

# *Current Situation and Reflection of Citizen Moral Education Research in Recent Years*

**Tong Wang**

*Teacher Education College, Jiangsu Zhenjiang 212000, China*

1473808795@qq.com

**Keywords:** Civic morality, New era, Moral education.

**Abstract:** Since the promulgation of the Outline in 2001 and the New Outline in 2019, the civic moral education has stood at a new historical starting point. The construction of civic morality in the new era presents a richer connotation and higher value pursuit, stands at a new historical height, must always adhere to the correct political direction of civic moral construction and the value guidance of socialist core values, must always adhere to the principal position of citizens in moral education and moral education in inheriting the tradition of innovation and development, must always adhere to the legal support and institutional guarantee of civic moral education, must always adhere to the civic moral education and civic moral governance, and cultivates new people with a sense of responsibility for socialism with Chinese characteristics.

## **1. Introduction**

On October 27, 2019, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Outline for the Implementation of Citizen Morality Building in the New Era" (hereinafter referred to as the "New Outline"). This is the new era brought by the party and the country to adapt to the national conditions and party conditions. Changes is an objective view of the achievements and experience of civic moral construction since the reform and opening up to accurately grasp the deficiencies and problems in the civic moral construction. It is a programmatic document that can continue to promote the moral quality and social and cultural level of the whole nation to a new height. It is a new guide for strengthening the moral quality of citizens, improving social morality and enhancing the moral image of the country. It has a milestone significance for the construction of citizen morality in our country.

The literature data used in this research are all sourced from CSSCI, and the source literature search was carried out with the keyword "civic morality". The retrieval time was July 20, 2020, and a total of 1,337 documents were obtained. The earliest was published in 1998. The search and issuance time is limited to after 2009, a total of 873 research results.

## 2. The main views on the moral education of Chinese citizens in recent years

### 2.1 Research on the connotation of domestic civic moral education

Ancient Greece was the first to use the word citizen to collectively refer to people who belonged to city-states. In our country, the word citizen was introduced as a foreign word during the Revolution of 1911. "Gong" in Chinese means public and official affairs and "Min" refers to the people. Therefore, the connotation of citizens in our country can be interpreted as people who are engaged in public affairs. In Xunzi's "Encouraging Learning", the words citizen and morality were first used together: "The husband is the ultimate morality." Since the promulgation of the "Outline" in 2001, our country has gradually enriched the research on the connotation of civic morality. In the past ten years, there has been a new understanding of the connotation of civic moral education. With the concept of citizenship as the core and goal, we will give full play to the common role of society, school and family in the civic education process, and cultivate generations of positive and responsible outstanding social youths for the country. This cultivation process runs through the entire life of citizens. With a long history, this is the principle that civic education should possess and grasp.

Feng Jianjun believes that contemporary China is in a critical period of transition. The transition of the country relies on citizens, and the transition of civic education can guide the transition of national citizens. The civic education should shift from the previous single political education and civic awareness education to a holistic education that cultivates complete civic qualities. In the path to becoming an internationalized country, what our country needs is a composite citizen who can adapt to social development and possess multiple identities of individuals, society, the country and citizens. Therefore, civic education cultivates a composite citizen. Civic education is to teach citizens the knowledge and skills that citizens should have and to give citizens correct civic values and civic ethics. [1] Conceptually, civic education is used to educate the people who will conform to the legal meaning of the country. In the process of gradual socialization, various forms of education are used to continuously improve the behavior of citizens. The performance of civic behavior is the manifestation of civic awareness in the field of practice. The quality of civic behavior is also a manifestation of the level of civic morality. [2] The most important thing in civic education is to cultivate the quality and spirit of citizens. It makes people become citizens, and then makes citizens become citizens with high moral quality. [3]

Civic education includes a wide range of content that far beyonds the scope of moral education. Fu Yanan conceptually divides civic moral education into two parts: civic education and moral education that are generally considered to be two important forms of education in the world. Both types of education belong to the category of social education and are different from intellectual education and aesthetic education. In today's society, the development of moral education must keep pace with the times to adapt to the complex operating structure of modern society. Modern society must shift from the era of solving all social problems with morality to the era of mutual cooperation between moral education and civic education. "Sharing" is the current trend pursued by society. Therefore, with the increase of public space and the separation of public and personal areas, personal moral education can no longer solve the current problems faced by citizens. Therefore, the rules and order of the public domain need to be further improved. Renewal and enrichment can be used to solve the problems faced by modern citizens. Moral education is biased towards private and basic education and civic education is a deeper education in the public sphere. Although the two types of education are quite different, for citizens to adapt to the development of modern society, the two types of education must be interconnected, transformed and cooperated to solve the problems encountered in today's society. [4] Moral education cultivates people's good and bad behaviors in interpersonal communication, civic education cultivates citizens who are qualified in all aspects of morality,

knowledge, skills and values for the country. Such citizens can actively perform their rights and obligations and Citizen moral education specifically refers to the cultivation of citizens who are good in national and social ethics.

American scholar Galbraith believes that what determines the future of a country is the education of the citizens in the country. With a high quality of citizens, the future of the country will be better. The future of a country is not directly related to whether the country's economy is strong or how gorgeous the public facilities are. Contemporary China is in the stage of popularization of Marxism, and more attention should be paid to the popularization and implementation of civic moral education. Improving the moral quality of citizens by the implementation of the citizen moral education plan can avoid the drawbacks of traditional education to a large extent and cultivate the spirit of collectivism among the people.

## **2.2 Research on the practice of domestic civic moral education**

The primary task of civic moral education is not to instill moral values into citizens, but to cultivate the ability of citizens to choose correct values, to educate citizens to make correct moral choices and value judgments and to choose appropriate moral values. It is crucial at the level of civic moral education practice Vital. In recent years, many scholars have put forward the importance of civic moral education practice from different aspects. To cultivate the practical ability of civic moral education, school moral education activities are indispensable. The current school moral education is also moving from campus to citizen, to society and to a diversified life. It is necessary to carefully handle the three relationships between citizens and the state, between citizens and each other, and between citizens' rights and obligations. Firstly, different from the previous idea that putting the state above the individual unconditionally, the state exists for citizens, so the status of citizens ought to be put above the state to make citizens feel honor and happiness during their lives in the country. Secondly, national citizens are equal to each other regardless of their status, so they should understand and respect each other. Thirdly, the large collective of the country should encourage citizens to find a balance between rights and obligations, which can also be called the spirit of citizen contract. [5]

The core of civic moral education is to shape the public morals of citizens, so that citizens can stand in a public position and assume their obligations. Contemporary civic education seeks an internal balance between "priority of rights" and "priority of responsibility". Based on the idea that citizens should be free and equal, as well as the current status of my country's lack of awareness of civil rights and the fact that responsibilities are greater than rights, the basic rights of citizens should be satisfied before they can cultivate responsible citizens. [6] Ye Fei divides the civic personality into "passive citizen" and "active citizen". In terms of the result of civic education, what we want to cultivate is "active citizen". The moral education of "active citizen" is manifested in many aspects and schools are needed. Constructed together with society, moral education must effectively realize the organic integration of life and education. [7] A key point in the cultivation of civic morality lies in the moral education of young people, guiding young people to actively participate in various types of moral life and the practice of civic life, and promoting the improvement and development of young people's moral quality and civic character. In classrooms, schools and community activities where citizens participate, teachers can experience the responsibilities and values of citizens with young people through vivid and concrete examples and guide students to develop the values of cooperation, integrity, mutual respect, integrity and fraternity in order to defend their rights and actively fulfill their obligations and continue to work hard. In the process of youth education, civic moral education should perform the duty of cultivating active, responsible and state-needed young citizens. Many scholars have common views on strengthening the civic moral education of college students. They believe that college students are the hope and future of the country and it is necessary to strengthen

the civic moral education of college students. Chen Dawen believes that the current legal education for college students not only has the nature of civic education, but also belongs to the category of ideological and political courses and moral education. When college students take ideological and political courses in colleges and universities, they can improve their morality by understanding moral and legal knowledge. [8] However, the current university lacks a systematic civic moral education curriculum and it is necessary to guide the civic moral education of college students with socialist core values. The use of explicit school education resources to integrate the core values content into the growth of students is more conducive to the cultivation of civic morality of college students. [9]

The cultivation of civic morality is inseparable from moral culture and the realization of moral values establishment and people cultivation is inseparable from the nourishment of good moral culture. Moral culture is value-oriented and plays a leading role in the realization of social and personal values; the cultivation of moral culture can also promote cultural identity and regulate citizens' moral behavior. In the long-term development of a country and nation, ethical culture restricts and guides people's behavioral norms in the form of ethical standards. [10] The cultivation of civic ethics not only depends on the cultivation of civic moral culture, but also it is more important to build a platform for public life in the process of practice. [11] Through the learning and building of public platforms, citizens' rationality can be strengthened, citizens' good moral quality in serving social welfare undertakings in their lives and public moral spirit in open public life can be cultivated. [12]

## **2.3 Summary of research on civic moral education abroad**

No matter how it is interpreted, civic education in modern countries is closely related to citizenship. The foundation of civic education is citizenship. Only by understanding and grasping the system and theoretical viewpoints of citizenship it can be helpful to the implementation of civic education. Civic education in the modern sense is accompanied by the establishment and development of the modern state. In the research process of civic moral education abroad, there are many related studies on civic moral education in the United States, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

### ***2.3.1 Research on American Citizen Moral Education***

Some scholars on the school moral education in the United States in the 19th century found that although the overall layout of the United States in the 19th century was mostly rural, it was in the highly industrialized areas of the Northeast and the newly opened territories of the West. Until before the war, all aspects of social life in the United States are undergoing drastic changes. The American society hopes to strengthen the moral education of American individuals and respond to the problems caused by the rapid changes in American society through the improvement of personal moral training and the United States implements the same fair education for children born from all family backgrounds. The universal public School education is used to deliver to students the common political ideology and moral values that eliminate conflicts caused by social changes and make society harmonious. [13] Since the 1990s, the United States has faced various challenges and disputes. The moral education of American citizens has changed. Building a peaceful cultural atmosphere is the goal of American school education. The solution to the serious violence problem on American campuses is through love education, so that students can establish a sense of friendship and peace to solve the problem of school violence. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out civic moral education. [14] Many experts are studying American moral education. By comparing it with our country's moral education, they hope to put forward solutions to the problems encountered in our country's citizen moral education. In order to maintain the consistency and integrity of moral education in the multicultural environment of American colleges and universities, in order to maintain the consistency and integrity of moral education, American colleges and universities use curriculum learning, student

responsible participation, character education and civic religious education to cultivate the knowledge, skills, emotions and other aspects of moral education. In the cultivation process, with innovative ideas and appropriate evaluation methods the model of moral education become more perfect. For our country, this kind of moral education is also an inspiration. [15]

### *2.3.2 Research on the Moral Education of Singapore Citizens*

In 2014, Singapore promulgated the new "Primary School Character and Civic Education Curriculum Standards". The new standards pointed out that the purpose of offering character and civic education courses in elementary schools was to instill consistent national values to students from an early age and nurture this age group. The students should have the civic skills, so that they have good character and can contribute to the society. The "New Curriculum Standards" also emphasizes the cultivation of core values and civic awareness, global awareness and cross-cultural awareness, which are vital to the development of student morals and civic ethics. [16] Singapore's primary and secondary schools put forward the concept of "common values" in curriculum setting and arrangement, follow the law of moral development and divide the content of education into stages to make moral education more hierarchical. Moreover, Singapore pays more attention to the education of Confucian values. History and experience have infiltrated the values of Confucianism into the moral education of schools. According to the characteristics of the times, the values of Confucianism are connected with the shaping of the national spirit in civic moral education. In the process of implementing moral education in our country's schools, the integration of core socialist values can provide a new way to implement for the moral education of our citizens. School education can build a new curriculum system that integrates the core values of socialism, establish a spiraling education chain system and use family, school and society as an educational network to ensure the full integration of socialist core values in the entire process of school education. [17] In terms of practice, Singapore primary and secondary schools develop national awareness education, civic moral education, environmental society and survival education through school curriculum, auxiliary extracurricular activities, community services and a three-dimensional educational network approach that combines family, school and society to develop self-confidence and eagerness to learn. It can cultivate Singapore citizens who take the initiative to care about the country and society and create "a school that values reflection and a citizen who loves learning." [18]

### *2.3.3 Research on British Citizen Moral Education*

Britain's moral education has a long history. The development from religious education to gentleman education to civic education also reflects the state of the country in different historical periods. [19] Britain is the earliest capitalist country and the tradition of civic moral education has always been valued. British civic education emphasizes human rights education, which is reflected in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools. In terms of curriculum content, the UK pays attention to the penetration of civic ethics in primary and secondary education. In terms of teaching implementation, students are required to actively participate in the management of class and school affairs and encouraged to participate in elections that focusing on the integration of school civic education and community education. [20] The "Crack Report" put forward by the United Kingdom in 1998 believes that good citizens should not only have good morals, but also have good actions. [21]

In addition to civic moral education in the United States, Singapore and the United Kingdom, Russia is currently at a critical node of recovery and reconstruction. Therefore, in the new era, for Russia the development of moral education is very important. In the process of moral education, highlighting the homogenous national history, inheriting national traditions and the inclusiveness of Eastern and Western cultures are all helpful to consolidate the "New Russian Thought". It has played

a favorable role in promoting Russia to become a country under the rule of law and a society where citizens are completely masters of the country. This satisfies Russia's status as a major power. [22] For France, more emphasis is placed on the development of moral education for primary and secondary school students and the ability of moral cognition in the process of moral education for students. Whether to have a critical spirit and whether to form a sense of responsibility that individuals should have in the collective is the top priority of French primary and secondary education. Therefore, in 2015, France promulgated the "Outline of Citizenship and Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools" to ensure the implementation of moral education content for primary and secondary school students. [23]

It is not difficult to see that every country attaches great importance to the development of civic moral education. At the practical level, each country has its own way of integrating civic moral education into the curriculum, which is worthy of our reference and learning.

### **3. Further reflection on civic moral education**

From Cai Yuanpei used civic moral education as the backbone to cultivate the five educations of national sound personality in 1912 to the promulgation of the "New Outline" in 2019, the concept of civic moral education has gradually become clear during the development process of civic moral education in my country. In the new era, in order to strengthen the civic moral education, the following points should be adhered to.

#### **3.1 Always adhere to the correct political direction and the value guidance of socialist core values**

In the new era, we must adhere to the Marxist ideals and beliefs as the political direction of civic moral construction, the socialist core ethics as the common support for the national spirit, and guide the right direction for the future development of the country and the nation. At the symposium to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the birth of Comrade Zhu De, General Secretary Xi Jinping once again firmly put forward: "The belief in Marxism, the belief in socialism and communism are the political soul of the Communists and the spiritual support for the Communists to withstood various tests." [24] Under the guidance of Marxism, the Chinese Communists led the people to achieve a great historic leap from standing up to becoming rich and then leading the Chinese nation to become stronger. Therefore, in the construction of civic morality, we must adhere to the guidance of Marxism based on the national conditions, focus on Xi Jinping's new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics and rationally use Marxist positions and viewpoints to understand and solve the current problems in the construction of civic morality. The problem is to use socialist ethics as the basis for civic moral construction, strengthen the personal moral cultivation of citizens and explore new ways to promote people to be more ethical, ethical and ethical in the new era.

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized: "To give full play to the leading role of socialist core values in national education, the creation of spiritual civilization and the creation, production and dissemination of spiritual and cultural products and to integrate socialist core values into all aspects of social development." [25] The essence of the outstanding traditional culture of the Chinese nation for more than 5,000 years has been refined into the core values of socialism. Therefore, the new era should adhere to the core values as the guidance of civic moral education and integrate the core values into all aspects of civic moral education. A moral force that develops toward truth, goodness and beauty is widely formed in society. The core social values include content from the three levels of the country, society and individuals. In the process of civic moral education, it has a leading role in the moral judgment, moral choice and moral behavior of citizens, that is, "integrating the requirements of socialist core values into daily life and making it

permeate people's daily lives." [26]

### **3.2 Always adhere to the main role of citizens in moral education and the innovative development of moral education in inheriting traditions**

The moral education of citizens in the new era depends on the improvement of the moral quality of every citizen. In the process of moral education, the moral subjectivity of citizens is adhered to, so that citizens are concrete in the moral field and people have enough moral courage and moral responsibility to solve moral issues and create a better moral life. In the new era, the true value of moral education is not only the standardization and rigor of moral principles, but also the practice of citizens' moral behavior. It gives full play to the enthusiasm of citizens and combines correct moral understanding with practice. In specific practical activities, the whole process of civic education must run through moral construction activities. Learning from Lei Feng is widely carried out in schools, communities and society to guide people to take voluntary service as a living habit, cultivate civilized citizens and guide people to make continuous efforts.

The rolling history has left China with profound traditional virtues, such as the sense of personal responsibility of "bow the essence and die after death", the value concept of family and country of "death to the country and regard death as home" and the Oriental wisdom of "people who love constant love ". Therefore, the construction of civic morality in the new era cannot lose traditional virtues and wisdom. Citizen moral education must also carry forward the excellent revolutionary moral traditions of the Chinese Communists in the course of the revolution. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has visited Xibaipo, Jinggang Mountain, Yimeng Mountain and other revolutionary holy places to inherit the red gene. The Chinese people have formed many excellent ethics in the long-term process, such as self-reliance, selflessness, diligence and thrift, etc. This new era citizen moral education provides an inexhaustible source. In the process of civic moral education, we must integrate the revolutionary spirit with the current era, tap the contemporary value of the revolutionary spirit and continuously promote the progress of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### **3.3 Always adhere to the legal support and system guarantee for civic moral education**

Throughout the ages, the experience of moral education has shown that morality begins with enlightenment and becomes standard. It uses the power of the system to promote civic moral education. In the process of civic moral education, we must pay attention to the power of the rule of law as the guidance and guide people upward to be good. Human society is a complex system composed of different fields, levels and forms. Various systems restrict each other and jointly restrain citizens' daily activities. Moral principles and concepts of good and evil are generally abstract and general to a certain extent, while civic moral activities exist concretely. Therefore, it is necessary to concretize moral responsibility, standardize ethical spirit into specific system requirements and use the law as a strong backing for the provisions of the moral education system. When citizens violate the provisions of the civic moral education system, they should use the law to impose sanctions to ensure that citizens abide by the moral norms.

In the process of civic moral education, we must give full play to the role of legal norms and administrative norms. Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen all links of legal regulations. In the strict law enforcement link, the maintenance of moral order requires the rigidity of the legal system. In the process of impartial justice, citizens can feel the fairness of the law. In the phase of law-abiding by the whole people, citizens' moral and legal concepts are enhanced and citizens' awareness of the rule of law is enhanced. Citizen moral education must be based on a certain ethical and moral spirit and the system that citizens must follow in life must be endowed with virtue by morality, which is

recognized from the heart and supported by actions. In the process of implementing civic moral education, the government should consider three aspects: legitimacy, scientificity and especially moral requirements to realize the connection between civic morality and the government system.

### **3.4 Always adhere to the simultaneous development of civic moral education and civic moral governance**

Citizens' moral education in the new era must follow the laws of educating people and promote the harmonious development of families, neighborhoods and society. In 2015, In the meeting with the National Model for Moral Building in the 4th session, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed: "In the process of moral construction, it is necessary to give full play to the power of role models. Leading cadres at all levels and public figures from all walks of life must always pay attention to their words and deeds and serve as a moral role model for the whole society, so as to lead the masses to strive to be a civilized person, do more civilized things and show our country's image of a civilized great country." [27] The moral role model around the people is the moral benchmark for civic learning. In the process of civic moral education, it is necessary to carefully cultivate moral benchmarks and establish a model of the times, in-depth development of the public's learning path to moral models in activities, practically build moral model care Mechanism and focus on forming the social value orientation of virtue.

In the period of social transformation of our country, civic moral education is inseparable from effective special governance. Citizen morality has produced a series of problems, such as lack of integrity, moral indifference and anomie of public morality. If these problems cannot be solved reasonably, social moral order and social stability will be affected. Therefore, civic moral education must not only insist on actively advocating new social trends, but also grasp the outstanding issues in the process of civic moral education. Guided by major moral issues that are of concern to citizens, the moral education should be combined with the rule of law. For all kinds of moral issues that have broken through the bottom line, the overall improvement of social morality will be driven by comprehensive use of economic, administrative, legal and so on.

## **4. Conclusion**

In the 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China, civic moral education has reached a new level of education. Whether the civic moral system can be accepted by the society depends on whether it can correctly reflect the relationships between people, people and collectives, society, nature and morality. The essence of the relations is whether it conforms to the development of society. Citizen moral education requires the coordination and cooperation of family, school and social education. In the process of moral education, it adheres to the principle of unity of integrity and system and establishes a close moral education system between family, school and society based on family moral education. School Moral education is the core and social moral education is the guarantee. We should use good family education and family style to cultivate moral conduct, grasp the correct direction of social morality and public opinion and effectively improve the pertinence and effectiveness of citizen moral education.

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