts as globalization, moral universalism and feminism will also be highlighted as they serve to gradually eradicate the limitation to the access to citizenship. Being small-scale communities allowed Greek citizens to forge friendly and trusting relationships with one another. This is essential particularly for building a society in which people have social obligations to conform to rules without the need for the government to resort to the use of force. As social bonding was fostered, citizens would be willing to cooperate with one another in collaborative activities. Small community also had a benefit of easily instilling values from generation to generation through institutions such as schools and families which would be hardly possible for large communities or the republic.

As Aristotle put, appropriate education will lead citizens to have good, dutiful acts. Strong rules and laws in the large community found in modern society might be able to force citizens to abide by the law, yet the citizens might not believe they are morally obliged to conform to it.

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Nonetheless, Athenian style of democratic citizenship was dependent on the intimacy of a community. Aristotle recognized this limitation when it was pointed out that fostering civic virtues could be practical only in small communities. In this way, living in a tightly knit community would be the only means to achieve a goal of sharing values and common interests and finally social solidarity. Greek model of citizenship was mainly drawn from Athens and Sparta political system with equality as a core principle. In the communities, every citizen was equal before the law and was obliged to treat one another with equal concern. The entitlements as a Greek citizen principally concern political participation. This is in line with Aristotle's account that 'human beings are political animals'. According to Aristotle, political participation is the most effective means to achieve a full sense of citizenship where the potential of citizens can be realized during the process of 'sharing in civic life'. Aristotle's definition of a citizen as 'someone who rules and is ruled in turn' makes citizenship conceptually inseparable from political spheres. Citizenship in ancient societies usually entails the right to engage in political life while non-citizens were underrepresented in the political process due to lack of opportunity to participate in the process.

Citizens in Athens enjoyed the right to directly participate in the Assembly or perform other public duties ranging from meeting for public discussions to performing jury services. Fixed-term duration in political careers served as a tool to ensure that most citizens would have opportunities to participate in political spheres and in practice, the citizens would have a chance to hold public office at a certain point. The Greek idea of citizenship principally involves the subordination of private life to public affairs or 'common good'. A clear distinction between public and private life was aimed to prevent citizens from seeking self-interest while performing public duties. The non-citizens were at the same time responsible for the private spheres of life of those citizens. The same could be said for citizenship in Sparta which was illustrated in Plutarch's account of Spartans - citizens should 'have no desire for a private life, nor knowledge of one, but rather be like bees, always attached to the community, swarming together around their leader and devote themselves entirely to their country. Citizens in Sparta also had to be in charge of protecting the country by doing military service.

Unlike modern citizenship, the access to the citizenship of the Greeks was not unconditional since the citizens were imposed with civilian duties and failure to perform such duties would result in the loss of citizenship. In fact, access to citizenship in ancient society was generally conditional on fulfilling the requirements. Spartans, for instance, had to be able to pay mess dues in order to be incorporated into a body of citizens as well as to maintain their status of citizens. This demonstrates that individuals with financial deficiency could not become citizens in Sparta. The same could be said of Athens citizens – failure to conform to the standards of the common goods would amount to them being removed. In this way, the threat of being deprived of citizenship would force the citizens particularly those in the Assembly not to pursue their own ends. On the contrary, the status of citizenship in modern societies often refer to a set of

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entitlements which is unconditionally given. It does not necessarily follow that only rights are associated with the status of citizenship, still, duties as in the case of Greek citizenship should not be preconditions of rights.

Clearly, a status of citizenship in Athens and Sparta was more of a duty and it did not come along with any aspects of real rights when compared to that of modern societies. The approach employed in Athens to exercise equal political participation could be regarded as problematic in that citizens did not have a say whether they were willing to participate in public duties. The attitude towards the access to citizenship also concerns how public and private life were balanced. A clear distinction between public and private life was aimed to prevent citizens from seeking self-interest while performing public duties. Nonetheless, those roles being assigned to citizens and non-citizens have been widely criticized as a form of oppression in that they prohibited individuals from choosing their own identities. It appears that the features of ancient Greek model of citizenship symbolize totalitarianism rather than democracy that the Greeks sought to establish and it was not envisaged during that time that a sharp distinction would bring about such disaster. To elaborate on that, lack of free choice and distinction of public and private life led to corruption and conflicts of interests demonstrating that such model of citizenship was not efficient in facilitating the process of political participation. Undoubtedly, the success of Greek democracy was short-lived due to Greek's flawed view of citizenship. Political powers were placed into the hands of male citizens that could not represent the interests of all groups in the communities. This would be problematic particularly during the process of passing the laws since there was nobody that could speak and act on behalf of the non-citizens. The absence of checks and balances implies the assertion of unlimited authority being vested in the assembly that was dominated by male citizens. It is fair to argue that the root cause could be attributed to the classification of citizens from the beginning.

Clearly, the Greek version of citizenship was not open to all. Citizenship status in both Greece and Rome was exclusive to specific groups of people. The Greek model of citizenship was the privilege of a minority who qualified as citizens - adult males being born to Athenian citizen families, warriors and the masters of the labor. The feature of Greek democracy runs counter to the oppression of the non-citizens where children, slaves, aliens, and women were not included in the list. Similarly, the Romans at first glance adopted the criteria for determining citizen eligibility, stating that Roman citizens had to be native free men who were the legitimate sons of other native free men. It was not until later that the criteria abolished. This is contrary to the idea of liberal democracy in modern societies which attempted to embrace all mature adults in the system. Despite sharing several characteristics with Athens, the Roman model of citizenship has certain striking differences from that of the Greeks. Since the beginning, the Roman Republic aspired to create a classless society and society was the product of the struggle to obtain rights against the aristocrats (patricians).

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The agreement between the patricians and the plebeians was reached when it was settled that the officials had to look after the interests of people. The creation of Tribunes of the People with the power resting in the hands of plebeians signifies the process of checks and balances that could better ensure the political equality of citizens. The power of the plebeians included the power to veto the acts or even power to enact the laws, demonstrating a shift towards a society where citizens of all classes not only the wealthy had political power. A concept of legal citizenship was also introduced when the Romans offered 'dual citizenship' to the conquered territories. Ineligibility for citizenship usually entailed the absence of rights to participate in political areas. Generally, non-citizens had a duty to take care of citizens' private life. The introduction of 'dual citizenship' as well as 'semi-citizenship' made it possible for foreign people to have Roman citizen status in addition to their original citizen status. The citizens of Tusculum, for example, were granted full Roman citizenship while retaining their nationality of origin. At first glance, the access to citizenship appears to be expanded when the status was not restricted to the nationals. In practice, Roman citizenship nonetheless turned out to be a legal status due to no real involvement in self-governance. The entitlements that were derived from the status of citizenship merely refer to the protection by the military and the judiciary.

In fact, Roman citizens did not have the authentic voice in political participation and lacked political influence that was a key element in Greek citizenship. In addition, the bodies that allowed Roman citizens to hold office mostly exercised judicial powers while the ultimate political powers remained with the Senate and Consuls which were the bodies consisting of wealthy landowners. Furthermore, the voting process was largely dominated by the wealthy. As a result, Roman citizens were only granted limited access to the rights being attached to citizenship status. Ultimately, the reluctance of the state to grant active political rights to the majority despite having citizenship status could be implied that the Roman model of citizenship was not a success having been developed from the Greek model.

As a result, the concept of Roman citizenship in spite of having several features that were similar to those of modern societies, still could not achieve in promoting political participation - a core element of representative democracy. This could merely represent the government's attitude that a citizen is 'someone who is ruled' but does not have the right to rule themselves. Citizenship without political participation does not have much impact, meaning that the failing faced in Greek societies would be potentially revisited when political power was not in the hands of the majority and thus could not promote their interests. As a matter of fact, the need to ensure representation is of primary importance for stability in the society.

Overall, democracy in ancient society was artificial with several ranks of citizens in the system which served to undermine its stability in the long term. In fact, Athenian democracy was democratic only amongst those who were citizens in the full sense. Indeed, inequality served to be the main cause of the failings of societies and was behind certain political uprisings. The

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attitude regarding the access to citizenship could be assessed from the works of ancient philosophers. Plato divided citizenry into three classes - the guardians, the soldiers, and the producers. Despite forming the largest component of citizens, the producers were discouraged from participating in public affairs. Plato further categorized citizens into certain classes by reference to their wealth. The requirement of resources regarding the access to citizenship widened the gap between the wealthy and poorer. This intrinsic fault in the political system could also be seen in Roman citizenship – power was restricted to a handful of elite families rather than the majority of citizens. This is linked to economic inequality that had a massive impact on political rights.

In general, ancient citizenship represents a highly restricted model of citizenship considering that it was a model of gender, race, and class defined citizenship. Although a scope of Roman citizenship was widened, citizens' right to participate in political affairs was diminished. Citizenship in ancient society scarcely consists of the private life of citizens. In fact, citizens were demanded to sacrifice their entire life to the services of the state. The Roman model of citizenship should not be confused with that of Italian city-states (e.g. Florence) that represented the autonomy of political, executive and judicial powers being independent of the Romans. Still, ancient citizenship lacks an aspect of active citizenship. This is different from modern active citizenship that concerns the idea of standing against the tyranny and inspires a modern revolution.

## Modern citizenship

Modern citizenship was significantly shaped by the 1776 American Revolution and the 1789 French Revolution. It was the first time that the idea of a constitution as a social contract was introduced. In the process, the people would be treated as equals before the law with the right to enter into transactions – buying and selling goods and services. There would be a sovereign political authority having a duty to act on behalf of the citizens by responding to the opinions of citizens. It was also the first time that the idea of the social pact was introduced with the idea that the private ends of the citizens could be met in civil society new feature of the political system that promotes the interests and the access to citizenship is the concept of separation of powers. Placing the ultimate power in the hands of one body or in the hands of the minority contributed to the rising of tyrannies as seen in ancient societies. Dividing powers in several branches Representative democracy brought up certain new aspects of citizenship as the limits of a sizeable citizenry found in ancient communities was eliminated and more were granted a status of citizenship. Obviously, the failings, on the one hand, concern the attitude towards the access to citizenship because... On the other hand, the way rights and obligations were perceived also affects the access to citizenship. Modern citizenship takes into account individuals' private sphere of life p.105 while the ancient one merely regards 'the public good' as a paramount consideration. However, the laws of most modern societies still contained

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explicit racial, ethnic, gender restrictions. Exclusion from citizenry was determined by discriminatory criteria ranging from gender, nationality and economic status. Modern citizenship particularly Early Modern philosophers did not regard certain groups as citizens. Indeed, women, ethnic minorities, children and the poor were marginalized. According to Hobbes, citizens should be males with high ranking and possessing substantial properties. Rousseau similarly argued that women and the poor would not be eligible as citizens since citizenship should be conditional upon property qualifications and upon the absence of dependence on others. The focus of Locke was also on men as qualified as citizens. Mill proposed the argument that the wiser should have more votes in the process of universal suffrage. It must be stressed that while citizenship is a statement of equality, that equality might be incomplete. Therefore, it is not accurate to claim that Modern citizenship fails to grant access to citizenship merely because the extent of rights as citizens varies with class. This happened in the United States and France after the revolutions as well. In the United States, for instance, black and women were regarded as citizens; still, their citizenship status at first did not have an element of political participation. Lack of the right to participate in the political system means that their opinion will be ignored. This reinforces the argument that racial and gender hierarchies were not yet abolished and still persisted for a period.

Nonetheless, it is not sufficient that all can gain access to citizenship without them being equal as citizenship does not only involve protecting the majority of people at the expense of 'the few'. It is vivid that Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, and Mill believed in the idea of democracy as the path to promote the interests of all citizens. Still, it is paradoxical that they deliberately set out criteria that reflected nothing but inequality. While Mill was the first male philosopher that counted women as equally mature adults as men, his proposed idea of giving votes based on individuals' ability could not be justified under democracy. The accounts still failed to grant all individual equal right.

Modern societies created a new model of citizenship with a social dimension. Social citizenship right was, according to Marshall, a dimension of the full status of citizenship. Social aspects could be seen as a way to improve citizens' lives. As it can be seen that ancient citizenship and early modern did not succeed in promoting equality of citizens, this new model of citizenship might better fill the gap of inequality by attempting to solve economic inequality at the first place. The idea is that social integration and social stability can be achieved provided that poverty is eradicated or minimized.

### **Ancient and Modern citizenship: overlapping aspects**

In this sense, both ancient and modern society share pretty much the same notion of citizenship with the restriction of certain groups from the citizenry. It is obvious that citizenship, particularly in ancient time, did not bring about basic rights (for example right to vote, right to make

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contracts and right not to be subject to torture) for individuals nor could it secure fairness in the society. Athens developed a form of democracy yet it failed to grant equal power to all individuals since only a highly exclusive group of men could have political power. Both ancient and Modern citizenship still could not afford to sufficiently accommodate for certain groups' representation in the society. Women, ethnic minorities and the poor were generally excluded from citizenry during the early modern period. The requirement concerning wealth, knowledge in ancient societies illustrates that not all individuals are eligible for such status. Aristotle's exclusion of the poor from citizenry It must be stressed that Athen's direct democracy is a separate matter from citizenship and therefore the need for the educated in democratic process does not justify the restriction of slaves, women in such process. The works of most notable philosophers including Rousseau and Locke share male-dominated model of citizenship. It was noted from the outset of Locke's concept of citizenship in a modern world that the individuals being regarded as citizens were men. The same male-dominated account applies to the argument of Hobbes and Rousseau. A new direction of citizenship Indeed, the conception of citizenship is usually based on the relationship between the individuals and the territorial state. Both Athenian and Spartiate mode of citizenship was strained by territory. According to Plutarch, citizens were not permitted to be away from the city for fear that the imposed norms and values could be tainted by citizens acquiring foreign standards of living. The emergence of new states, transnational patterns serves as challenges to the concept of 'citizenship as nationality' and calls for the expansion of the scope of citizenship. Membership of the European Union creates a new identity in addition to that of EU citizen's notion of originality. However, the status is based on border criteria. The Brexit vote signifies the challenge to this concept because the additional status of EU citizens could potentially be removed. Nationality model of citizenship has been criticized as a status of citizens should be 'relevant to individuals irrespective of their particular histories, cultures and specific experiences'. Having a status as world citizens is arguably a step towards a peaceful society where every citizen feel they are part of the society.

Citizenship in modern societies is different ... but in some fundamental regards, the idea of citizenship remains what it has long been from an ancient society. Greek and Roman share certain aspects of citizenship that the government was not prepared to give basic political, legal and social rights to citizens. Arguably, ancient society regarded civic activism as potentially disruptive as it would threaten public order if individuals were commonly granted access to citizenship. However, it must be noted that forms of challenge varied from one society to another. The challenge to the ancient societies was military-related, forcing the rulers to put a great emphasis on the protection of the state and negatively affected citizen standing. Modern and contemporary model of citizenship is challenged by Cosmopolitanism which renders the idea of access to citizenship within nation-states problematic. The status of world citizen encourages individuals to take global moral responsibilities and conform to universalistic moral commitments by helping other strangers who do not share geographical territory with one

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another. In fact, citizenship should not be regarded as a privilege that excludes certain groups from having representation. The contemporary account of the access to citizenship is that individuals can be citizens in a variety of groups with certain degrees of generality. It might be true that strong feelings of shared belonging facilitate solidarity; still, national and cultural belonging should not be seen as the only way to achieve group solidarity.

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