

# **Theoretical Reconsideration of “Citizen”: Interface between “Citizen” and “Civil Society”**

Kenta UNOKI

This study attempts to clarify the interface and problems between the concept of “citizen” and “civil society”. Today, the concept of “citizen” is not defined as particular status, and “civil society” is relatively distinguished from the nation state and market economy. However, such recognitions indicate the problem that the diversity of citizens is included within civil society. When only the people who can participate in non-profit or voluntary organizations are regarded as citizens, their diversity not related to such activities is being spoiled by civil society. Besides of that, this problem disregards and criticizes the diversity of people outside of civil society as lack of virtue. That is, these problems show the interface between the concept of citizen and civil society is interpreted by the presence of participation. And so, this study aims to express the way to preserve the diversity of citizens who are not necessarily included in civil society as the concrete organizations. In accordance with such concerns, in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, we survey the relationship between citizens and civil society through their historical transitions. Before the modern age, the citizenship had been clearly defined as the membership of civil society, but now, the roles of “community” and “diversity” are being very important. These features point out the citizens in present-day are different from historical ones. However, political commitments are essential for both age of citizens and civil society. That is because citizens are now recognized as political actors based on the general public, and civil society is regarded as organizations to protest against the government or commercial enterprises. And then, in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, we consider the ways and means of preserving the diversity of individuals and communities through the recent discussions on liberalism and communitarianism, as well as modern theories on tolerance. And in Chapter 5, we attempt to examine how the concepts of “citizen” were considered in post-war Japan. These chapters indicate the problem that the diversity of citizens is unified into civil society. If the initiative of “citizen” is recognized only by the presence of participation in “civil society”, homogeneity and exclusivity of civil society will remain continuously. The socially vulnerable who just need individual assistance corresponding to their social differences are included in citizens as the public, and in civil society as the non-governmental or non-profit organizations. Therefore, this study reveals that the concept of “citizen” and “civil society” are expected as political actors or organizations to gather and disperse provisionally, and to keep their critical mind on same issues. If the relationship between citizens and civil society could be defined like that, internal diversity will be maintained by provisional agreements in political community. And so, when someone is not participating in civil society as non-profit organizations, voluntary groups and the like, that person might be recognized “not citizen”. However, if we can participate in and leave from such organizations intentionally, we are the “citizen” as the members of civil society network.