

Autonomy and civic virtue

A republican educational fantasy

DAVID HOGAN, UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Arguably, the greatest single challenge confronting a post-liberal-democratic theory of education and citizenship is to find an intellectually coherent way of reconciling a liberal-democratic commitment to individual autonomy and a civic republican commitment to civic virtue. Such a task is not without difficulty; indeed, many believe it is impossible and urge the ship of state to abandon its free-riding liberal fellow travellers on a deserted island somewhere. In recent times, for example, the liberal tradition has been variously accused of a preoccupation with individual rights and relative indifference to the claims of individual responsibility and the common good, an inadequate view of liberty, a limited view of citizenship and a socially (or ontologically) incoherent sense of the self and political community (e.g. Sandel 1982, 1996; Glendon 1991; MacIntyre 1981; Gey 1993; Sherry 1995; Sunstein 1988; Skinner 1990; Taylor 1989). Civic republicanism, on the other hand, has been denounced (especially by those of a strongly liberal persuasion) for its willingness to sacrifice individual autonomy and self-determination to the demands of civic virtue, active and muscular citizenship, the collective good and the glory of the city (e.g. Constant 1988; Berlin 1969; Galston 1991; Burt 1990). Dagger, for example, observes that 'autonomy and civic virtue are often taken to be at odds with each other because one has to do with individual liberty, the other with collective responsibility. Personal autonomy requires people to look inward so that they may govern themselves, while civic virtue demands that they look outward and do what they can to promote the common good' (1997, p.13). Dagger, however, like a number of others, denies that there is a necessary antagonism between autonomy and civic virtue and seeks to reconcile them from within a 'liberal republican' framework. Others also have sought to reconcile autonomy and virtue, although the terms of reconciliation vary considerably, from those that are essentially liberal-democratic in orientation to those that are more republican in sensibility (Gutmann 1987; Rawls 1993; Skinner 1983, 1984; Pettit 1997; Hogan 1997, 2000; Callan 1997). While a critical analysis of these efforts is overdue, I do not undertake this task here. Instead, I very briefly outline key features of a republican theory of education and sketch out a little of the intellectual background to such a theory.

On the one hand, I will suggest that the core principle of a post-liberal-democratic republican theory of education is a particular claim about the fundamental moral interests of persons viewed as citizens of a democratic society. The claim is that the highest-order good of persons is to develop and pursue their own informed and reasonable conception of a good life – to lead a life of their own choosing. Historically, this claim can be derived from either civic republican accounts of liberty as non-domination or liberal-democratic notions of autonomy derived variously from Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, or contemporary American philosopher John Rawls. But, on the other hand, the ability of individuals to lead a life of self-determination depends, and depends necessarily, on a range of normative commitments and institutional preconditions, including the practice of civic virtue, that render the principle of self-determination compatible with principles of justice and democratic self-determination. One of these conditions is stipulated by what Rawls (1971, 1993) terms the principle of ‘equal liberty’ – the notion that all persons have an equal right to lead a life of their own choosing – or what Eamonn Callan (1997) terms ‘reasonable pluralism’. A second is that the principle of self-determination assumes that all persons have an equal right to those capacities and opportunities that permit them to make informed and reasonable judgments about what a good life for them would be and to develop the particular capacities necessary to pursue it, revise it and protect it. And finally, the principle of self-determination assumes that a necessary precondition for a life of self-determination is a set of social and political institutions that protect and enhance the principle of equal liberty or self-determination. In particular, individual self-determination presumes the necessity of collective or democratic self-determination.

In sum, a post-liberal-democratic model of republican citizenship is one that focuses on the promotion of individual autonomy within the limits of justice and collective self-determination. From these broad principles we can derive an account of the nature of a ‘republican’ education. Specifically, a republican education is one that pursues three objectives. First, a republican education is one that provides all students, and all students equally, with meaningful opportunities to develop those capacities (dispositions, commitments, understandings, skills and identities) necessary to make informed and reasonable choices about the nature of their civil and civic interests that they have as interdependent members of a liberal-democratic society, broadly defined. Second, a republican education is one that develops the capacities (again, broadly defined) that enable citizens to pursue and protect their civil and civic interests within the institutional framework of a liberal-democratic society, again broadly defined. And finally, a republican education is one that develops the capacities that prompt and enable citizens to engage in those social and civic practices and forms of civic agency that maintain, improve or alter political and civil institutions in line with the requirements of democratic self-determination. So conceived, a republican education is one that develops the ‘civic virtues’ necessary for all citizens, and all citizens equally, to lead not just a good life based on individual autonomy but a life of collective self-determination, or what David Held (1996) describes as ‘democratic autonomy’.

So conceived, the account of civic virtue that I provide does not repudiate so-called 'protectionist' models of citizenship and civic virtue generally thought responsible for the demise of classical and republican conceptions. Instead, it merely declares them insufficient and, at some level, self-defeating unless augmented and supported by republican civic virtue. Explaining how this came to be is the burden of this article. However, I should emphasise that the argument developed here is very sketchy and in no way canvasses all the key contributors to the debate or addresses, for that matter, all the key issues in the debate.

FROM CLASSICAL POLITICS TO PROTECTIVE CITIZENSHIP: THE RISE AND FALL OF CIVIC VIRTUE

'What effectively distinguishes the citizen proper from all others is his participation in giving judgements and in holding office', Aristotle writes in *The Politics*. '[A]s soon as a man becomes entitled to participate in office, deliberative or judicial, we deem him to be a citizen of the state; and a number of such persons large enough to secure a self-sufficient life we may, by and large, call a state' (Aristotle 1981: pp.169, 171). He then goes on to suggest that 'The good citizen should know and have the capacity *both to rule and be ruled*, and this very thing is the virtue of a citizen' (Aristotle 1981, pp.362-3, emphasis added). The civic virtues expected, then, of the citizen are of two kinds: that necessary to rule, and that necessary to be ruled. One set focused on the capacities – above all, practical judgment – necessary for active participation in the life of the polis, while the other focused on the capacities – obedience, self-sacrifice, courage, military prowess – necessary to preserve the liberty of the city. But equally, since participation in the public life of the city was necessary to the development of virtue, and participation depended on the freedom of the city, the virtue of the citizen depended on the liberty of the city. Indeed, the liberty of the city was necessary to a good and virtuous life centred on civic participation. While the good of the community is clearly a greater and more perfect thing to achieve than the good of the individual, Aristotle did not assume a tension between the good of the individual and the good of the community. Rather, the highest-order interest of an individual was to live a life of virtue, but a life of virtue was only achieved in living a life as a member of a virtuous community. Happiness for Aristotle is the object of a good life, but happiness is only possible with the complete and perfect use of all our faculties under the guidance of virtue. The end or telos of the polis was a good life and a good life was a life of virtue.

Aristotle's image of democratic citizenship and civic virtue has long influenced the western civic imagination and repeatedly inspired neoclassical and civic republican revivals over the course of western history, from republican Rome through Renaissance Florence and Venice, the seventeenth-century English commonwealth tradition of Harrington and Sidney, and on to that last great paroxysm of civic virtue, the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution. Cicero and other defenders of the Roman civic republican tradition, for example, agreed with Aristotle that the liberty of the state depended on the virtue of the citizen, and that participation in the affairs of the city was necessary to the

cultivation of virtue. However, with the growth in the size of the Roman Republic and its transformation into an empire, opportunities for citizen participation in the affairs of the state had grown fewer and fewer and the connection between participation and civic virtue more and more attenuated, despite the continuing belief in the importance of civic virtue to the survival of the state. Cicero responded to the loss of civic opportunity by attempting to establish a new relationship between liberty and virtue, one mediated by 'the natural law' and the compulsions of 'duty' or 'obligation' rather than participation (Cicero 1966). Like Aristotle, Cicero believed that the liberty of the state depends on the virtue of the citizen, but, unlike Aristotle, he concluded that in a large republic the virtue of the citizen depended first and foremost on their willingness to honour the requirements of the moral law. Above all, it depended on the willingness of citizens to respect the rights of other citizens and to fulfil their obligations to each other and to the state. For Cicero, then, active citizenship is a life of continual service to the community in the fulfilment of the citizen's obligations. The good citizen is one who is unremittingly self-disciplined, restrains his (*sic*) passions, honours his ancestors, worships the gods, subordinates his self-interest to the good of the community, serves the state in what ever capacity he is called, and willingly lays down his life in order to protect the liberty of the state.

The underlying moral logic of Ciceronian civic virtue then is a deontological ethics of obligation rather than a teleological ethics of virtue of the kind advanced by Aristotle. The next great flowering of classical civic virtue – the civic humanism of the Renaissance – owed more to Rome than Athens, and more to Cicero than Aristotle. Still, it combines elements of both. For Bruni and the theorists of the early *quattrocento*, Aristotle is more in evidence: civic virtue is fundamental to 'the struggle for civic liberty' and to the full realisation of human capacities (Skinner 1978). For Machiavelli, writing in the early part of the sixteenth century towards the end of the Italian Renaissance, Cicero and Livy are more important: *virtu* is important as a precondition for the liberty of the city, and the liberty of the city necessary for the liberty of the citizen. Bruni and Machiavelli, however, deployed very similar notions of *virtu* that they derived principally from Cicero. *Virtu* consisted of devotion to the public good, manliness, courage, military prowess, intense patriotism, resolution, service to the polis and, as Pocock (1985, pp.41-2) puts it, 'that active ruling quality' which permitted citizens to combat the power of *fortuna*, to resist the corruption of the polis by private interest, powerful *signori* or luxury, and to seek honour, glory and fame actively in the protection of the liberty of the city. And while one could learn something of *virtu* through a rigorous and manly Ciceronian education, both Bruni and Machiavelli followed Aristotle in insisting that citizens principally learnt *virtu* through the practice of active citizenship itself – in participating in the affairs of the polis. But in order to resist corruption, the citizen must not be dependent on others. Dependency on the will of another occasions 'corruption' by undermining the capacity of the citizen to act independently and virtuously in regard to the public good. Further, dependency undermined liberty: a citizen's liberty lay not just in the absence of interference or 'the silence of the law', as Hobbes was famously to argue a century or so later, but in the absence of 'domination'. Men wanted independence; they did not want not to be ruled

by others, either in their own lives or in their lives as members of political communities. Instead, they wanted to live as free men able to pursue their own ends or purposes that they gave themselves individually and collectively (Machiavelli 1950; Skinner 1983, 1984; Pettit 1997; Pocock 1975). The good life, then, consisted not so much in a life of virtuous activity, as Aristotle had claimed, but in a life of security and individual liberty. Civic virtues were important to a good life, but instrumentally rather than constitutively. The civic virtues – understood as devotion to the public good – were important because they promoted or protected, along with good fortune, able and virtuous leaders, the rule of law, a mixed constitution, competitive politics, popular participation in the affairs of state, and a self-governing republican form of government free of foreign domination, the liberty of the city. Indeed, it is this argument – that personal liberty can best be assured within a self-governing republican community – that, in Quentin Skinner's words, 'represents the heart and nerve of all classical republican theories of citizenship' (Skinner 1984, pp.209-210).

In most respects, Machiavelli's account of civic virtue follows Cicero closely. Civic virtue, argues Machiavelli, consists in the devotion to the public good and the capacity to carry out the *res-publica* – the work of the public. Specifically, civic virtue consists in courage, military prowess, temperance, prudence and practical judgment (Skinner 1983, 1984, 1978; Pocock 1975, 1985). But where Cicero and Bruni assumed that the virtuous man was a virtuous citizen and vice versa, Machiavelli argued that virtuous men were not always virtuous citizens, and that virtuous citizens were not always virtuous men. In effect, Machiavelli severs the Ciceronian and the classical humanist nexus between justice and virtue. Virtuous citizens are citizens willing to go to any length to preserve the liberty of the republic, even if doing so meant violating 'the moral law'. However, Machiavelli largely followed Cicero and Aristotle in maintaining the classical republican nexus between civic virtue and civic participation, although he also emphasised that by itself civic participation was insufficient to cultivate virtue. Virtue also depended, he thought, on civic-minded religious worship and education that cultivated unthinking patriotism, loyalty and attachment to the good of the republic.

Machiavelli's view of citizenship thus positions him at the crossroads between classical and modern politics. On the one hand, he retains the classical commitment to the nexus between civic virtue, civic participation and the liberty of the city. On the other hand, he develops an essentially modern and instrumental conception of 'protective' citizenship as a means of protecting, in the first instance, the liberty of the city, and in the second, the liberty of the citizen. And he does so in a relentlessly instrumental, hard-nosed, empirical and political way. Despite his deeply republican view of the world, he will have nothing of Aristotle's teleological construction of the good life and virtue, or Cicero's deontological account of the moral law and virtue. The subsequent development of the political theory of citizenship took two paths. One path, mapped out initially by Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, flatly repudiated the classical and civic republican conception of citizenship by insisting that only absolute sovereign power could protect the fundamental interest of subjects in self-preservation. The other path, developed initially by Locke and later by David

Hume, Bentham, Kant, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, and Rawls, developed the idea of individual liberty far beyond anything that Machiavelli could have imagined or would have tolerated. To a degree, the two paths mirrored each other: where one valorised sovereign power, the other valorised individual autonomy.

The early modern assault on civic republicanism was led by Jean Bodin in France and Thomas Hobbes in England. Of the two, Hobbes' assault is far more developed theoretically and influential historically. Hobbes agrees with Machiavelli that men desire peace, security and liberty but, importantly, he defines liberty not in terms of the absence of 'domination' as Machiavelli had, but in terms of 'non-interference' – the absence of law. Moreover, he grounds this account of liberty in an unremittingly bleak view of the human condition and an account of the fundamental interests of men defined in terms of self-preservation. Moreover, where Machiavelli had argued that civic virtue and participation in the exercise of political power were necessary to individual liberty, Hobbes insisted that only a sovereign with unlimited or absolute power could protect individuals from the ravages of a return to the war of all against all. Not civic virtue, but a universal 'fear of death' and the absolute sovereignty of the state provided the foundation of a stable and prosperous society (Hobbes 1962).

Hobbes then constructed an account of citizenship that explicitly rejected classical and republican conceptions of citizenship and civic virtue. For Hobbes, citizenship was a purely instrumental exchange of obedience for protection. Subsequent formulations of protective citizenship have varied in their account of the nature of protective citizenship, and in the liberal tradition at least, beginning with John Locke at the end of the seventeenth century, have repudiated Hobbes' absolutist model of unlimited sovereign power over the subject/citizen. Like Hobbes, Locke believed that the legitimacy of the state depended on the consent of its members. Like Hobbes, he thought that the fundamental purpose of the state was to protect the fundamental interests of the citizen. Unlike Hobbes, however, he defined these interests not simply in terms of 'self preservation' but in terms of 'natural rights' or what he called the 'mutual *Preservation* of their Lives, Liberties and Estates, which I call by the general Name, *Property*' (Locke 1963, pp.395-96). In exchange for the protection extended to his life, liberty and property, the citizen is expected to honour the obligations he voluntarily assumes to his fellow citizens in consenting to the social contract. These include the obligation to obey the law and the security of life, liberty and property. In fulfilling his obligations the citizen 'protects the protection' of his fellow citizens; likewise, to the extent that they honour their obligations, they 'protect his protection' (Walzer 1970, pp.206). But where Hobbes had argued that the protection of individual interests depended on the creation of an absolute sovereign power, Locke insisted that the defence of individual interests and a 'peaceful and commodious' life depended, in the first instance, on a limited, constitutional state honouring the natural rights of individuals. Leviathan would not so much protect as devour its subjects. To think otherwise was 'to think that Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done them by *Pole Cats*, or *Foxes*, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by *Lions*' (Locke 1963, p.372). But limited consti-

tutional government was not by itself sufficient to protect the fundamental rights of citizens. It also depended on their capacity to fulfil their obligations that arose from the social contract; this in turn depended on their capacity for rational autonomy 'self government' which he defined in terms of the capacity of individuals to subordinate their 'desires' to the demands of 'reason'. 'Every man must some time or other be trusted to himself, and his own conduct; and he that is good, a virtuous, and able man, must be made so within. And therefore, what he is to receive from education, what is to sway and influence his life, must be something put into him betimes; habits woven into the very principles of his nature; and not a counterfeit carriage, and dissembled outside, put on by fear, only to avoid the present anger of a father, who may perhaps disinherit him' (Locke 1964b, p.31, see also p.29).

Subsequent liberal conceptions of protectionist citizenship generally followed Locke in their commitment to a protectionist conception of citizenship, a limited constitutional state, the definition of a person's fundamental interest in terms of rational autonomy, and self-government as the basis of autonomy and virtue. They principally departed from Locke in their abandonment of natural rights theory and in their slow and deeply ambivalent embrace of a democratic polity. But, from the late eighteenth century on, the outlines of a liberal-democratic conception of protective citizenship can be discerned. Here the critical figure is Bentham. From the principle that all human beings are governed by desire and the assumption that the end of politics was the maximisation of aggregate individual utility, Bentham deduced that a representative democracy was the form of government most likely to maximise aggregate utility by permitting individuals to define, pursue and protect their own interests relatively unhindered by the rapacious activities of an oppressive government. Democracy protected the governed from the governors by holding the governors accountable to the governed: 'A democracy then, has for its characteristic object and effect, the securing its members against oppression and depredation at the hand of those functionaries which it employs for its defence ...' (Bentham 1843, bk.1, p.47). Similarly, Bentham's collaborator, James Mill, argued in his *Essay on Government* (1825) that the one form of government capable of protecting the interests of persons individually and in the aggregate is a representative democracy: 'We have ... seen that the interest of the community ... is, that each individual should receive protection, and that the powers which are constituted for that purpose should be employed exclusively for that purpose' (J. Mill 1967, p.15). Very much like his father, John Stuart Mill agreed that a representative democracy was the most practicable and desirable form of government. The superiority of representative government rested on a principle 'of as universal truth and applicability as any general propositions which can be laid down respecting human affairs', he wrote in *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861). The principle is 'that the rights and interests of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person is himself able, and habitually disposed, to stand up for them ... Human beings are only secure from evil at the hands of others in proportion as they have the power of being, and are, *self protecting*.' Indeed, each person 'is the only safe guardian of his rights and interests ...' (J.S. Mill 1958, pp.43, 44, 55).

But if John Stuart Mill accepted his father's and Bentham's protectionist model of representative democracy, he departed from them in two important respects. First, he developed an argument he derived from de Tocqueville that ordinary citizens should be actively involved in the governance of local public institutions and voluntary associations, and participation was more than just a means to protect the interests of the governed from the arbitrary exercise of power by the government. It was also a mechanism of moral education and a means of promoting the public good. Indeed, towards the end of *On Liberty*, Mill argues that although popular participation and decision-making may not always be efficient, it promoted 'mental education' (J.S. Mill 1989, pp.109-10; 1958, pp.25, 43, 53, 54-55, 216-17). And second, while Mill shared his father's enthusiasm for Bentham's 'principle of utility', he nonetheless feared that Bentham's doctrine lacked moral depth as an account of the fundamental moral interests of individuals. Thus, for Mill, the principle of 'utility' remained the 'ultimate appeal on all ethical questions'. But he also insisted that 'it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being'. He then went on to draw a distinction between different kinds of pleasures and utilities and to develop a richer account of human flourishing and individual liberty than offered by his father or Bentham (J.S. Mill 1989, p.14). For Mill, the principle of 'utility' should not assume a narrow, pinched conception of interests, but a broad notion 'grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being'. And, for Mill, these centred on 'the region of liberty' defined as 'all that portion of a person's life and conduct which affects only himself, or if it affects others, only with their free, voluntary and undeceived consent and participation'. That is, liberty consists 'of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character, of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow: without impediment from fellow creatures, so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse or wrong.' He goes on to conclude that '[n]o society in which these liberties are not, on the whole, respected, is free, whatever may be its form of government; and none is completely free in which they do not exist absolute and unqualified. The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of *pursuing our own good in our own way*, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it' (J.S. Mill 1989, pp.14-16, emphasis added).

Mill's defence of the principle of autonomy – along with the very different account offered by Kant (1991), which focused on the moral standing of persons as moral agents – firmly established the notion of autonomy at the very heart of modern liberal-democratic notions of justice. The principal difficulty with Mill's account of autonomy and citizenship is that, despite his powerful plea for individual liberty, Mill's progressive version of utilitarianism is no more capable of protecting the autonomy of all citizens equally than Bentham's original version or of requiring politics, in Kant's terms, to bend its knee to justice. This is exactly the thrust of the neo-Kantian account of justice developed by Rawls (1971). The principles of justice, Rawls writes at the very beginning of *A Theory of Justice*, are those 'principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms

of their association. These principles are to regulate all further agreements: they specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into and the forms of government that can be established. This way of regarding the principles of justice I shall call justice as fairness' (Rawls 1971, p.11). Rawls argues that ideally individuals should come to an agreement about the principles of justice – those 'principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits' – in a condition of initial equality with all other individuals' (Rawls 1971, p.11). Of these, the first and most important is the principle of 'equal liberty'. Equal liberty is the equal right of each individual to the most extensive basic liberties compatible with the same liberties of others: the right to freedom of conscience, the right of free association, the right of access to information, the right to participate in public life, and so on. Equal liberty, however, imposes a fundamental obligation on all citizens to respect the moral autonomy and agency of all persons and their right to develop their conceptions of their good and to fashion a life that allows them to pursue it. The right to pursue our own good, in other words, is constrained by the principles of reciprocal equality and mutual respect.

Now, although the major thrust of Rawls' argument focuses on explicating the principles of justice, Rawls is not unaware that it is one thing to identify the principles of justice, and altogether another to sustain a just society. Consequently, Rawls develops a political sociology of justice built around the argument that the 'stability' of a constitutional democracy depends, first, on the creation of an 'overlapping consensus' about the basic principles of justice in a society, and, second, on the development of the capacity of individuals to form an effective 'sense of justice' (Rawls 1971, 1993). The question that must be asked, however, is whether Rawls' political sociology is adequate to the task. Both communitarian and republican critics believe Rawls fails the test and that, like other liberals before him, he is rather too preoccupied with issues of individual autonomy and rather too little concerned with civic virtue and the creation of a viable political community.

On the one hand, Rawls' communitarian critics argue that protective models of citizenship generally lack an adequate understanding of the preconditions of political community. Justice, the priority of liberty, or the logic of protection is much too thin a reed on which to establish or sustain a viable political community and ignores the fundamental importance of attachment and identity – including our identities as citizens – in constructing a life that is good. A viable political community requires various kinds of 'common social goods' – a substantive and comprehensive notion of the common good, a particular ensemble of civic virtues, strong forms of civic identity, extensive participation in the civic life of the political community – that develop attachments, form identities, confer dignity, create disciplines of self-government, motivate social action, and inform conceptions of the good, interests and the self (Sandel 1982, 1996; MacIntyre 1981; Taylor 1994; Barber 1984). In short, where the liberal-democratic model of citizenship focuses on the instrumental logic of the civic exchange, communitarians focus on the constitutive qualities of social life and civic identity; where the liberal-democratic model seeks to protect the autonomy of individuals by limiting the power of the state through a combina-

tion of constitutional and normative constraints, communitarians prefer mechanisms that enhance the attachment of citizens to the political community.

On the other hand, contemporary civic republicans have suggested that while Rawls' account of liberty as individual autonomy is rich and valuable, it fails to recognise that the protection of liberty requires a far broader view of virtue than provided by a 'sense of justice', however important that might be. Skinner, for example, endorses Rawls' account of the importance of individual autonomy and equal liberty, but insists that the security of liberty depends on the rule of law and the practice of civic virtue understood in terms of public service, duty and devotion to the public good. The priority of liberty, Skinner concludes, cannot be absolute, for it necessarily presupposes a range of civic institutions and practices that protects liberty and secures 'a free way of life'. The paradox of liberty, therefore, is that the security of liberty requires institutions and practices that constrain liberty (understood in negative terms as non-interference) in ways that protect the capacity of citizens to lead 'a free way of life' in a 'free state' (Skinner 1978a, 1983, 1984, 1990a, 1990b, 1992; see also Pettit 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1997). Skinner insists, however, that this is a very different claim than the one made by communitarians who argue, for example, that a viable political community requires pursuit of a comprehensive conception of the common good. For Skinner, this is unnecessary and runs foul of the requirements of equal liberty. Instead, a viable political community requires a commitment to *res-publica* in ways that protect 'a free way of life'.

Both sets of criticisms of Rawls are substantial and weighty. While justice might very well require the capacity to frame, revise and pursue one's own good, the survival of justice presupposes forms of political community that permit citizens to pursue their own good within the limits of justice and the development of those civic capacities that sustain the kind of political community that protects protection. But it is also true that communitarian theorists are at best blasé about, and at worst indifferent to, the claims of individual autonomy, justice and pluralism. Community might very well be an ontological precondition of justice, but justice requires that community not come at the expense of pluralism and individual autonomy (Mouffe 1992, 1993).

TOWARDS A REPUBLICAN THEORY OF EDUCATION

These considerations underscore, I believe, the value of a post-liberal-democratic theory of citizenship. On the one hand, we want a theory that incorporates, as Rawls has, a rich and robust normative theory of individual autonomy and justice. On the other hand, we also want a political sociology that recognises, as Machiavelli did, that the liberty of the citizen depends on the liberty of the city. In effect, we want a theory that reconciles autonomy and civic virtue in a relatively seamless and unproblematic way. Liberal-democratic theory on its own is incapable of doing so; so is classical civic republican theory. But a post-liberal-democratic republican theory promises the ability to weave together a theory of citizenship and education that does justice, so to speak, both to our most considered judgments about the principles of justice and the institutional preconditions of democratic political community.

What, then, would a civic republican theory of education look like? From my perspective, a republican education is one that pursues three objectives: it provides all students, and all students equally, with meaningful opportunities to develop those capacities necessary to make an informed and reasonable choice about a good life within the limits of justice; it develops the capacities that enable citizens to pursue and protect their civil and civic interests within the institutional framework of a liberal-democratic society; and it develops the capacities that prompt and enable citizens to engage in those social and civic practices and forms of civic agency that maintain, improve or alter political institutions in line with the requirements of democratic self-determination. Let me explain.

1. Framing interests

Given that the value of autonomy or liberty depends on the purposes or ends that persons have or develop, it follows that the value of liberty also depends on the provision of those learning opportunities in classrooms and schools that develop the capacities (dispositions, commitments, understandings, skills and identities) necessary for young people over time to progressively frame a conception of a good life for themselves, including the development of an informed, reasonable and deliberative conception of their good or interests (both civic and civil) as interdependent members of a liberal-democratic community. In the first instance, an *informed* conception of our interests is necessary because the value of our liberty depends in part on the opportunity to make meaningful and knowing choices from a capacious set of choices (Raz 1986; Callan 1997) For this we require an extensive understanding of the range of choices that we might make and a developed understanding of the consequences of making one set of choices rather than another. Amy Gutmann (1987) calls this kind of governing principle of a democratic education the principle of 'non-repression'. Second, a *reasonable* conception of our interests is necessary because conceptions of interests have to be publicly defensible, and not merely subjectively desirable. Further, a reasonable conception of our interests is more likely to be accomplished when the process of framing interests is both public and deliberative, and conforms to the standards of 'public reasonableness' (Rawls 1993; Callan 1997). Specifically, the framing of interests should conform to the standards of what Rawls terms 'deliberative rationality', or even more ambitiously, 'deliberative democracy' (e.g. Bohman and Rehg 1997). John Dewey's conception of the classroom as a deliberative and democratic community of learning exemplifies this view very well. An education for democracy, Dewey insisted, must be an education *in* democracy conceived as a form of social life, a 'mode of associated living', a community of full participation and 'conjoint communicated experience' necessary for the development for social understanding, sympathy and deliberative moral reason (Dewey 1964, p.93). Schools and classrooms should be organised as inclusive and deliberative democratic communities of learning, not merely in their administration and governance, but in their everyday life.

Finally, a republican education is also one committed to the provision of those learning opportunities and resources that permit students to develop *political* conceptions of

their civil and civic interests as members of a political community. This can be done in the most direct way by helping students come to an understanding of how they themselves, as well as their interests, are situated in, and constituted by, the broader political, social, cultural and economic contexts in which they spend their lives. As Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry (1997, pp.15-16) suggest in a recent work entitled, appropriately enough, *Democracy and Education*, in 'order for democracy to function, individual citizens must first be able to identify and understand their preferences and political interests ... [that is] to formulate considered policy preferences'. Lacking such a conception of their interests or how these are affected by institutional arrangements and political developments, students' ability to pursue, protect and realise their projects and purposes as adults will be significantly compromised. More broadly still, schools ought to help develop, as Bob Connell (1993) argues, a curriculum taught from the perspective of the 'least advantaged' members of society.

2. *Protecting interests*

The second task of republican education is to develop the capacities that all students, and all students equally, need to *pursue* and *protect* their interests in civil and civic society, given that a liberal democracy is committed to the principal of social and political equality. On the one hand, students need the full range of capacities that allows them to pursue their particular interests in civil society: to get a good job, to form meaningful relationships, to understand the natural and social world, and so on. Equally, a republican education is one that develops those capacities, understandings and forms of civic agency and political participation necessary for students to protect their interests in ways that satisfy the requirements of political equality and democratic citizenship. At a minimum, this requires that a republican education cultivate the development of a range of 'judicial' virtues or capacities necessary for citizens to protect their interests in a representative democracy through the careful and judicious monitoring, surveillance, evaluation and judgment of their representatives in parliament. Macedo, for instance, describes the 'judicial citizen' as one who evaluates and judges the intentions, character and performance of his or her representative and assesses whether the representative is acting in a way consistent with the principles of a liberal democracy, including the protection of the interests of all citizens in a fair and measured way. The good citizen, then, is a judge, a watchdog, an ombudsman and a probing, watchful inspector who hands down a report card or a judgment at the end of every electoral cycle on the performance of the people's representatives in parliament (Macedo 1991; Rawls 1993).

From a republican perspective, such judicial virtues are necessary but not sufficient to protect the interests of citizens as demanded by the principle of political equality. Conventionally, liberal democracies define political equality in terms of the equal protection of interests, and specifically in terms of the equal representation and consideration of interests (Dahl 1989; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Arguably, the exercise of judicial virtues is insufficient to protect the interests of all citizens equally. Equal protection also requires, apart from appropriate institutional arrangements, forms of civic agency – pay-

ing attention to political developments, contacting government officials, writing letters to the editor, calling talk-back radio, voting, joining political organizations, giving support in various ways to social movements, protesting, contributing money to political parties or causes, signing petitions and so on – that enable citizens to give voice to their political preferences and seek to ensure the more effective representation and consideration of their interests in the political process. To put it another way: democracy requires political equality; political equality requires the equal protection of interests; the equal protection of interests requires the equal representation and consideration of interests; the equal representation and consideration of interests requires ‘equal voice’; and ‘equal voice’ requires active participation in the life of the polity. (For a powerfully argued contrary view, see Beitz 1989).

3. *Protecting protection*

A just democracy requires the provision of equal opportunities to all citizens, and all citizens equally, to frame an informed, reasonable and political conception of their interests within the limits of justice and the development of those civic virtues that allow citizens to ensure the equal protection of their interests. But a just democracy also needs to be a viable democracy – which is to say, a form of political community that prompts and enables its citizens to engage in those civic practices that ensure at least the reproduction and hopefully improvement of democratic institutions. Gutmann (1987) calls this process ‘conscious social reproduction’, but this ignores the many institutionalised forms of social and civic reproduction that do not depend on ‘conscious’ agency (Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Scott 1995; Emirbayer and Mische 1998). More broadly and usefully, and following Michael Walzer (1970), we might call the process ‘protecting protection’ and define it as the development of those civic virtues or capacities that prompt and enable citizens to engage in a range of social and civic practices necessary to maintain, improve or alter those political and civil institutions that protect and promote the fundamental and immediate interests of all citizens within the limits of justice and collective self-determination.

Clearly, this commitment to ‘protecting protection’ reflects the concerns of both republican and communitarian critics of liberalism that liberal-democratic theory and practice typically fail to address the requirements or preconditions of a viable democratic community. I have already suggested, however, that in my view communitarians go too far in the opposite direction in that they take an appropriate concern with the ‘common good’ and political community too far and begin to needlessly compromise fundamental principles of individual autonomy and justice. Contemporary republican theorists, I want to suggest, do much better on this score. On the one hand, they accept, with liberals, the priority of liberty and equal justice and a pluralism of the good. On the other hand, they argue, rightfully, that the priority of liberty is not absolute, that pluralism has to be ‘reasonable’ and the priority of liberty and reasonable pluralism should not come at the expense of those institutional preconditions that ensure both individual and collective self-determination. Of course, this is tricky empirical and theoretical ground to

traverse – after all, what particular ‘institutional preconditions’ are in fact necessary for equal justice and a viable democratic community? But in principle there is little doubt, at least to my mind, that republicans have much the better of the argument over both liberals and communitarians.

Still, both liberal and communitarian theories can make important contributions to a republican political psychology and sociology. A republican political theory of democratic community necessarily requires a realistic rather than a romantic (let alone utopian) account of civic motivation and attachment to underpin a theory of civic virtue. Moreover, it requires an account that respects the underlying moral commitments of republican theory. In the final analysis, republicans have to rely substantially on an essentially instrumental logic of enlightened self-interest to motivate citizens to engage in civic-minded ‘reproductive’ practices, so to speak. Clearly, this means that republican theories of citizenship have to offer effective solutions to the various civic conundrums that arise from the logic of collective action in democratic systems, including ‘free rider’ problems and ‘prisoner’s dilemmas’. But as the work of Dagger (1997) and Janoski (1998) suggests, republican theory is not without solutions to these challenges, in the form of ‘assurance games’ (the citizen as a conditional altruist) and theories of asymmetrical ‘generalised exchange’ (the citizen as an other-regarding moral agent). In addition, I can see no reason why a republican education is not equally as capable of promoting ‘a sense of justice’ as a liberal education, and equally able to develop constitutive forms of civic identity, attachments, dispositions, normative commitments and ‘democratic characters’ as the best communitarian education – and do so with a lot less danger to core liberal-democratic principles of equal liberty and pluralism (Callan 1997; Hogan 2000).

How, then, might a republican education simultaneously and without contradiction pursue individual autonomy and civic virtue? In broad terms, it requires a form of education that is committed to the development of those social practices and forms of agency that promote an understanding of, and commitment to, republican and liberal-democratic principles, strong but pluralistic forms of civic identity, and active and deliberative forms of civic agency. These objectives are recursively linked. Active forms of civic agency, for example, are both cause and effect of strong civic identities. Indeed, in my view, the development of appropriate forms of civic agency and civic identity provide the keys to effective forms of republican education. On the one hand, a republican education should seek to foster forms of civic identity that acknowledge individual autonomy, social pluralism and civic membership (compared to pluralist or democratic liberal, unreconstructed civic republican, or communitarian notions of civic identity). As Chantal Mouffe (1993, p.60) recently suggested, ‘the attempt to construct citizen identities is one of the important tasks of democratic politics’ and might well enable liberal democracies to ‘reestablish the lost connection between ethics and politics’. But as she makes very clear, this can only happen if citizens continue to respect fundamental liberal-democratic principles. ‘What we share and makes us fellow citizens in a liberal-democratic regime is not a substantive idea of the good but a set of political principles specific to such a tradition: the principles of freedom and equality for all’, Mouffe writes. ‘To be a citizen is to recognise the authority of such

principles and the rules in which they are embodied, to have them informing our political judgement and our actions ... It implies seeing citizenship not as a legal status but as a form of identification, a type of political identity ... that is created through identification with the *respublica*.' She goes on to conclude that 'what binds them together is their common recognition of a set of ethico-political values. In this case, citizenship is not just one identity among others, as in liberalism, or the dominant identity that overrides all others, as in civic republicanism. It is an articulating principle that affects the different subject positions of the social agent ... while allowing for a plurality of specific allegiances and for the respect of individual liberty.' (Mouffe 1993, pp.65-66, 69-70). Similar views have been expressed in Australia by Donald Horne (1989) and Chandran Kukathas (1993), among others.

The second string of a republican educational strategy focuses on the expansion of opportunities for participation in the life of the school as a political community, above all those forms of participation that permit and promote the development of deliberative forms of civic agency. It is here that the 'developmental' and 'deliberationist' models of democratic citizenship again come into their own in education, apart from their role in the framing of interests. The writings of Dewey (1964) and recent pedagogical work on community of inquiry approaches to teaching and learning, for example, suggest how schools might be organised to approximate a deliberative democratic community of learning committed to the development of mutual respect, inclusiveness, civility and attachment to a democratic community.

CONCLUSION

In a much-cited essay published in 1989, Michael Walzer distinguished between 'republican' and 'liberal' conceptions of citizenship in the following way. In the republican tradition, citizenship is 'an office, a responsibility, a burden proudly adopted', while in the 'liberal' tradition, citizenship is 'a status, an entitlement, a right or set of rights passively enjoyed'. Whereas the first 'makes citizenship the core of our life, the second makes it the outer frame. The first assumes a closely knit body of citizens, its members committed to one another; the second assumes a diverse and loosely connected elsewhere. According to the first, the citizen is the primary political actor, law making and administration his everyday business. According to the second, law making and administration are someone else's business; the citizen's business is private' (Walzer 1989, p.216). As much as I admire Walzer's work, this is a highly misleading view of the contemporary debate. What contemporary republican theories of citizenship – and education – promise is not a warmed-up classical form of republicanism but a post-liberal-democratic republicanism that takes liberal commitments to individual autonomy, justice and pluralism as seriously as it takes civic virtue and political community. Anything less would be to deny our children an education worthy of a democratic society. Anything more would compromise our democratic commitments.

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