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## Republican Citizenship

RICHARD DAGGER

To speak of republican citizenship is to risk confusion, at least in the United States, where it is often necessary to explain that one is referring to ‘small-r’ republicanism rather than a position taken by the Republican Party. But just as one may be a democrat without being a Democrat, so one may be a republican without being a Republican. The ideas of democracy and the republic are far older than any political party and far richer than any partisan label can convey – rich enough to make the use of ‘republican’ here worth the risk of some initial confusion.

‘Republican’ and ‘citizen’, in fact, are old and intertwined words – so old that some may wonder at their relevance in the brave new world of the twenty-first century, and so intertwined that the phrase ‘republican citizenship’ seems almost redundant to others. There is no republic without citizens, after all; and, according to the classical republican thinkers, there is no citizenship, in the full sense of the word, except among those who are fortunate enough to inhabit a republic. But this view of citizenship’s connection to republicanism no longer seems to prevail. If it did, there would be no need for a chapter on republican citizenship in this volume of essays on citizenship, for the authors would simply assume that citizenship entails republicanism and go on to other matters.

There might also be no need for this chapter if it were not for the revival of scholarly interest in republicanism in recent years. Such a revival has definitely occurred, though, and occurred simultaneously with a renewed interest in citizenship. This coincidence suggests that *republican* citizenship is well worth our attention, not only for purposes of historical understanding but also as a way of thinking about citizenship in the twenty-first century. Why this revival has occurred and whether republican citizenship truly offers anything of relevance or value today are thus the subjects of this chapter.

The first subject, however, must be republicanism itself. Rather than attempt to survey the long, varied, and often contested history of republicanism – a task undertaken recently by Oldfield (1990), Rahe (1992), Sellers (1998) and others – I begin by trying to distill something of the spirit and forms of republicanism into a brief but historically sensitive account. The second part of the chapter then shifts the emphasis to citizenship by explaining, from the republican standpoint, its value. Part three takes up the revival of interest in republicanism and citizenship in the last quarter century or so, and the fourth section concludes the chapter with a defense of the continuing relevance of the republican conception of citizenship.

## REPUBLICANISM

‘Republic’ derives from the Latin *res publica*, the public thing, matter, business, or property, with the implication that a republic differs from a state or society in which the rulers regard everything, including the people who inhabit it, as their property.<sup>1</sup> In a republic, that is, the government of the state or society is a public matter, and the people rule themselves. *Publicity* – the condition of being open and public rather than private or personal – and *self-government* thus seem to be the essential elements of republicanism.

But what exactly do publicity and self-government entail? What is ‘the public’, and how are its members to govern themselves? There is no single republican answer to these questions. In ancient times, and long beyond, republicans typically assumed that the public comprised the citizenry, and only property-owning, arms-bearing men could be citizens. Contemporary republicans define the public and citizenship more expansively, however, to include women and people without property, and nothing in the idea of republicanism prevents them from doing so. Similar shifts have occurred with regard to self-government. When they designed representative institutions for the new republic, for example, the men who drafted the US Constitution knew that they were departing from the classical conception of self-government as direct participation in rule; yet they saw this as an improvement within, not an abandonment of, republican practice. Whether they were right to think so, or whether they sacrificed too much participation and relied too heavily on representation, remains a point of contention. But it is the commitment to publicity and self-government that generates this and other intramural disputes among republicans. For republicans, the question is not whether publicity and self-government are good things; it is how best to achieve them.

One could say the same, of course, about liberals, conservatives, socialists, and others who claim to promote government of the

people, by the people, and for the people. Publicity and self-government may be the essential elements of republicanism, but they are not peculiar to it. To the extent that they stress the importance of publicity and self-government, however, modern political theories do so because they draw upon the legacy of classical republicanism. To the extent that they differ from one another – and from republicanism – it is because they pursue the implications of publicity and self-government in different ways. Thus writers such as William Sullivan (1986), Michael Sandel (1996), and Philip Pettit (1997) maintain that liberalism gives too much attention to privacy and individual rights and too little to fostering the public virtues that lead people to do their duties as citizens. Liberals and republicans both want to promote self-government, according to Pettit, but liberals make the mistake of thinking that all forms of restraint deprive people of freedom – even, as we shall see, the restraints imposed by a legal system that prevent some people from ruling or dominating others. There is, then, a neo-republican school of thought that sees liberalism as a misguided rival of republicanism. To others with republican sympathies, these differences are more a matter of emphasis than of fundamental commitments. One may be a republican *and* a liberal, on this view, and there are reasons to think that republican liberalism is an especially attractive political philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Still, to speak of *republican* liberalism is to acknowledge, first, that republicanism and liberalism are not one and the same, and, second, that there are more and less republican forms of liberalism. To understand what is distinctive about republicanism, then, we must look more closely at the implications republicans draw from publicity and self-government.

In the case of publicity, the implications are twofold. The first is that politics, as the public’s business, must be conducted openly, *in public*. The second is that ‘the public’ is not only a group of people but an aspect or sphere of life with its own claims and considerations, even if it is not easily

distinguished from the private. What makes something public is that it involves people as members of a community or polity – as people joined by common concerns that take them out of their private lives and beyond, as Tocqueville put it in *Democracy in America* ([1835] 1969: 506), ‘the circle of family and friends’. One need not go as far in this regard as Aristotle – or as Aristotle as read by Hannah Arendt (1958: esp. Part II) – but all republicans believe that there is something enriching about public life, regardless of how wearisome it sometimes may be. Public life draws people out, and it draws them together. It draws out their talents and capacities, and it draws them together into community – into connection and solidarity, and occasionally conflict, with other members of the public.<sup>3</sup> No matter how desirable they may seem to others, neither a life of unfettered individualism nor one devoted exclusively to family and friends will appeal to a republican.

From these aspects of publicity follow the republican emphasis on *the rule of law* and, perhaps most distinctively, *civic virtue*. The public business must be conducted in public not only for reasons of convenience – literally, of coming together – but also in order to guard against corruption. As members of the public, people must be prepared to overcome their personal inclinations and set aside their private interests when necessary to do what is best for the public as a whole. The public-spirited citizens who act in this way display public or civic virtue. If they are to manifest this virtue, furthermore, the public must be bound by the rule of law. Because it is the public’s business, politics requires public debate and decisions, which in turn require regular, established procedures – that is, rules about who may speak, when they may speak, and how decisions are to be reached. Decisions must then take the form of promulgated rules or decrees that guide the conduct of the members of the public. From the insistence on publicity, the rule of law quickly follows.<sup>4</sup>

The connection of self-government to the rule of law is at least as strong and immediate.

If citizens are to be self-governing, they cannot be subject to absolute or arbitrary rule. If the citizen is to be *self-governing*, then he or she must be free from the absolute or arbitrary rule of others. To avoid this arbitrariness, citizens must be subject to the rule of law – the government of laws, not of men, in what was the standard formula.<sup>5</sup> But it is also important to note that self-government requires *self-governing*. The republican citizen is not someone who acts arbitrarily, impulsively, or recklessly, but according to laws he or she has a voice in making. Again, the need for the rule of law is evident.

As with publicity, the republican commitment to self-government leads to characteristic republican themes, such as the republican conception of freedom and, again, of civic virtue. Self-government is, of course, a form of freedom. For republicans, it is the most important form, for other forms of individual freedom are secure only in a free state, under law. Freedom thus requires dependence upon the law so that citizens may be independent of the arbitrary will of others. In Pettit’s terms, republicans are less concerned with freedom from interference than with freedom from domination (1997).<sup>6</sup> It is not interference as such that is objectionable but its arbitrariness. A slave and a citizen may both suffer interference when the former must bow to the will of the master and the latter must bow to the law, but their conditions are hardly equivalent. The master need not consider the slave’s desires or interests, but the law, at least in the ideal, must attend to the interests of the citizen even when it interferes with his or her actions. Because it protects the citizen against arbitrary, unaccountable power, the law is ‘the non-mastering interferer’ that ensures the citizen’s freedom (Pettit, 1997: 41).

The law only ensures the citizen’s freedom, however, when it is responsive to the citizenry and when the republic itself is secure and stable enough for its laws to be effective. Sustaining freedom under the rule of law thus requires not only active and public-spirited participation in public affairs – the civic

virtue of the republican citizen – but also the proper form of government. This will be some version of *mixed* or *balanced* government, so called because it mixes and balances elements of rule by one, rule by the few, and rule by the many. As Pocock (1975) and others have noted, writers from Polybius and Cicero to Machiavelli and the American founders celebrated the mixed constitution for its ability to stave off corruption and tyranny. Monarchy, aristocracy, and rule by the people are prone, according to these writers, to degenerate into tyranny, oligarchy, and mob rule, respectively; but a government that disperses power among the three elements could prevent either the one, the few, or the many from pursuing its own interest at the expense of the common good. With each element holding enough power to check the others, the result should be a free, stable, and long-lasting government.

If the mixed constitution is the characteristic form of the republic, civic virtue is its desired substance. Without citizens who are willing to defend the republic against foreign threats and to take an active part in its government, even the mixed constitution will fail. Republics must thus engage in what Sandel (1996: 6) calls ‘a formative politics ... that cultivates in citizens the qualities of character that self-government requires’. Constitutional safeguards may be necessary to resist corruption in the forms of avarice, ambition, luxury, and idleness, but they will not suffice to sustain freedom under the rule of law in the absence of a significant degree of virtue among the citizens. Seeing to the continuing supply of civic virtue through education and other means will be, accordingly, one of the principal concerns of a prudent republic.

A prudent republic will also be a small one. That, at least, has been the conclusion – or presumption – of many republicans throughout the centuries. ‘In a large republic’, as Montesquieu explained in 1748 in *The Spirit of the Laws* (Book VIII, Chap. 16), ‘the common good is sacrificed to a thousand considerations; it is subordinated to exceptions; it depends upon accidents. In a small

one, the public good is better felt, better known, lies nearer to each citizen; abuses are less extensive and consequently less protected’. So widespread was this view in the late eighteenth century, and so fierce the insistence that only a small polity can sustain a republic, that the American authors of the *Federalist* found it necessary to point out that Montesquieu had also allowed for the possibility of a ‘federal’ – or ‘CONFEDERATE’, according to *Federalist* 9 – republic. Even then, the debate over the proposed constitution often turned on the question of whether the United States would become a ‘federal’ or a ‘compound’ republic – a republic comprising thirteen or more smaller republics – or whether it would become a ‘consolidated’ republic that could not long preserve its republican character.

A small republic or a large (con)federal republic: these seem to be the only alternatives that the republican tradition allows. The concern for size and civic virtue that these alternatives reflect testifies to the republican belief that citizens must have a strong attachment to their polity that grows out of a connection to their fellow citizens. This connection must work almost immediately, as in the city-republic, or in building-block fashion, with the higher and more remote layers of government resting on the local ones, as in the federal republic. Without some connection of this sort, civic virtue will not flourish and self-government will not survive. Neither will the form of citizenship that some have regarded as its only true form.

#### THE VALUE OF REPUBLICAN CITIZENSHIP

‘We have physicists, geometers, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, and painters in plenty; but we have no longer a citizen among us’. So wrote Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (Rousseau, [1750] 1950: 169). His lament echoes today in the writings of those who deplore the decline or loss of ‘real’ or ‘true’

citizenship – especially in the United States and other countries where worries about declining electoral participation and eroding ‘social capital’ abound (e.g. Putnam, 2000). Consciously or not, these laments bespeak a desire for a revival of republican citizenship.

From the republican point of view, citizenship has an ethical as well as a legal dimension. If it did not, Rousseau’s lament would make no sense in a world where more and more people hold the legal title of citizen. If the lament does make sense, it is because we continue to regard citizenship, in republican fashion, as an *ethos* – a way of life. Citizenship may be a matter of legal status that confers various privileges and immunities on the citizen, in other words, but it must be more than that. ‘Real’ or ‘true’ citizenship requires commitment to the common good and active participation in public affairs. It requires civic virtue.

That is not to say that republicans denigrate the legal aspect of citizenship. On the contrary, the citizen of a community governed by the rule of law must be someone who holds the legal rights and duties of membership. To say that Joan Smith or Juan Sosa is a citizen of a republic is to say that Smith or Sosa not only enjoys the protection of its laws but is also subject to them. It is also to say that, as a citizen, Smith or Sosa is supposed to be on an equal footing with other citizens. If Smith or Sosa is not treated equally under the law, then she or he may rightly complain of being a ‘second-class citizen’. In these respects, legal status is as necessary to the republican conception of citizenship as to any other.

Necessary but not sufficient, for it requires the supplement of the ethical dimension. This ethical aspect of citizenship is evident in the theory and practice of the Greeks and Romans who bequeathed us the concepts of citizenship and republic. ‘Citizen’, of course, derives from the Latin *civis*, or member of the *civitas* (city-state); the Latin terms parallel the Greek *politēs* and *polis*. In ancient Greece and Rome the citizen was a full member of the community. Every other member – whether woman,

child, slave, or resident alien – was subject to the laws, and might even enjoy some rights under them, but only the citizen had the right to take part in the government of the community. Not only was the citizen *entitled* to engage in civic affairs, he was *expected* to do so. In ancient Athens, this could mean that a citizen would have to devote the better part of his time and energy to public concerns, such as serving on a jury for a full year. Such devotion was necessary if he was to achieve the ideal of citizenship: to be a self-governing member of a self-governing community. Those who preferred a more private or less arduous life than the citizen’s could find themselves mocked, as they were in Pericles’ Funeral Oration, as ‘good for nothing’ (Thucydides, [431–411BCE] 1993: 42). Indeed, the Greeks drew a contrast between the *politēs*, the citizen expected to play a part in public affairs, and the *idiōtēs*, the private person who could not or would not meet this expectation.

That we no longer regard ‘citizen’ and ‘idiot’ as opposites may be a measure of how far we have departed from the classical ideal of citizenship. Even so, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the ethical dimension of citizenship persists. There is, for instance, the fact that we sometimes characterize people as good or bad citizens. If citizenship were only a matter of legal status, we would not be able to distinguish ‘good’ citizens from ‘bad’, or ‘true’ citizens from those who are citizens ‘in name only’. This point is brought home by those who insist that ‘every citizen holds office’ (Kennedy, 1961; Zwiebach, 1975: 87; van Gunsteren, 1998: 25). That is, citizens hold a position of public responsibility, just as mayors, senators, city councillors, and members of parliament do. The citizen who does not act responsibly may thus be said to betray a public trust, while the citizen who faithfully does his or her duty displays civic virtue. Citizenship has an ethical dimension, in short, because there are standards built into the concept of citizenship, just as there are standards built into the concepts of mayor, teacher, plumber, and physician. In

the case of citizenship, moreover, these are republican standards, for they stress the public nature of citizenship.

This public nature manifests itself in two ways. The first is that the good citizen is a public-spirited person who places the interests of the community ahead of personal interests. Such a person will recognize that citizenship is a matter of responsibilities as much as rights, and the good citizen will discharge these responsibilities when called upon to do so – from the day-to-day demands of obeying traffic laws and respecting the rights of others to the more onerous burdens of paying taxes and providing military (or some alternative) service. The second way in which this commitment to the public good manifests itself is in civic involvement. Good citizens will undertake public responsibilities when called upon, as with jury duty, but they will not always wait for others to issue the call. Instead, they will take an active part in public affairs. They need not be ‘political junkies’ who have little interest in any other area of life; they may even share Oscar Wilde’s concern that ‘socialism [or any political cause] takes too many evenings’. But the good citizen will not think that an occasional evening devoted to public affairs is one too many, nor that politics is a nuisance to be avoided or a spectacle to be witnessed. Politics is the public’s business, and the good citizen, according to the republican view, will try to play a well-informed and public-spirited part in the conduct of this business.

The republican standards embedded in the ethical dimension of citizenship thus provide an ideal of what a citizen should be. Like other ideals, however, republican citizenship can take more or less stringent forms. At its most stringent, the republican conception seems to demand unquestioning loyalty and total sacrifice from the citizen. The Spartan mother who supposedly told her son to come back a hero from the war or to come back on his shield gave voice to this view. In its less stringent forms, the republican conception acknowledges that even good citizens should not forsake self-interest

altogether. Tocqueville articulated this position when he praised the doctrine of ‘self-interest properly understood’. Paying taxes, serving on juries, obeying the law, and attending to public affairs require the sacrifice of time, attention, and treasure, but such sacrifices are necessary if we are to preserve republican government and continue to enjoy the rights of the citizen.<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of ‘self-interest properly understood’ may not inspire extraordinary deeds or heroic sacrifices, Tocqueville admitted, ‘but every day it prompts some small ones; by itself it cannot make a man virtuous, but its discipline shapes a lot of orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled citizens. If it does not lead the will directly to virtue, it establishes habits which unconsciously turn it that way’ ([1835–40] 1969: 526–7).

As Tocqueville’s remarks suggest, the person who acquires the habits of the public-spirited citizen is also likely to become a better, more virtuous person in other respects. To appreciate how this can happen, we need to examine two further dimensions of republican citizenship: the *integrative* and the *educative*.

Republicans believe that citizenship provides ‘an integrative experience which brings together the multiple role activities of the contemporary person and demands that the separate roles be surveyed from a more general point of view’ (Wolin, 1960: 434). When we act as (republican) citizens, we cannot simply speak or vote as parents or workers or consumers or members of this group or that sect. A policy that will work to one’s benefit as a consumer may work to one’s detriment as a worker or parent, for instance, so the search for a more synoptic understanding of one’s interests becomes necessary. According to Rousseau, one should simply set aside personal interests to follow the general will one has as a citizen – that is, as one who has no interests except as a member of the public ([1762] 1950, Book II, Chs. 1–4). But we cannot truly act as members of the public unless we have some understanding of the personal interests of the people involved. The activity of

citizenship – the exchange of views, the give-and-take of debate – helps to provide this understanding. Indeed, the activity of citizenship performs an integrative function in two respects: it enables the individual to integrate the various roles he or she plays, and it integrates individuals into the community.

Assuming that citizenship does in fact provide this integrative experience, one may still wonder how this helps someone to become a better person. The answer is that it instills a more secure sense of self, of one's identity and integrity as a person. One of the most common complaints about modern society is that life tends to be divided into a series of almost discrete compartments. We leave home to go to work, where the division of labor often confines us to a narrow and repetitive task; we leave work to go shopping, where we encounter people we know only as clerks and customers; we leave the store to drive or ride home, seldom seeing a familiar face along the way. Modern, urban society presents a far greater range of opportunities than earlier forms of society, but it also separates people from one another and splits their lives into fragments (Wirth, 1938). To the extent that active citizenship requires people to see themselves as more than the sum of the various roles they play, it will work to establish a secure sense of self. Anyone who finds this desirable will thus have good reason to believe that the integrative aspects of citizenship will be, at least in the long term, of personal benefit.

Of course, there are other ways to deal with the multiplicity of roles and the fragmentation of identity characteristic of modern life. One way is to withdraw into a cave; another is to join an all-embracing community of like-minded people. Yet another is to concentrate, so far as the insistent demands of modern life will allow, on a single role – parent, perhaps, or soldier or scholar – to the virtual exclusion of all others. From the republican standpoint, however, citizenship offers a better alternative because it promises an educative as well as an integrative experience.

Perhaps the best way to make this point is in terms of a distinction Dennis Thompson draws between Rousseau's 'patriotic' and John Stuart Mill's 'enlightened' conception of citizenship (Thompson, 1976: 43–50). For Rousseau's austere republicanism, the true citizen puts the good of the community above all other considerations. Citizenship demands simplicity – a whole-hearted devotion to duty – rather than sophistication. For Mill's liberal republicanism, however, good citizens are people who develop their faculties through active engagement in public life. As Mill argues in *Representative Government*, the individual stands to gain from the intellectual growth, the practical discipline, and

the moral part of the instruction afforded by the participation of the private citizen, if even rarely, in public functions. He is called upon, while so engaged, to weigh interests not his own; to be guided, in case of conflicting claims, by another rule than his private partialities; to apply, at every turn, principles and maxims which have for their reason of existence the common good: and he usually finds associated with him in the same work minds more familiarized than his own with these ideas and operations, whose study it will be to supply reasons to his own understanding, and stimulation to his feelings for the general interest. He is made to feel himself one of the public, and whatever is for their benefit to be for his benefit. (Mill, [1861] 1975: 196–7)

On Mill's account, then, active citizenship educates people by drawing out abilities that might otherwise remain untapped or unfulfilled. Because these abilities will prove valuable in other aspects of the citizens' lives as well, the educative dimension of citizenship clearly promises to work to their benefit.

Two other features of this educative dimension are noteworthy. Both pertain to 'the moral part of the instruction' afforded by participation in public affairs. The first

is that this participation leads individuals to Tocqueville's doctrine of 'self-interest properly understood'. For reasons Mill set out, active citizenship widens individuals' horizons and deepens their sense of how their lives are involved with others', including the lives of people who are unknown to them. In this way participation works to overcome *individualism* as Tocqueville understood it: 'a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself' ([1835–40] 1969: 506). Republican citizenship works to overcome this pernicious form of individualism by fostering the individual's sense of himself or herself as a part of, rather than apart from, the public.

It is also important to notice *how* participation encourages public-spirited citizenship. The legal dimension of citizenship inclines us to think of citizenship in categorical terms: either one is a citizen of a certain polity or one is not. From the ethical perspective, however, one can be more or less of a citizen – a 'real' citizen, a citizen 'in name only', or something in between. Mill's insight is that real citizenship can be cultivated by encouraging those who are citizens in name only to join in public life. From modest beginnings in occasional activities that require one to 'weigh interests not his own' and to look beyond 'his private partialities', political participation can transform the nominal citizen into one who, 'made to feel himself one of the public', is moved to act by the desire to promote the common good. Participation in public life thus seems to be a pathway to, as well as a defining feature of, republican citizenship.

#### REVIVING REPUBLICAN CITIZENSHIP

The belief that participation in public life is neither as extensive nor as intensive as it ought to be is largely responsible for the

recent revival of interest in both citizenship and republicanism. The complaint is not so much that civic life in the advanced democracies has declined dramatically from some golden age as that it has failed to realize the promise of republican citizenship. This complaint, for instance, animated the work of Hannah Arendt in the middle of the twentieth century. Technology has eased the burdens of labor and freed people to act as citizens in the public realm, she argued in *The Human Condition* (1958), yet we turn away from public life and toward private consumption. We want governments to provide for the welfare of the citizenry, she declared in *On Revolution*, but we 'deny the very existence of public happiness and public freedom' as we 'insist that politics is a burden ...' (1965: 273). We are, in short, squandering an opportunity to achieve what the republicans of ancient Greece and Rome thought impossible – a polity in which the freedom of republican self-government is available not only to the well-to-do few but to almost the entire people.

Similar concerns lie behind the republican revival of the last quarter-century or so. In this case, neo-republicans tend to place the blame on one, or both, of two theories they regard as pernicious. One of these is liberalism; the other is the tendency to reduce politics to the market place.

According to such critics as Sandel (1982, 1996), Sullivan (1986), Pettit (1997), and Barber (1984), the liberal emphasis on individual rights and liberties has worked to loosen civic bonds and undermine self-government. As Sandel puts it, 'the civic or formative aspect of our [American] politics has largely given way to the liberalism that conceives persons as free and independent selves, unencumbered by moral or civic ties they have not chosen' (1996: 6). This 'voluntarist' or 'procedural' liberalism, as found in the works of liberal philosophers such as John Rawls (1971, 1993) and the legal decisions of liberal jurists, has fostered a society in which individuals fail to understand how much they owe to the community. The chief purpose of the state, accordingly, is to

arbitrate the conflicting claims of these individuals as they pursue their disparate conceptions of the good life. Such a society will be self-subverting, Sandel insists, for it ‘fails to capture those loyalties and responsibilities whose moral force consists partly in the fact that living by them is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are – as members of this family or city or nation or people, as bearers of that history, as citizens of this republic’ (1996: 14). Where such loyalties and responsibilities cannot be sustained, self-government cannot survive. Hence the need for a republican revival.

Others have reached this conclusion in reaction to the tendency of many political scientists and economists to think of politics as a form of economic activity. In politics and public affairs, according to this view (e.g. Schumpeter, 1962; Downs, 1957), the citizen is essentially a consumer. Political parties offer candidates and platforms in an attempt to win votes, and sensible consumer-citizens vote so as to strike the best bargain for themselves. If they decide that the political market place offers nothing appealing, or that their resources are better invested elsewhere, consumer-citizens will stay away from the ballot box and quite wisely forsake political activity. They may even find that it is rational for them to remain largely ignorant of public affairs. There is little that one vote can accomplish, after all, so why waste time studying the issues and assessing the candidates in order to cast a meaningless vote?<sup>8</sup>

This way of thinking about citizenship and politics is far removed from the republican ideal of civic virtue. Conceiving of the citizen as a consumer may capture the legal dimension of citizenship, but there is no room in this conception for the ethical, integrative, or educative aspects of citizenship. Indeed, one republican response is to say that the consumer-citizen is a citizen in name only: ‘Market theories of political exchange which reduce the citizen to a “consumer” or “customer” are not so much amoral – although they are that too – as

trivial: a *reductio ad absurdum*’ (Selbourne, 1994: 14).<sup>9</sup>

Republican critics also point to other problems with the market model of politics, notably the problem of generating obedience and allegiance. If citizens are merely consumers and the political order, like the market, is merely a mechanism for coordinating and aggregating the citizens’ preferences, there is no satisfactory answer to the question, ‘What reason has anyone to accept the decision that emerges from the process of interest-aggregation?’ (Miller, 1989: 257). Appeals to solidarity or civic virtue are not available to the advocates of the market model, of course. In such a ‘resolutely individualistic’ conception of politics, people ‘are essentially competitors – rivals for space, for resources, for power ... The only bonds between citizens are contractual in nature, formed by agreements based on the self-interest of the parties involved’ (Spragens, 1990: 139–40). Where self-interest does not dictate allegiance, there is simply no reason to obey the law or remain loyal.

To be sure, self-interest does dictate that people obey the law when they are likely to be punished if they do not. The proponents of the market model may thus argue that allegiance and cooperation are secured by the coercive force of the government. When obedience seems burdensome, however, the law and those who enforce it will be resented as obstacles, or even opponents, that block the satisfaction of the consumer-citizen’s desires. Government and law soon appear to be alien forces imposed on one – not forms of self-rule but forces to be circumvented whenever possible. As law-breaking increases, and their own interests suffer, consumer-citizens have no recourse but to call for more police, more jails, and more coercion. This reliance on coercion reveals a most embarrassing problem for the market model of politics: its inefficiency. As Diego Gambetta observes, ‘[S]ocieties which rely heavily on the use of force are likely to be less efficient, more costly, and more unpleasant than those where trust is

maintained by other means. In the former, resources tend to be diverted away from economic undertakings and spent in coercion, surveillance, and information gathering, and less incentive is found to engage in cooperative activities' (1988: 220–1). Such inefficiency demonstrates how the market model undermines itself. Citizens who think of themselves as consumers will surely prize efficiency. Yet the more citizens think of themselves as consumers, the more likely they are to rely on the inefficient means of coercion to secure compliance with the laws. On its own grounds, then, the conception of the citizen as consumer is inferior to a conception of citizenship that generates cooperation on the basis of solidarity and civic duty. Such a conception will be, at least to some extent, republican.

As with other revivals, in sum, the revival of interest in republicanism and in citizenship grows out of the sense that something valuable is in danger of being lost. That loss, in this case, will have grievous consequences for political stability and individual freedom, for one cannot be a free person, in the republican view, unless one is a citizen of a free, self-governing political community (Miller, 1991: 3). And such a community cannot be sustained unless a substantial number of citizens (in the legal sense) undertakes the active life of the public-spirited citizen.

#### THE RELEVANCE OF REPUBLICAN CITIZENSHIP

There is a sense in which all revivals are backward-looking, and one may wonder whether the attempt to revive the republican ideal of citizenship looks so far back – to the Greek *polis*, the Roman *civitas*, and the Italian city-republics of the Middle Ages – as to be irrelevant to life in the twenty-first century. Thomas Jefferson's agrarian republicanism is a case in point. Jefferson may have been right two hundred years ago to praise the small farmer as the model of

the independent citizen who would rather live frugally on land he and his family worked than succumb to the luxury and corruption of urban life (Jefferson, 1999: 549–50, 28). Such praise, however, seems little more than nostalgia in today's world of global agribusiness and 'e-commerce'. What may be said, then, for the relevance of republican citizenship today? What may be said for it, moreover, in light of the biases implicit in the republican ideal of the property-owning, arms-bearing citizen?

We thus have two criticisms to consider by way of concluding the case for republican citizenship in this chapter. The first is that the republican conception of citizenship is no longer realistic, if ever it was; the second is that the conception poses a threat to an open, egalitarian, and pluralistic society. This second criticism is put forcefully by Iris Marion Young, who detects a denial of 'difference' in republican attempts to establish a 'civic public':

This ideal of the civic public ... excludes women and other groups defined as different, because its rational and universal status derives only from its opposition to affectivity, particularity, and the body.... [I]n so far as he is a citizen every man leaves behind his particularity and difference, to adopt a universal standpoint identical for all citizens, the standpoint of the common good or general will. In practice republican politicians enforced homogeneity by excluding from citizenship all those defined as different... (1990: 117).

Space does not permit a full consideration of this criticism, but three points may be made here.<sup>10</sup> One is that there is a strong republican strain in the writings not only of pioneering feminists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1794), but also of some recent feminists (e.g. Dietz, 1985, 1990). A second point is that politics will be a tricky business indeed if concern for difference rules out attempts to find a common good. Young wants 'claimants to justify their

demands before others who explicitly stand in different social locations' (1990: 190). But how is a decision to emerge from the conflicting claims of people in these 'different social locations' if no appeal to a common good or to the standpoint of the citizen is allowed? To be sure, Young's point is that the search for common ground serves to justify the dominance of a particular – and typically affluent, white, male – group. But if there is no common good or common ground, then it is difficult to see how *public* decisions, including those of the 'heterogeneous public' she recommends (1990: 190), can be justified.

The third point concerns the claim that citizenship involves a false ideal of impartiality. Here the republican response is to deny that the ideal is false. We should indeed strive to think and act, when establishing laws and policies, as members of the public rather than self-interested individuals. But this does not mean that we cannot take account of the particular needs and interests of the people – even people who 'stand in different social locations' – who compose the polity. Republican citizenship, again, is integrative. It requires us to bring together the facets of our individual lives as best we can. In working toward policies and laws that we can agree to despite our differences, citizenship also helps us to find unity in the midst of diversity. But it does not require that we surrender our particular identities or deny the value of diversity.

That is not to say that 'difference' and cultural pluralism do not present difficulties for a 'civic public', for they do. But difference and pluralism present difficulties for all kinds of polities, and republican citizenship at least has the virtue of confronting them head on by encouraging people to look for the common ground on which they stand, despite their differences, as citizens. In that respect, there is surely something to be said for the relevance of republican citizenship.

There is also something to be said in response to the first criticism – that republican citizenship is an irredeemably

nostalgic ideal in this age of globalization. In this case the republican response is to point out that fear of dependence and hatred of corruption are still very much with us, and one need not be the yeoman farmer of Jefferson's vision to enjoy the kind of independence necessary to republican citizenship. The challenge is to find ways to adapt these enduring republican concerns to the circumstances of vast polities that are themselves entangled in a 'global economy whose frenzied flow of money and goods, information and images, pays little heed to nations, much less neighborhoods' (Sandel, 1996: 317). To those who would take up this challenge, republicanism offers guidance of both a general and a particular kind.

In general, the republican advice is to build community. Among other things, this means that a republican cannot be a wholehearted cosmopolitan (Miller, 1999; Dagger, 2001). To be a citizen, in the republican view, is to be a partner in a common enterprise, and people will be likely to put the common interest ahead of their own – to act as true citizens – only when they feel themselves to be part of such an enterprise. The Internet and satellite television are unlikely to inspire this sense of community on a global basis.

The republican, however, will also note that genuine communities come in many different forms, not all of which are hospitable to the republican ideal of self-government. Republicanism thus points toward particular characteristics to be cultivated in political communities. Indeed, we may say that the republican model of the good community exhibits the following five characteristics: fair treatment under the rule of law prevails; economic arrangements and the distribution of wealth promote citizenship rather than consumerism; preparing children for a life of responsible citizenship is a leading aim of education; civic design strengthens neighborhoods and public spirit; and opportunities for participation in public affairs, including programs of civic service, are abundant.

Much more needs to be said on each of these five points, of course, to clarify and

bolster the case for republican citizenship. That so much may be said, however, and that neo-republicans and republican liberals

are now beginning to say it, is perhaps the best testimony to the continuing relevance of the republican ideal of citizenship.

## NOTES

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1 Cicero made this point in his *Republic* when he asked (Book III, 43), 'So who would call that a republic, i.e., the property of the public, when everyone was oppressed by the cruelty of a single man...?' As the subsequent discussion, in his dialogue indicates, Cicero believed that rule by the few and rule by the many could also be tyrannical – and therefore not republican.

2 As I argue in Dagger (1997). For criticism of Sandel's and Pettit's attempts to distinguish republicanism from liberalism, see Dagger (1999 and 2000, respectively). Others who believe it is a mistake to divorce republicanism from liberalism include Terchek (1997) and Spragens (1999).

3 On this point note Spragens's (1999: 186–7) remarks on 'civic friendship':

'It is not only close friends who may share the common interests, common attachments, common purposes, and common values that generate the behavioral cohesion of amicable and cooperative association. Quite large groups of people may share these goods in common, and on the basis of pursuing them together they may form the quasi-erotic bonds of social concord Aristotle referred to as *homonoia*: 'friendship between the citizens of a state, its province being the interests and concerns of life'. [*Nichomachean Ethics*, Book IX, Chap. 6]

4 This connection is manifest in Cicero's famous definition (*Republic*, Book I, 39) of the republic as 'a numerous gathering brought together by legal consent [*iuris consensu*] and community of interest'. See also Book III, 45 – 'there is no public except when it is held together by a legal agreement' – and, for analysis and assessment, Schofield (1995).

5 Historians (Wirszubski, 1960: 9; Skinner, 1998: 45) trace this formula to the Roman writers Sallust, Livy, and Cicero.

6 On Pettit's account (1997: 80), 'freedom as non-domination' is the 'supreme political value' of the republican tradition.

7 Quentin Skinner (1991) makes a similar point with regard to Machiavelli and other republicans.

8 So, at least, went the argument before the closely contested US presidential election of 2000.

9 See also Ball (1988: Ch. 6) on the distinction between 'economic' and 'educative' democracy.

10 For more detailed discussion, see Miller (1995) and Dagger (1997: 176–81).

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