

broad limits civil associations may order their affairs as they see fit. Despite the important public interest in educating good citizens, Galston argues, there are other morally significant interests to which that interest must sometimes give way. Thus fidelity to democratic deliberation is not sufficient to rule out the attempts of fundamentalists to have their children shielded from materials they find offensive to their faith. "It is possible to enjoy . . . expressive liberty within associations that are hierarchical and directive, so long as there is reasonable fit between institutional structures and individual beliefs", Galston concludes (p. 122). Hence liberal pluralism limits the power of public institutions to shape the practice of families and voluntary associations within the state.

Some of the later chapters, especially, are rather short-winded and choppy in argument, and throughout the book there are frequent appeals to and quotations from other writers, which serve to reduce the original content of an already brief title. Irritatingly there is no bibliography. Nonetheless, the issues raised by *Liberal Pluralism* are important ones to which the monograph affords some valuable insights, and I learned much from it.

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*Civic Republicanism*

By ISEULT HONOHAN

Routledge, 2002. viii + 302 pp. £55.00 cloth, £16.99 paper

'Republicanism' is the name given to a contemporary school of political theory which tries to find a way between liberalism and communitarianism. It emphasises participation in a self-governing community and concern for the common good. This stress on the common good distinguishes it from liberalism; while the view that common values are not pre-given but must be politically created sets it apart from communitarianism.

This book gives a clear and useful account of these ideas. It is divided into two parts. The first outlines their historical sources. This is the least satisfactory or convincing part of the book. For the idea of a Republican school of thought is a recent invention and the claim that there is a 'tradition' of such thought questionable. Honohan's survey includes a very disparate collection of figures, ranging from Aristotle, through Machiavelli and Rousseau, to Hannah Arendt and Charles Taylor.

However, Honohan's accounts of these thinkers also serves to introduce the major themes of contemporary Republicanism: 'civic virtue' (and the danger of 'corruption'), freedom, participation, and recognition. These are then the focus of part two. Though words like 'virtue' and 'corruption' seem wilfully archaic, Honohan is dealing with current political issues. By 'civic virtue' she means social involvement, commitment to the common good. For Republicanism holds that a well functioning community requires not only 'thin' procedures to guarantee the equal individual rights and liberties of neutralist liberalism, but should also express the "concerns, values and even the identity of citizens" (p. 112). Thus, Republicanism is not content with the negative,

liberal notion of liberty as tolerant non-interference, it is committed to a more substantial and positive conception of liberty. "This means giving public space for citizens to voice their deepest concerns, and giving a serious hearing to claims to influence public debates and public culture" (p. 261). Public spaces in which there are opportunities for deliberation and debate must be expanded and multiplied. Deliberation is desirable and enhances the legitimacy of political decisions simply because it involves citizens in debates about common concerns, not because of any role it may play in determining the outcome. Honohan's concern is purely that 'citizens' get included in the discussion. Republicans, it seems, are not particularly interested in effective democratic control. On the question of who makes the decisions Honohan is strangely silent. Again the language of 'public deliberation' seems anachronistic and inflated when applied to radio phone-ins and internet chat-rooms.

Republican politics is concerned not just with issues of material equality but with the ways in which groups and individuals are included in political processes. These issues are introduced under the heading of 'recognition'. In her final chapter, Honohan gives a full and interesting discussion of the issues of diversity and difference in modern society. On the one hand, she rejects liberal neutrality, which ignores cultural and other such differences and treats all citizens equally. Republicanism by contrast recognises difference. Society should "grant recognition to citizens *in* their identities, rather than *of* their identities" (p. 261). For example she criticises the French government for banning girls from wearing the Muslim headscarf in school.

Thus, for Republicanism, society is not simply a collection of strangers who tolerate each other within the liberal framework of a minimal set of laws. Nor is society founded on a pre-political communitarian unity. Society is a grouping of those who share common concerns, who are 'in the same boat'. It is not defined in advance by national or any other prior boundaries, physical or moral. It is created politically. "The substance of Republican politics is based on interdependence rather than commonality, is created in deliberation, emerges in multiple publics to which all can contribute, and is not definitive but open to change" (p. 281).

Republicanism thus conceived is an ideal rather than an analysis of existing reality, and an attempt to think through how this ideal can be realised in the modern world. It raises important questions about social commitment, freedom, participation and identity. The 'Republican' label is an expedient way of doing this; but whether this approach is of enduring significance is more questionable.

The search for an alternative to liberalism and communitarianism is welcome. Those are not the only possibilities in political theory, and the polarisation of recent debate between them has been unduly limiting. But whether Republicanism can ultimately offer something better is more questionable. To someone of my generation what is striking is the almost complete absence of reference in this book to one of the main modern political traditions in which until recently these issues were usually debated: namely, socialism broadly conceived. Not so long ago this is the tradition in which thinkers like Honohan would have been situating their ideas; but today any mention of it is deeply unfashionable and we get 'Republicanism' in its stead, a sort of 'shamefaced

socialism' to adapt a phrase of Engels. This is understandable, but I wonder whether the project of resurrecting Machiavelli, Rousseau et al. is a satisfactory way forward. Despite these caveats, however, this is a clear and useful account of this school of thought, an intelligent and thought-provoking discussion of a wide range of issues that it raises, and highly recommended.

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