

Republicanism in the History of Political Philosophy and Today

3rd Biennial *Ideas in Politics* Conference

Prague: November 3rd-4th, 2017

Panel 2.2 Abstracts

Arguing for Political Judgement as Key Capability of Republican Environmental Citizens

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This paper argues for recognizing political judgement as a key capability of republican environmental citizens and points out the need to focus on the framework conditions enabling political judgement.

The need for a sustainability transformation challenges the traditional concept of citizenship. In response, scholars are developing different concepts of environmental citizenship such as republican environmental citizenship. This concept adjusts elements of the classic republican model: As in classic republicanism, it is the duty of each citizen to engage in producing the common good; however, the common good now includes an intact environment, and the virtues required to fulfill citizenly duties comprise "green" virtues. Active citizen participation is another classic element attuned to new challenges by republican environmental citizenship scholars. They regard it as an opportunity to develop and extend ("green") civic virtues and believe it propels reflection, perspective exchange and, ultimately, the transformation of environmentally harmful attitudes.

While promising a compelling way to bring about the necessary transformation to sustainability at first sight, several scholars criticize the assumptions underlying republican environmental citizenship amongst others because of their "purely theoretical" nature: Not only is there a lack of ideas concerning the practical implementation of republican environmental citizenship, especially regarding the necessary institutional structures. Moreover, the high hopes placed in active citizen participation seem to conflict with empirical findings on citizen participation.

Nonetheless, based on a critical discussion of the potentials and weaknesses of republican environmental citizenship, the author comes to the conclusion that republican environmental citizenship is necessary to achieve a transformation to sustainability.

Subsequently, the paper argues for focusing on political judgement formation as a key capability of republican environmental citizens.

Political judgement describes the ability to decide on the right course of action in a particular situation, to make this decision with a view to collective interests and without having a fixed set of criteria on which individual decisions can be based. "Good" political judgement builds on both knowledge and empathy and requires deliberative institutions and practices to be learned and implemented. In other words, it depends on the prioritization of the common good over personal interests and on the ability to take others' perspectives and, thus, bundles up the assumed positive effects of active citizen participation in line with republican environmental citizenship.

The paper concludes that a transformation to sustainability requires republican environmental citizens actively participating as citizens by forming political judgements. However, as the scholarship on republican environmental citizenship is lacking in proposals to practically implement this kind of citizenship, so is the literature on political judgement formation: It remains unclear which institutional framework conditions need to be created in order to allow for political judgement formation.

In sum, the paper reviews literature on environmental citizenship and subsequently links the concept of republican environmental citizenship with the concept of political judgement. Thereby, it contributes to the evaluation of republican environmental citizenship's potential for sustainability transformation, shows the added value of relating both topics to the concept of political judgement and deduces questions on the practical implementation of both concepts. This paper argues for

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Citizenship, Equality, and Economic Crisis

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In this paper I argue that economic crises produce domination. Specifically, the unemployment generated by economic crises threatens the equality of republican citizenship; such equality requires certain resources and opportunities, access to which becomes vulnerable to those who suffer unemployment. The degradation of status these citizens suffer as a result constitutes a form of domination.

Economic crisis is a recurring and inherent feature of capitalist societies that has dramatic effects on the economic trajectory of a society and the lives of individuals within it. While crises vary in kind, all emerge from the standard operation of the business cycle (Gorton, 2012, 75; Schumpeter, 1927, 287). One common effect of these crises is increased unemployment disproportionately affecting young people, leading to longer periods of unemployment than that brought about in non-crisis periods; in the longer-term, this can have a major effect on an individual's employment and social prospects across their whole working life (Bell & Blanchflower, 2009; Verick, 2009).

These crises imperil access to material and non-material resources and opportunities that are part of the status of a free and equal republican citizen. The republican conception of freedom is committed to a multi-faceted relational equality between and among citizens (Garrau & Laborde, 2015; Pettit, 2012, 82-3). Three dimensions of this equality are threatened by crises. First, unemployment deprives citizens of their main source of income, jeopardizing the ability of citizens to access basic material goods. Citizens who cannot secure basic goods are dominated both due to their poverty and how that poverty affects the way other citizens treat them. Republican citizens have a right to those goods necessary to avoid dependence, and the lack of these goods may be interpreted by one's compatriots as indicative of lack of full political and social status. Second, unemployment constitutes an exclusion from a socially influential practice of acknowledgment and validation of status. Formal employment is commonly understood to be a highly significant practice of social reciprocity, participation in which expresses an ethos of social equality and respect to one's compatriots (White, 2003, 28). To be barred from making a contribution of this kind is institutionally expressive of a lack of political standing, whereas republican institutions should act to affirm the equal standing of all citizens. Third, unemployment of this kind damages the social bases of self-respect necessary for republican citizenship, which include employment and a number of its associated benefits (Pettit, 1997, 56). The effect of crises, then, is to dislocate the egalitarianism of republican citizenship in these three ways, rendering those citizens most susceptible to unemployment vulnerable to exclusion from the full status of republican citizenship, and, as such, to domination.

Having set out the nature of this domination, I then briefly consider whether it might be possible to ameliorate these vulnerabilities within capitalist societies. I suggest that a jobs guarantee policy is a plausible way in which republicans could reform capitalist societies so as to secure robust republican freedom free from the vulnerabilities discussed.

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Analyzing Policy in Network Governance through the Lens of Neo-republicanism and the Concept of Domination

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Network governance, which involves an informal and self-regulated set of public and private actors who together address various political and social problems, has substantially altered the institutional landscape of the formation and implementation of public policy. A common view is that network governance makes it possible to enhance pluralism and disperse political power by transferring power from the sovereign state to a wider set of private actors and stakeholders. In this article I suggest that we need to analyze network governance in reference to the framework of neo-republicanism and the concept of domination. An alternative image is thereby formed which reveals that network governance may in fact generate a form of institutional domination that encompasses both citizens and civil society actors due to the arbitrary influence that certain network participants come to exercise the life choices of non-participants. This article specifies five dimensions in which domination may arise and, conversely, be mitigated.

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Reverse-Engineering of Freedom in Republican Thought

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In this paper I investigate the role that freedom plays in republican political thought, and specifically its relationship with liberalism. I argue that the fragmentation of the concept of freedom into rival accounts has been driven largely by political factors: by writers either pursuing a political agenda of their own, or striving to combat what they see as politically-motivated distortions introduced by others. In support of this thesis I contrast the work of Isaiah Berlin, with his distinction between positive and negative freedom, and Philip Pettit, with his distinction between freedom as non-interference and freedom as non-domination.

I start with the assumption that freedom has two key features: it is triadic (x is free from y to do z), and it is about the realisation of desires (goals, objectives, etc.), hypothetical as well as actual. It follows that freedom cannot be increased or diminished simply by creating or eliminating desires, since to be free involves having the ability to do something if one were to so desire. These assumptions, I suggest, are common to most accounts in the liberal and republican traditions, although confining them to political freedom may involve limiting the domain of one of the elements of the triad.

While Berlin's "negative" freedom is clearly one of those accounts, I argue that his concept of "positive" freedom is a mixed construct that results from his attempt to discredit a set of views regarded as politically suspect— notably those associated with Marxism in the mid-twentieth century. Without that imperative, it's not difficult to separate "positive" freedom into some elements that fit within an ordinary liberal conception and others that are not really to do with freedom at all.

The subsequent rise of political libertarianism provides the context for Pettit's reimagining of republican theory, and his desire to distinguish non-interference (identified with Berlin's "negative" conception) from non-domination. He argues that understanding freedom as non-domination is necessary to justify a larger sphere of state action, and that the contrasting idea of non-interference was introduced in part to provide cover for traditional power relations.

I show that if we move beyond these political considerations, the difference between Pettit's two conceptions largely disappears. Philosophical discussions of freedom cannot be understood in isolation from broader political debates, and one advantage of a relatively "thin" conception of freedom is that it can allow such debates to focus on substantive considerations (which freedoms are most important, which impediments to freedom are properly the concern of the state, and so on) rather than being diverted into semantic questions that obscure the real issues.

I conclude with the thought that where liberal and republican traditions diverge more sharply is over their understanding of democracy. Rather than thinking of interpretations of democracy as being derived from different concepts of freedom, I suggest it would be more accurate to think of rival concepts of freedom as having been reverse-engineered from different ideas about democracy and about the nature of the state.