

Why an Individual is Loyal to the Country

Kanghyun You*

Beijing No.80th high school,
Beijing, China

*Corresponding author:
youkanghyun043@outlook.com

Abstract:

This paper delves into the intricate concept of national loyalty, exploring its origins, manifestations, and ethical dilemmas. It posits that national loyalty is not solely driven by emotional and patriotic impulses but is also deeply rooted in citizenship and social constructs. The study examines the psychological, cultural, and contextual factors that shape national loyalty, emphasizing the influence of patriotic feelings, national identity, and security concerns. It also addresses the ethical challenges that arise when individual rights and freedoms conflict with national interests, highlighting the tension between personal autonomy and collective responsibility. The paper underscores the importance of education in cultivating a balanced form of patriotism that respects diversity and encourages active citizenship. By analyzing these dimensions, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of national loyalty, offering insights into how it can be fostered in a way that promotes social cohesion and respects individual rights. Ultimately, the paper seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on national loyalty, providing a nuanced perspective that considers both its positive and negative implications for individuals and society.

Keywords: National loyalty; patriotic sentiments; national identity; citizenship.

1. Introduction

Patriotism as a phenomenon is a rather complex notion, which has been an integral part of human civilization and personal and societal orientation for centuries. Patriotism is a combination of feelings, attitudes and behaviours through which people, citizens and a nation identify with and feel linked to a particular country. Now, knowing the underlying motivations of this loyalty and the subsequent consequences of it is all the more important given the current connected and multicultural environment that surrounds us.

This essay provides an analysis of why loyalty to one's country is not only a feeling based on emotional and patriotic concerns and based on the assurance that certain elements are in place such as security and stability, but also citizenship and societal construction. Through analysing the incentives and the ethical concerns of national loyalty, this essay will illustrate that the concept of loyalty is inextricably linked to the creation of national identity and citizenship. Loyalty is also one of the key factors that define the perception of the community, as well as goals and plans. This is the reason why people follow their

feelings and values throughout their lives, commonly regarded as loyalty. Some require loyalty for the feelings that are tied to their country and national identity, others may need it because of various concrete concerns that can be associated with security, order, and stability. Self-serving or self-preservation loyalty is often considered “blind loyalty” in that it is not bound by ethical norms or other more comprehensive ethical frameworks. However, the efficiency of the threat is still seen in citizens’ concern to support the development of their country, especially in critical conditions. Hence, loyalty implies a relationship in which concerns are in the best interest of the self and others, guided by ethical and moral standards in pursuit of both individual and overall benefit.

This essay will explore the various dimensions of national loyalty, discussing its key motivations, the mechanisms through which it is fostered, and the ethical dilemmas that arise when individual rights conflict with national interests.

2. The Concept and Meaning of Loyalty to the Country

2.1 Definition of Allegiance

Consequently, allegiance can be defined as a deep attachment and obedience that a person holds for a particular group, company or country. In the context of social psychological analysis of allegiance, it can be argued that commitment is an important component of group factors which include emotional, cognitive, and situational aspects. It is centred on a feeling of identification and affiliation that an individual has towards a country or a community. This attachment is not just an affectionate response but also an essential aspect of self-identity as it offers recognition, reassurance, and meaningful occupation. Social psychologists need to stress that loyalty is a rather multifaceted concept, which can involve positive aspects, including solidarity, patriotism, and national identity on the one hand, and potentially negative implications, including prejudice and exclusion of out-groups seen as threatening [1].

The definition of allegiance is fluid and can evolve and/or differ based on certain historical, political, economic, and social factors [1]. Although loyalty enhances voluntary compliance like voting and polite conduct, it is inclined to result in negative consequences if it engenders preeminence over other groups or fuels rivalry. This duality of allegiance underscores the complexity of the phenomenon and calls for a more nuanced approach to understanding how individuals handle their loyalty toward a country.

2.2 The Importance of Personal Loyalty to the State

People’s commitment to the state is one of the key ele-

ments that fosters positive citizenship and supports the stability of democracy. National and patriotic feelings significantly influence how individuals perceive and engage with their country. In some cases, ethnicity can play a crucial role in shaping these patriotic sentiments, especially in nations where ethnic identity is closely tied to national identity. Current studies have revealed a correlation between civic nationalism—which includes patriotic feelings, individual identification with the country, and respect for national institutions—and positive citizenship behaviours [2]. These behaviours include voting, obeying laws, and actively contributing to society. A patriotic person is likely to participate in state-related processes such as voting, voluntary work, paying taxes, and following laws.

However, the type of national attachment that is being used does make a difference. Where civic nationalism encourages behaviours that foster democracy and social capital—referring to the networks, relationships, and trust that allow society to function effectively—it leads to positive outcomes. Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, has been associated with negative outcomes, such as exclusionary behaviour and lower levels of democracy. This form of nationalism results in the emergence of factions within society, causing conflict and promoting insensitivity and a lack of unity among people from different areas. It is crucial to understand these kinds of national attachments to encourage a form of nationalism that is constructive, not destructive [2].

Appreciation of personal loyalty toward the state is therefore marked by the ability to distinguish between patriotism and reverse discrimination—where the dominant group feels they are being unfairly treated or excluded in favour of minority groups—often referred to as exclusionism. Individual identification with the state helps foster social cohesion and the acceptance of the state, democracy, and its institutions, thus nurturing order, democracy, and efficiency [2]. On the other hand, there should be a call for healthy forms of nationalism or nationalism with a positive attitude toward diversity, as this fosters a healthy, stable, and cohesive society [2].

3. The Motivation and Reason of Loyalty to the Country

3.1 Patriotic Sentiment

Another form of loyalty motivator is patriotic sentiment, or the attachment individuals feel toward their country. This perception is deeply rooted in social and psychological motives, often stemming from shared experiences, as well as cultural and historical references that express identity and unity. Psychologically, patriotism develops as part of socialization, where feelings of national identification and affection are instilled in individuals. This attachment

is supported by the culture that defines how we see things, by the family that enlightens us, and by politicians who appeal to the nationalist feeling [1].

Political disposition also plays a vital role in the manifestation of patriotic emotions. A study on the manifestation of patriotism shows that conservatives and liberals have different ways of perceiving and acting on patriotism. For example, conservatives may perceive patriotism in terms of symbols, culture, and defence while liberals may embrace it through equality or social justice [3]. This ideological divide thus results in diverse forms of loyalty within a single national culture and hence multiple patriotism may or may not overlap with the official structures of nationhood. Hanson and O'Dwyer's (2018) work reveals that while both the left and the right display nationalism in some way, the direction and nature of the nationalism are distinct owing to political beliefs and system values [3].

3.2 National Identity

Nationality, which is another significant factor for loyalty to a country, is determined by internal and external factors. In his cross-sectional comparison, Dirksmeier suggested that the character of nationality can indeed differ across cultures and socio-political contexts [4]. The concept of nationalism is defined differently in various countries, and their symbols and mottos may refer to history and culture, as political and economic accomplishments. Satisfaction with these aspects can produce a positive identity, which means that a person becomes more loyal to the country.

Hence current communication equipment and social networking systems feature prominently in the construction and reconstruction of national identity in the new millennium. As for modern modes, people develop, negotiate, and perform national identities in cyberspace, especially on the internet [5]. These digital media platforms enable the fast circulation of ideas and narratives hence fostering the construction of national consciousness. For instance, Social media has been employed in China to propagate nationalism where the government has seen it fit to assimilate traditional cultural norms with today's political system to garner loyalty amongst Chinese citizens [5].

3.3 Interests and Security Considerations

Patriotism is not only an ideal but also practical in terms of the interests of the state and security. Altogether, it should be noted that in critical situations, including the COVID-19 outbreak, the concept of national identity is shaped largely by the perceived threats and the desire for protection. In the case of the pandemic, many governments implemented strategies such as lockdowns, which were regarded in various ways within different countries. For example, in China, the government urged people to adhere to strict guidelines and accept a policy of unity by appealing to nationalist sentiments. These appeals were concluded to relate to more support from the public

toward government policies, a reflection of how threats increase the level of loyalty to the nation [6].

It is thus observed that the occurrence of crises hails conditions that make people develop what they feel as the necessity for nationalism or patriotic feelings entailing more affinity to their country. This attachment is usually seen in support of government activities that are viewed as protective or defensive. However, this relationship can be used in both ways by the heads of state, who appeal to people's patriotism as a reason for the actions that limit freedom, thus enhancing national identification during the crisis [6].

Analyzing these motivations - love for the country, national identity, and security concerns, this chapter reveals that loyalty to the country is a complex issue. It tackles the psychological, cultural, and situational factors concerning an individual's loyalty to his country, in a way that demonstrates the bond that between the heart and the head is as strong as the one that is between the heart and the soul.

4. Forms and Manifestations of Loyalty to the State

4.1 Legal Compliance and Civic Duty

Legal compliance and civic responsibility are the two primary forms of loyalty to the state, as they show the subject's willingness to follow and uphold the laws, as well as the standards of the given country. These behaviours are determined by various forms of nationalism and patriotism, as will be explained below. For instance, patriotism, which has been defined as love for one's country, is normally accompanied by positive citizenship behaviours which include obeying the laws, engaging actively in the affairs of their communities, and supporting the government and the adopted policies for the welfare of all citizens. On the other hand, the concept of nationalism which fosters the feeling of superiority and dominance of one country to the other can cause varying levels of compliance depending on what the policies going in line with nationalism mean [3]. This is essential because, although patriotism and nationalism may serve as sources of loyalty to a nation and its people, one may not necessarily galvanize the same with the other since the drivers and passions associated with the two may be markedly different; these create a perception of duty in people [3].

4.2 Participation in National Construction and Development

Patriotism as well as nationalism is not only related to social responsibilities but also participation in national growth. At such a time of crisis for example the COVID-19 pandemic, both forms of national attachment may influence citizens to advance government policies

and embrace national development endeavours. For instance, in China when the government called for nationalism and patriotism when managing the disease there was support for rigorous measures such as lockdowns because these were viewed as a defence mechanism of the country's health and security. This feeling of the common duty and pride of being a national awakened the society to comply willingly with the government's standard and follow all the recommended measures towards the control of the virus [6]. In the analysis of the results, it was observed that the more patriotic citizens have a high inclination to support policies that will be implemented by the government, thus it established the fact that nationalism can be a critical factor in encouraging people to participate in state activities during emergencies [6].

4.3 Attitude Towards National Crises and Challenges

Citizenship and people's loyalty to the state are typically challenged during difficult circumstances like war or the COVID-19 pandemic where unity is imperative. Earlier, shocks such as World War I reignited patriotic feelings as everyone, both men and women, became ready to dig deep to defend perceived affronts to the country's values and principles [7]. Similarly, modern crises including the coronavirus pandemic influenced the public perception through patriotism. For instance, the Chinese government depicted the fight against the virus as a patriotic cause, which would ensure people would follow various measures put in place to control the virus, thus gaining the population's support and cohesion [6]. These examples show that state loyalty is not constant but rather exists in many forms, especially at times when nationalist sentiments are important.

5. The Ethical and Moral Considerations of Allegiance to the State

5.1 Balance Between State and Individual Rights

Appreciation of personal rights about the devotion of an individual towards the state he or she belongs to is therefore a complex construct based on cognition skills that determine an individual's thinking style. It has been found that people with analytical minds may not perceive 'Loyalty' in a similar manner as people with intuitive minds. The type of patriotism of which one is more constructive, in the sense that it involves reflection on one's loyalty to the nation and willingness to critique it, is found more often in introspective thinkers. People with a higher extent of intuitive thinking, which is based on fast, non-reflective processes, are inclined to have uncritical, even heroic views of patriotism, which includes admiration and postulates the superiority of one's country and prohibits criti-

cism [8].

The analysis of citizenship behaviours showed that the positive reference to patriotism and nationalism can also be ambivalent and produce both positive and negative impacts on the behaviours of citizens. Thus, while civic nationalism is linked with pride and respect for the country and its institutions, there can be a positive association with civil activism and voting behaviours. In contrast, a type of nationalism, ethnic nationalism that focuses on ethnicity, birth and ancestral origin in defining the status of a person has been known to have exhibitionist behaviours and a low level of civility. These observations indicate that the kind of national identity impacts peoples' perception of balancing their human rights with their allegiance to the state to consider nurturing patriotic cultures that are more overtly civic [2].

5.2 Moral Conflict and Choice

The tension that can occur between national identification and social culture is the conflict between national policies or culture and one's ethical standards. For example, an attitude that one has towards immigrants fits this conflict as well. To some extent, such ethnocentrism makes people approve measures designed to protect the national interest against immigrants, who are viewed as a menace to the unity and integrity of the nation. However, the type of loyalty that may be implicated in such choices may clash with the other considerations relating to different forms of human rights and the resulting processes of categorization and exclusion that may be inherent in these forms of patriotism, thereby posing an ethical dilemma for agents who anchor themselves both on nations and human rights [9]. Other common types of moral conflicts are those that are born from a conflict of loyalty between the country and an individual. For example, people may find themselves in conditions when they are required to demolish state laws or not to violate their ethics. This conflict is most likely to arise when the state undertakes actions that are considered unfair or unethical. Some people may remain loyal to their state while others may decide to oppose or condemn the actions that the state takes to uphold the right moral values in the country thus showing that there is always a relationship between state allegiance and personal ethics [2].

6. Education and Training of Loyalty to the State

6.1 Roles of Family and School

Schools and families, as the main institutions of socialization, have always been instrumental in the process of forming national identity, often through authoritative measures. Over the ages, focusing on state formation, it was common to use mass education as a tool to enforce obe-

dience and respect for existing power structures. For instance, in the nineteenth century, many states implemented primary education systems not to educate the young, but to produce obedient citizens who would not question the current state of affairs. This approach is best illustrated in the expansion of education facilities in Europe and Latin America, where primary education was used to ensure compliance and prevent rebellions against the state [10].

6.2 Civic Education and National Identity

Public school systems have also been the tools of nationalization and civility to ensure national homogeneity. These systems sought to ingrain the spirit of nationalism and citizenship by imparting standard language and societal norms [9]. In recent societies, education remains paramount in the development of patriotism with the enhancement of the positive identity of the nation. For instance, during the COVID-19 outbreak, with the help of educational tools, governments tried to garner support for national initiatives and increase the citizens' sense of unity and belonging [6].

7. Conclusion and Prospect

This exploration of loyalty to the country has highlighted its complex nature, shaped by patriotic sentiment, national identity, and responses to crises. Various forms of nationalism and patriotism influence behaviours such as legal compliance, civic duty, and participation in national development. While national loyalty can be cultivated through education and socialization, ethical challenges arise when individual rights conflict with state demands. Looking forward, loyalty in a fast-moving world has to be nurtured through striking the right balance between inclusiveness and national unity. Education must instil a form of patriotism that embraces diversity and, at the same time, propels active citizenship. Meeting these challenges requires grasping the complexities of national identity and utilizing education as a tool to foster an informed, engaged citizenry that is committed to country and global

values.

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