A Testing Ground to See Whether Pluralist or Not: Can Republicans Be Tamed?

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Summery
Recently the retrieval of civic republicanism has attracted much attention. By liberal theorists, who occupy a position of public philosophy in liberal democracies, it has often been classified into two versions so that one can be approved and the other refused. The aim of this paper is to clarify the viewpoint and intent behind this liberal classification of republicanism, by reviewing John Rawls' theory and tracking it back to Isaiah Berlin's. I will conclude that the liberal viewpoint is set so as to test whether republicanism is compatible with a condition of value-pluralism and that their intent is one that would accommodate it within the liberal framework. Finally I make some comments on this classification from the republican viewpoint and explain how far the republican division of republicanism goes beyond the liberal framework. (1)

1. Retrieval of civic republicanism
Recently the retrieval of civic republicanism has attracted much attention. (2) This strand of political thought has a long history: it originated

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(2) Too many literatures on republicanism have been published since Hans Baron's and John Pocock's memorial works (Baron 1966, Pocock 1975), so I cannot take them up here. For your information, I cite, as one of the most helpful introduction to republicanism, Honohan 2002. As references to this paper, see also Pettit 1997, Skinner 1998, Spitz 1995, Sandel 1996, Oldfield 1990, Michelman 1988 and Sunstein 1988.
in the thoughts of philosophers and historians in ancient Greek and Rome, like Aristotle and Cicero, and was inherited by civic humanists in the Renaissance period, like Machiavelli, by political theorists in the English Revolution, like James Harrington and by Federalists in the ratification of the Constitution of U.S., like Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. It is surely the traditional political thought in Western countries, but in these days it has been appraised, not merely as the historical heritage, but also as a promising recipe for retrieving a loyalty to fatherland or public spirit in those countries, where people are too anomic and apathetic: the crime rate remains high or voter turnout low. It is regarded as an attempt to reconstruct the common good, shared end, or res publica, in the modern societies. This trend doesn’t seem to be unrelated to the other countries, like China and Japan.

Civic republicanism, often confused with communitarianism,\(^3\) has a variety of dimensions and many layers of implications accumulated in the long history, so is difficult to capture. It is not objectionable, however, to sum up this political thought as claiming the following three points.

① Liberty as self-government

People can be free, not when they are only protected from interference or intervention by government, but when they can decide on a social framework within which they live by their own hands, for example, by taking part in public forum, discussing on their common issues, and making a consensus on them.

② Cultivation of civic virtue

People must, not claim their own private interests, but learn to assume public spirit enough to devote themselves to their community as a whole.

\(^3\) I differentiate republicanism from communitarianism. I cannot discuss here on this but just point out a general tendency that the former is likely to connect with deliberative democracy and the latter is with perfectionalism. In the words that I use in the final section, the participating-deliberation version corresponds to republicanism with deliberative democracy, while the cultivating-virtue version to republicanism with perfectionalism, say communitarianism. I state there that the former is more adequate version of republicanism than the latter.
Community, in turn, must take a variety of educative measures in order to instill this disposition in its members.

③ Participating in deliberation

People have to take part in political forum, express their opinions and perspectives, discuss each other and make public decisions through dialogues and communications, in order to determine their common affairs by themselves.

Certainly, it is not deniable that civic republicanism has unacceptable aspects in the modern world, for it has an origin and a long history before the Age of Enlightenment. It has a notorious reputation that it has conventionally sustained the hierarchy, the slavery, the compulsory imposition of a single religious doctrine, wars of invasion and so on. It is said to maintain the existence of the lower class that is occupied with housework in order that citizens can have afford to engage in political activities. It might force its members to convert their own faiths and submit to a particular religious sect so as to make them sacrifice their lives to community. Furthermore, it would not deny military invasions of foreign countries for their territories or resources. In these senses, it poses a risk of conflicting with the ideals that we now value: equality, toleration and peace.

Then it is important to see whether civic republicanism is likely to contradict the important values in our modern societies. In this context, mainly liberal theorists, who occupy a position of public philosophy in the modern world, attempt to classify republicanism so as to sort the compatible version out of it. Put another way: for republican thought has both a good aspect of retrieving public spirit and bad one of conflicting with our ideals, we should pick up the former and cast off the latter. But here is my doubt: Don’t they have any intent in this attempt to accommodate a republican aspiration within the liberal framework? Would republicans come to term with or go beyond that framework? This is the theme that I explore in this paper.

In this paper I will make clear the liberal viewpoint and its intent behind the classification of republicanism, and make some comments on it, in turn,
from the republican viewpoint. Let me explain the plot of this paper. In the following sect. I introduce the classification of republicanism that liberal theorists have recently made. In the sect. I make clear the liberal viewpoint behind this classification by focusing on John Rawls' *Political Liberalism*. In the sect. I extract the intent of it by tracking back to Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty*. In the last sect. I make some remarks on the liberal classification from the republican viewpoint.

### 2. Liberal classification of republicanism: strong and moderate

Civic republicanism is often classified into two versions in many liberal literatures. Here I pick up only three cases among them:

**Alan Patten: civic humanism and instrumental republicanism**

One kind of objection draws upon the republican or **civic humanist tradition** in political thought to argue that liberalism's main error lies in its narrow commitment to the ideal of negative liberty. Although republicans are not necessarily hostile to negative liberty, they are often read as recommending other important ideals as well, such as civic friendship, shared understandings, self-government and participation with others in the political affairs of one's community. To reinstate the proper value of community and public service, on this view, it is important to look beyond liberty to these and other goods...

...[T]he republican tradition, on this reading, takes issue instead with the idea that negative liberty can be divorced from a commitment to public service and citizenship. Active citizenship, these revisionist republicans argue, should be valued, not necessarily because it is good in itself, but because it contributes to the maintenance of a free society. I shall call this view **instrumental republicanism**, both to distinguish it from other views that are influenced by the republican tradition, and to emphasize its distinctive feature, which is the claim that citizenship and public service are goods because they contribute to the realization of negative liberty.\(^4\)

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Wil Kymlicka: Aristotelian and instrumental interpretation

To oversimplify, we can say there are two camps within contemporary civic republicanism. One camp tries to persuade people to accept the burdens of democratic citizenship by persuading them that these are not in fact 'burdens'. The activities of political participation and public deliberation, on this view, should not be seen as a burdensome obligation or duty, but rather as intrinsically rewarding. People should happily embrace the call of democratic citizenship because the life of an active citizen is indeed the highest life available to us. We can call this the ‘Aristotelian’ interpretation of republicanism... In any event, this view about the value of political participation is difficult to accept. As even its proponents admit, this view is markedly at odds with the way most people in the modern world understand the good life. Most people find the greatest happiness in their family life, work, religion, or leisure, not in politics. Some people find political participation fulfilling and satisfying, but for most people, it is seen as an occasional, and often burdensome, activity needed to ensure that government respects and supports their freedom to pursue these personal occupations and attachments... So liberals will offer a different, more modest and more instrumental, account of civic virtue. On this account, it is accepted that people will have differing views about the intrinsic value of political participation, and that some people will find their greatest joys and projects in other areas of life, including the family, work, the arts, or religion. A liberal democracy must respect such diverse conceptions of the good life, as far as possible, and should not compel people to adopt a conception of the good life which privileges political participation as the source of meaning or satisfaction. (5)

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David Held: developmental and protective republicanism

In fact, two strands of republicanism can clearly be distinguished for analytical purposes, strands which have been referred to as ‘civic humanist republicanism’ and ‘civic’ or ‘classical republicanism’ (see Skinner, 1986), but which I shall refer to as ‘developmental’ and ‘protective’ republicanism... developmental theorists stress the intrinsic value of political participation for the development of citizens as human beings, while protective theorists stress its instrumental importance for the protection of citizens’ aims and objectives, i.e. their personal liberty... [Principle(s) of justification of developmental republicanism is that political participation is an essential condition of personal liberty; if citizens do not rule themselves, they will be dominated by others... [Principle(s) of justification of protective republicanism is that citizens must enjoy political and economic equality in order that nobody can be master of another and all can enjoy equal freedom and development in the process of self-determination for the common good.]

These classifications, though each naming may be different, can be said to have a meaning of the same sort: republicans agree to value primarily political participation and civic virtue, but differ on how to value them. One camp of republicans think that citizens have to take direct part in politics of their community and their community in turn has to cultivate virtues for its members, depending on the Aristotle’s doctrine ‘man is by nature a political animal.’ This camp has a view originated in ancient Greek, modeled on democratic city-states like Athena. It is characterized by the intrinsic value of participation and virtue — they are important, not because they serve to some other ends, but because they are themselves important: one can grow up a virtuous man when he takes part in politics in his own community. In this paper I shall call this strand as ‘strong’ version of republicanism, including in this camp Patten’s civic humanism, Kymlicka’s Aristotelian and Held’s developmental republicanism. I call strong because this version has a rigid and uncompromising claim that participation and virtue are the

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(7) I exemplify, as other critics point out, Adrian Oldfield and Michael Sandel in this camp. They tend to be hostile to liberals. See Sandel 1996 and Oldfield 1990.
privileged political values among others.

The other camp of republicans think that citizens have to participate in politics and their community has to cultivate virtue, but to the extent which these serve to maintain individual basic rights and the constitutional institutions which protect them, without depending on the Aristotle’s doctrine. This camp has a view originated in ancient Rome, led by philosophers and historians like Cicero and Sallustius. It is characterized by the instrumental value of participation and virtue — they are important, not because they are themselves important, but because they serve to other ends, including protection of individual rights; one would lose their own liberty unless he contributes to support, by civic-minded participation, the subsistence of the constitutional institutions which protect it. In this paper I shall call this strand as ‘moderate’ version of republicanism, including in this camp Patten’s and Kymlicka’s instrumental and Held’s protective republicanism.\(^8\) I call moderate because this version has a soft and temperate claim that participation and virtue are important just as long as necessary.

The problem here is why civic republicanism should be classified in this way. Republicans themselves may not think that they are divided in different camps. If republicanism were regarded as an undividable camp, whether criticized or not, it would be appraised or refused as a whole in any way. It is unclear why these liberal theorists differentiate one camp from the other. As long as I know, this way of differentiation isn’t found generally in other cases of political thoughts, such as feminism or multiculturalism. Then why only republicanism should be classified? We must stop here and think about a general meaning of classification: A classification seems to mean that we relocate into some independent categories those different elements which are themselves inseparable and intimately entangled when we find some heterogeneous features among these elements. Note ‘when we find some heterogeneous features among these elements.’ When we classify something, we previously ‘find some heterogeneous features’ in it. That is, a classification presupposes a certain viewpoint to find one feature strange,\(^8\) I exemplify, though other critics may disagree, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli in this camp. They seem to compromise somewhat with liberals, and liberals would be ready to accept their theories. See Skinner 1998 and Viroli 2002.
which forces us to divide them. In other words, it implies that there is a normative viewpoint behind it, which directs us to pick up a good one and cast off a bad one. Then in the case of republicanism, what kind of viewpoint is behind? In the next section, I proceed to explore implications of the classification, by focusing on a theory of justice offered by one of the most famous liberal theorists.

3. Liberal viewpoint of the classification found in Rawls’ theory

John Rawls, in his *Political Liberalism* (1993), also classified civic republicanism just as many other liberal theorists do. The passage is rather long, but I cite it here to explore its implications in more detail.

**John Rawls: classical republicanism and civic humanism**

| Classical republicanism | I take to be the view that if the citizens of a democratic society are to preserve their basic rights and liberties, including the civil liberties which secure the freedoms of private life, they must also have to a sufficient degree the “political virtues” (as I have called them) and be willing to take part in public life. The idea is that without a widespread participation in democratic politics by a vigorous and informed citizen body, and certainly with a general retreat into private life, even the most well-designed political institutions will fall into the hands of those who seek to dominate and impose their will through the state apparatus either for the sake of power and military glory, or for reasons of class and economic interest, not to mention expansionist religious fervor and nationalist fanaticism. The safety of democratic liberties requires the active participation of citizens who possess the political virtues needed to maintain a constitutional regime. With classical republicanism so understood, *justice as fairness as a form of political liberalism has no fundamental opposition*. At most there can be certain differences on matters of institutional design and the political sociology of democratic regimes. These differences, if there be such, are not by any means trivial; they can be extremely important. But there is no fundamental opposition because classical republicanism does not presuppose a comprehensive religious, philosophical, or moral doctrine. Nothing in |

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classical republicanism, as characterized above, is incompatible with political liberalism as I have described it.

But with civic humanism, as I understand it, there is indeed fundamental opposition. For as a form of Aristotelianism, it is sometimes stated as the view that man is a social, even a political, animal whose essential nature is most fully realized in a democratic society in which there is widespread and vigorous participation in political life. Participation is not encouraged as necessary for the protection of the basic liberties of democratic citizenship, and as in itself one form of good among others, however important for many persons. Rather, taking part in democratic politics is seen as the privileged locus of the good life. It is a return to giving a central place to what Constant called the “liberties of the ancients” and has all the defects of that. (9)

These passages clearly provide another example of the classification that liberal theorists make, and two versions of republicanism into which he classified almost completely correspond to what I called strong and moderate republicanism: civic humanism is strong and classical republicanism is moderate. What Rawls meant in these passages is also clear: classical republicanism is consistent with his political liberalism but civic humanism is not. The former is consistent because it certainly values participation and virtue but as long as they support “[t]he safety of democratic liberties” and “maintain a constitutional regime.” On the other hands, the latter is not consistent because it approves the intrinsic value of participation and virtue. In other words, it regards participation and virtue as the most important good life of all citizens, not as one of diverse lives that people endorse and pursue. In the Rawls’ terminology, it is not consistent because it presupposes a particular “comprehensive doctrine.” What is then a comprehensive doctrine? In order to see what it means, we have to expand our views on his whole project of political liberalism.

It is very important for his project to separate the political conception of justice from comprehensive doctrine. His differentiation of republicanism can be thought as a particular case of this general separation in his project.

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(9) Rawls 1993, pp. 205–206 (emphasis added).
He meant by “comprehensive doctrine” one that teaches a wide range of affairs, covering a good life or a world view. It includes, for example, a moral doctrine which teach us how to live or a religious doctrine which explains how God created our world. All citizens commit to their own particular comprehensive doctrines, whether they consciously endorsed or not. So there is a diversity of reasonable comprehensive doctrines in our societies, and this fact is “a permanent feature of the public culture of democracy.” On the other hands, the political conception of justice is freestanding from these comprehensive doctrines and so it doesn’t instruct any good life or world view in itself. Rather it is said only to express the “fundamental ideas seen as implicit in the public political culture” and even if citizens commit to their own comprehensive doctrines, its content “is at least familiar and intelligible to the educated common sense of citizens generally.” Therefore the political conception of justice is completely neutral to all comprehensive doctrines, because it is independent of them and just expresses the shared ideas in the political culture. It would never favor or disfavor them.

Note here that there is a curious and interesting relation between the political conception of justice and comprehensive doctrines. The former is surely freestanding from the latters. But according to Rawls, even if a reasonable diversity of the comprehensive doctrines is given, the political conception of justice is nevertheless agreed to by citizens who commit to them. All citizens may commit to their different comprehensive doctrines, but at the same time they can agree to the political conception of justice on each reason which derives from each doctrine — for example,

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(10) Rawls 1993, p. 36. “This pluralism is not seen as disaster but rather as the natural outcome of the activities of human reason.” See also Rawls 1993, p. xxvi.


(12) “Now if all citizens are freely to endorse the political conception of justice, that conception must be able to gain the support of citizens who affirm different and opposing though reasonable comprehensive doctrines, in which case we have an overlapping consensus of reasonable doctrines....We model this by putting people’s comprehensive doctrines behind the veil of ignorance. This enables us to find a political conception of justice that can be the focus of an overlapping consensus and thereby serve as a public basis of justification in a society marked by the fact of reasonable pluralism.” Rawls 1993, p. 24–25 note.
those who belong to a sect of Christianity can agree on a reason of freedom of faith or those who endorse moral philosophy of Mill or Kant on a reason of the principle of toleration. What kind of reason they rely on is completely ignored. But the political conception of justice can have support of reasons derived from each comprehensive doctrine. Rawls call this “an overlapping consensus.” It is not just a temporary and unstable product of compromise among citizens who commit to opposing doctrines, like *modus vivendi*, but a permanent and stable basis of the public justification rooted in each doctrine. The political conception “rests on the totality of reasons specified within the comprehensive doctrine affirmed by each citizen.”(13)

Then why should the political conception of justice be agreed to by citizens who commit to their comprehensive doctrines, though it is said to be freestanding from them? The reason can be traced to a main issue that Rawls tried to answer in *Political Liberalism*: what I call the problem of ‘the stable unification of the pluralist society.’ He declared at the beginning of his book: “How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?”(14) This statement can be analyzed as follows: it is a given fact that there is a diversity of incommensurable and even opposing though reasonable comprehensive doctrines in our modern society. Rawls called this “the fact of reasonable pluralism.” But in spite of this fact, it is still possible to realize an ideal of the well-ordered society where free and equal citizens, who endorse different doctrines, can cooperate and respect without conflicting each other. Put another way: the aim of political liberalism is set for organizing the constitutional regime in which citizens can freely endorse and pursue their own comprehensive doctrines and their conceptions of the good, even if they oppose each other. This can be said the primary question of political liberalism.

By tracing back to his main issue, we come to be able to understand what Rawls meant by differentiating the political conception of justice from comprehensive doctrine. We now see that Rawls required this differentiation

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because he tried to make an outline of a social framework in which citizens can endorse and pursue their own conception of the good given the fact of reasonable pluralism. In this outline, comprehensive doctrine should be disqualified as a basis of the public justification in the pluralist society because it privileges a particular conception of the good and therefore would deny the other conceptions if it held a public position. The public basis should be the political conception of justice because it is freestanding from, therefore neutral to, all comprehensive doctrines and at the same time is supported by citizens on each reason derived from their doctrines. It must be the political conception of justice, not comprehensive doctrine, that gives a key to solve the problem of the stable unification of the pluralist society.

Now let’s get back to the classification of republicanism. The classification can be said a corollary of this Rawls’ approach to the problem and a particular case of this general separation. Generally, if any thought presupposes a particular comprehensive doctrine, it must be refused in the pluralist society. If not, it can be endorsed unless its content is contradictory to the political conception of justice. Let’s apply this general approach to a particular case of republicanism. If republicans have a strong claim that participation and virtue are the most important good for all citizens, their claim must be denied because it presupposes a particular comprehensive doctrine. But if they have a more moderate claim that participation and virtue are only means to preserve democratic liberties, it can be acceptable because, according to Rawls, it doesn’t contradict his political conception of justice. In this way the criterion of how to classify republicanism is, as we have noted, the compatibility with the project of political liberalism to unite the pluralist society.

By focusing on the Rawls’ project of political liberalism and tracing back to his primary issue, we can now infer the liberal viewpoint in general. Liberal theorists, it seems, tend to rely on a separation between the right and the good, or the public and the private, when they try to find out some principle to organize a pluralist society. In other words, they tend to ‘sanctify’ the private sphere from interference by government in order to

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15 I am not confident to say that all liberals relied on such a separation, but it is well known that Sandel criticized Rawls, as the most typical liberal, for the priority of the right over the good. See Sandel 1998b, pp. 184–218.
allow individuals to pursue their own conceptions of the good, whereas they urge governmental power to realize the conception of justice that specifies individual rights or distribution of the goods. It may be possible to say that Rawls’ differentiation between the political and the comprehensive is parallel to the liberal separation between the public and the private in general. So it isn’t surprising that liberal theorists like Rawls introduced this separation when they judged a validity of republicanism. On this separation, according to them, republicanism must be judged: it should be accepted if it is consistent to their public conception of justice but if not, it must be refused. In sum, the viewpoint whether republicanism is acceptable or not is, it seems, the compatibility with the liberal conception of justice. Isn’t it this viewpoint that was behind when liberal theorists made the classification of republicanism?

The classification from this viewpoint, though current in recent literatures, doesn’t have its origin in Rawls’ political liberalism. We can track it back to a great ancestor, who has influenced many liberals for a long time. Further exploration will lead us to clarify the intent behind the classification.

4. Liberal intent behind the classification hidden in Berlin’s theory

Isaiah Berlin published his famous article, Two Concepts of Liberty in 1958, prior to Rawls’ Political liberalism in 1993. Since then, this article has been, whether supported or criticized, the basic reference for the after-war dispute on liberty and one of the most influential literature in legal and political philosophy. In this article, as is well known, Berlin laid out two different — negative and positive — conceptions of liberty.

The negative conception of liberty, on the one hand, means that one is free when he is relieved of any interference or not intervened by anyone.\(^\text{(16)}\) It has been supported by J. Locke, J.S. Mill, B. Constant or A. de Tocqueville and so clearly connected to modern liberalism.\(^\text{(17)}\) The positive conception of liberty, on the other hand, means that one is free when he is willing to take part in the decision-making on his own life.\(^\text{(18)}\) It has been, according to Berlin, “at the heart of many of the nationalist, Communist,

\(^\text{(17)}\) Berlin 1969, pp. 171–175.
\(^\text{(18)}\) Berlin 1969, p. 178.
authoritarian, and totalitarian creeds of our day.\(^{(19)}\) But if it can be called a liberty as self-government, we may connect this conception of liberty to civic republicanism.

After he had explained the two conceptions of liberty, he supported negative rather than positive liberty in his conclusion. The conclusion derived from the following single-track reasoning:

1) The positive interpretation of liberty necessarily leads to metaphysical monism.
2) But metaphysical monism is not consistent with our modern pluralist society.
3) So we have to interpret the concept of liberty only in the negative sense.

I explain this reasoning in order:
1) According to Berlin, the positive interpretation of liberty would always arrive at the same conclusion. It begins with a claim that when we live with our naked desires, we are slaves of them. It proceeds to claim that we are free when we live rationally with the 'true' desires, that is, when we are subject to the substantive code of behaviors or the objective rule of affairs. But we don't know what it is and irrationally live 'wrong' lives, so we have to listen to the other person who knows well about it. At last appears metaphysical monism: it is a destination of positive liberty that we are obliged to be dependent on, therefore subordinated to, a single moral subject who would know the absolute truth of just behaviors beyond our world of concrete and contingent affairs.
2) However, metaphysical monism clearly contradicts a condition of our modern society. We live in a society in which there is no common good so that we have different and mutually incommensurable values and ends. If government or 'the moral agent' forced us to accept a single value and end, our society would take the road to serfdom: totalitarianism. It would deny liberty itself by compelling us to abandon our own values and ends.
3) This is why liberty should be interpreted in the negative, not positive,

sense. Surely interpreting liberty in the negative sense is not the best way. It has some problems: firstly, it cannot recognize a miserable condition like poverty as interference of liberty. Even if someone is put in an extreme poverty, as long as he isn’t intervened to do what he wants to do, he would still be regarded as completely free. Secondly, it is consistent with any form of political regime. It is not necessarily connected with democratic government. It would be protected, as long as the private spheres aren’t intervened, even under tyranny.\(^{(20)}\) However, in spite of these problems, Berlin emphasized that the risks of negative liberty were less than those of positive liberty, that is, totalitarianism.\(^{(21)}\) He justified, as it were, negative liberty on the reason of its comparative merit against the background of the supposed worst consequence from positive liberty.

Note here the risks that Berlin attributed to positive liberty. 1) specifies that if we adopt the interpretation of liberty in the positive sense, as self-government, it will necessarily lead to metaphysical monism. This idea would bring totalitarian society where government in place of the moral agency would deny our own values and ends and force us to accept the single common good. In this scheme, the positive conception of liberty is perhaps supposed to involve a claim that participation and virtue are the common good which all citizens must accept and other conceptions of the good should be denied. If so, it contradicts a condition of our pluralist society because it would not leave room for a diversity of the conceptions of the good which people endorse and pursue. In sum, Berlin thought that *the positive conception of liberty should be refused because it would deny value-pluralism*.

The criterion to decide whether a certain theory of liberty should be permissible or not is, for Berlin, one that it would approve value-pluralism: he would accept a conception of liberty when it would leave room for a diversity of the conceptions of the good. But otherwise, he would not. The negative interpretation of liberty is supposed to have its comparative merit because it presupposes value-pluralism. In contrast, the positive interpretation should be refused because it would deny value-pluralism. It seems plausible

\(^{(21)}\) Spitz 1995, p. 94.
to say that he used a kind of a litmus test: whether theory of liberty is pluralist or not? We have explored a viewpoint behind the liberal classification of republicanism in the section: republicanism is acceptable when it would be compatible with the liberal theory of justice, while it is denied when it would not. Isn’t the viewpoint consonant to this Berlin’s test?

There is certainly a distance between Berlin’s and liberal theorists’ like Rawls’ position. The liberal classification gets across republicanism itself, that is, separates it into two versions. It is a difference, in its own terms, between two positions within republicanism. To the contrary, Berlin’s dichotomy is not for judging a validity of republicanism. It is a difference between two conceptions of liberty: negative liberty is supposed to be connected with liberalism, while positive liberty is not, by definition, even concerned to republicanism. The supporters of positive liberty were not republicans, but “the nationalist, Communist, authoritarian, and totalitarian” as Berlin exemplified. Republicans have certainly advocated an importance of self-government, but a relation between republicanism and positive liberty is not so direct.

In order to explore how Berlin would see republicanism, let’s introduce an analysis of his theory by Crawford B. Macpherson. According to it, Berlin’s understanding of positive liberty includes three meanings of political liberty: (1) self-direction or self-mastery, (2) coercion by the fully-rational or by those who have attained self-mastery and (3) a share in the controlling authority. Berlin thought that (1) self-mastery would necessarily lead to (2) coercion, but this transition was based only on an unsustainable supposition by rationalist that there is a “single true solution.” If a connection between (1) self-mastery and (2) coercion is not necessary as Macpherson said, Berlin’s degradation of positive liberty cannot hold true thoroughly of republicanism, which valued only (1) self-mastery, not (2) coercion. Then we should say that it holds true only of a particular version of republicanism, which connects (1) self-mastery with (2) coercion. Put another way: in the Berlin’s view, if republicans approve (2) coercion by the fully-rational, they would be degraded as supporting a strong version because it would

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22 Macpherson 1973, pp. 95–119.
necessarily lead to metaphysical monism.

Then if republicans don’t approve coercion, how would Berlin judge a version which they support? To see this point, we must put it together with his understanding of Niccolò Machiavelli. For modern republicans, he was a great successor of classical republicanism in the Renaissance and is seen as an enemy of liberalism or pluralism. But in the Berlin’s view Machiavelli was the first value-pluralist in the history of western political thought. He was the first writer who differentiated a moral world into two incompatible moralities—one is the morality of the pagan world and another is the morality of Christianity. By this differentiation, he challenged “one of the foundations of the central western philosophical tradition, the belief in the ultimate compatibility of all genuine values.” He didn’t wholly intended to bring such an effect, but a certain consequence would follow from his political philosophy: “ends equally ultimate, equally sacred, may contradict each other, that entire systems of value may come into collision without possibility of rational arbitration, and that not merely in exceptional circumstances, as a result of abnormality or accident or error...but (this was surely new) as part of the normal human situation.” His philosophy didn’t allow people anymore to live comfortably and harmoniously in a single moral world, since the incompatible moralities eternally existed and this fact couldn’t be avoided. And Berlin judged Machiavelli’s contribution to modern political philosophy as follows.

This was a major turning point, and its intellectual consequences, wholly unintended by its originator, were, by a fortunate irony of history (which some call its dialectic), the bases of the very liberalism that Machiavelli would surely have condemned as feeble and characterless, lacking in single-minded pursuit of power, in splendour, in organisation, in virtù, in power to discipline unruly men

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23 According to Berlin, in the morality of the pagan world, vigor, fortitude in adversity, public achievement, order, discipline, happiness, strength, and justice were valued, while in the morality of Christianity, charity, mercy, sacrifice, love of God, forgiveness of enemies, contempt for the goods of this world, faith in the life hereafter, and belief in the salvation of the individual soul were counted as the supreme ideals. Berlin 1971, pp. 45-46.


against huge odds into one energetic whole. Yet he is, in spite of himself, one of the makers of pluralism, and of its — to him — perilous acceptance of toleration.\(^{26}\)

According to Berlin, Machiavelli was the very originator of pluralism and liberalism, even though he himself wasn’t aware of that. What he advocated was that moral world is plural and diverse, not single and unitary. In this way Berlin understood that Machiavelli was one of value-pluralists, even liberal. If Machiavelli himself was appraised as one of value-pluralists, republicans, who take over his heritage, would also be appraised as favorable by Berlin. They would also be accepted at least as quasi-pluralists or quasi-liberals in the same way neo-roman theorists are appraised by Quentin Skinner. In sum, republicanism, if it has taken over Machiavelli’s philosophy, can be approved as a moderate version which can be compatible with value-pluralism.

By putting together Berlin’s dichotomy of liberty with his understanding of Machiavelli, it can be said that he would correspond to republicanism just as liberals like Rawls do. Their correspondence to republicans, as it were, has a coincidence. In the eyes of Berlin, if republicanism is connected to the positive conception of liberty, particularly \(\text{coercion as Macpherson analyzed, it would be refused as leading metaphysical monism and totalitarianism. This is the very reason Rawls rejected civic humanism: it would presuppose a particular comprehensive doctrine and therefore contradict value-pluralism. On the other hand, if republicanism is a derivation from Machiavelli’s pluralist philosophy, it would be accepted. This is also dependent on the same reason Rawls approved classical republicanism: it would be consistent with his political conception of justice and therefore accommodated within it.}\(^{27}\) In this way, Berlin and liberals like Rawls seem to converge on a point that they judge a validity of republicanism by the compatibility with value-pluralism. Certainly Berlin’s dichotomy of liberty appeared more rigid and stubborn perhaps against the political background of the Cold War at that time, while Rawls’

\(^{26}\) Berlin 1971, p. 79.

\(^{27}\) When Rawls classified republicanism, he put Machiavelli into classical republicans, who are consistent with his political liberalism, and preferred him to Arendt, who was put into civic humanists. See Rawls 1993, pp. 205–206. n. 37.
differentiation of republicanism looked more tolerate and benevolent since liberals occupied a position of public philosophy in liberal democracies. However, it cannot be denied that the liberal viewpoint behind the classification of republicanism is consonant with the Berlin’s test of the compatibility with value-pluralism.

Tracking the liberal classification back to Berlin’s theory of liberty, we can reach the deeper point to see why liberal theorists intended to classify republicanism. Remember why Berlin separated the conception of liberty. According to Charles Taylor, Berlin dared to limit negative liberty to the “opportunity concept,” without extending it to the “excise concept,” in order to eradicate the extreme version of positive liberty. That is, Berlin took a strategy of ‘Maginot line’ to fight totalitarian menace at the last-ditch position, rather than engaging enemies on an open terrain of exercise-concepts, where one would have to fight to discriminate the good from the bad among such concepts. Put differently: Berlin separated the conception of liberty because he wanted to stay on a safe and stable position by entrenching himself in a fort of negative liberty, filling it only with good elements, and fight dangerous enemy of totalitarianism, inflicting the other bad elements on the side of positive liberty. Of this conservative and distortive strategy Berlin took, we can find out his anxiety or fear for a theory of liberty as self-government, say republicanism. And it seems to be commonly rooted in an assumption of liberal theorists: republicanism would, unless one has vigilant eyes for it, quickly fall down to connect with metaphysical monism and deny individual liberties and rights. In order to avoid this result, it is necessary to test a validity of republicanism from the viewpoint of whether it is compatible with our pluralist world.

It seems their anxiety or fear that was in the root of the liberal classification of republicanism. Liberal theorists like Berlin and Rawls are afraid of a denial of value-pluralism, that is, of imposing a particular value or end on individuals and making them unable to endorse and pursue their own. That is perhaps a motivation that drove liberal theorists to classify republicanism: republicans must be rejected out of the liberal framework if they regard participation and virtue as the single common good, while they

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should be accepted if they regard participation and virtue among diverse conceptions of the good and respect the constitutional regime which protects individual liberties. In this classification, a ‘strong’ version is supposed to be dangerous, in that it would go beyond the liberal framework, whereas a ‘moderate’ version is supposed to be safe in that it would be accommodated within the framework. Behind this classification is an apprehension that republicanism, as long as it has a risky aspect of imposing a single value on all, cannot be approved in our pluralist society. In other words, the underlying intent of the liberal classification is one that would accommodate republicanism within its framework. By testing republicans, liberal theorists try to subordinate them to a condition of our modern world: value-pluralism.

5. Beyond the liberal classification

Do republicans pass this test and be accommodated well? In the last section, I make some comments on the liberal classification to explore this point.

1) ‘strong’ republicans are locked in by the liberal classification

Among modern republicans, some accept the liberal classification without doubt and are willing to admit that they advocate the strong version of republicanism. For example, Michel J. Sandel, based on the classification, professed that the strong version, not the moderate one, seemed to him “the most persuasive.” He said that if one adopts the moderate version, self-sacrifice would be reduced to a function of utilitarian calculation as an instrument to pursue private ends. (29) Adrian Oldfield also seemed to prefer the strong version because he thought, based on a view of the human growth, that paternalistic education is needed for “the creation of free and autonomous moral being.” (30) They have a joint passion for stressing that

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(29) "The idea that political participation and civic virtue are important only for the sake of maintaining a regime that enables us to pursue our private ends is unlikely to be stable. Unless citizens have reason to believe that sharing in self-government is intrinsically important, their willingness to sacrifice individual interests for the common good may be eroded by instrumental calculations about the costs and benefits of political participation." Sandel 1998a, p. 325.

civic republicanism is an autonomous position distinct from modern liberalism by putting emphasis on the intrinsic importance of participation and virtue.

However, their self-understanding seems locked in by the liberal classification: they drive themselves into closing the way to the possible revival of civic republicanism in our modern world by putting too much emphasis on a role of participation and virtue. It may be necessary to promote political participation and foster civic virtue in our modern world, but it would be seen, perhaps even from the republican viewpoint, unrealistic, or undesirable, to expect normal citizens to devote a full-hearted self-sacrifice to their community. Pluralist or liberal theorists wouldn’t hesitate to refuse their demand, and instead recommend them to be consistent with the pluralist condition of our world: to be modest. The self-professed strong republicans, though successfully differentiated their position from liberalism, seems to make their own validity suspicious by specifying their own position along the liberal classification. They fail the specification of their position from the republican viewpoint, which otherwise judges the validity of republicanism in our modern world. I will be back on this point later in 4).

2) Was Machiavelli moderate?

It is also problematic that liberal theorists understand Machiavelli as an ancestor of the moderate version of republicanism. In fact he wasn’t so pluralist much as Berlin and Rawls thought. As a whole, he gave us an impression that he advocated the strong version of republicanism in that he accentuated an utility of civic religion and coercive law in order to foster virtuous citizens. And an exploration on his argument in more detail would prove to demonstrate that his philosophy had many features clearly distinct from the liberal understanding. It is well known that he appraised the ancient religion, which often used auspice, and hated the Roman Catholic Church and its ecclesiastics. He preferred the ancient religion because it animated virtue such as a brutality or ferociousness and served to military purposes including a triumph of war. And he reproached the Catholic Church because it had brought a serious split in Italy and impeded a national unity enough to defend against invasions by other countries. We
can imagine from his statements that in fact he expected religion to assume a role of cultivating virtue in order to unify cities and defend Italy. He confronted the ancient religion with Christianity as Berlin described, not because he wanted to show these two moral worlds were incompatible, but just because he judged the former was more useful in cultivating virtù than the latter. If Christianity were useful, he wouldn’t have hesitated to discard the ancient religion and to support the Catholic Church. In this sense, Machiavelli was a strong, not moderate, republican who aimed to cultivate virtù with a single religion, whether the ancient religion or Christianity. In spite of Berlin’s and Rawls’ understanding, he wasn’t a republican who was “one of the makers of pluralism” or did “not presuppose a comprehensive religious, philosophical, or moral doctrine.”

3) Beyond Berlin’s dichotomy

It is important to note that many modern republicans profess that they take the third way beyond Berlin’s dichotomy, neither negative nor positive liberty. According to Skinner and Philip Pettit, liberal theorists have interpreted the concept of liberty as ‘non-interference’ or ‘non-intervention’: one is free when he can do what he wants to do without interference by others. However, in the republican tradition, one is not supposed to be free when he can do anything without interference, because he would lose his freedom when he might be intervened. When one is subject to an arbitrary intention of the others, just as a slave depends on his master’s whim or mercy, he cannot be any longer free, even if he isn’t actually intervened. One would lose his freedom when he might be intervened i.e. he is dominated. They proclaim that the conception of liberty taken over by civic republicans in the long history has been ‘non-dependence’ or ‘non-domination.’(33)

In this context, Skinner and Pettit put the republican conception of liberty on neither conception of liberty suggested by Berlin. In their view, the republican conception of liberty cannot be reduced to the full-range

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(31) Machiavelli 1999, p. 494. He exemplified the effects of the religious actions with the cases of the Sammnium (ibid., pp. 515–517) or of the consul Papirius (ibid., pp. 511–514).

meaning of negative liberty as Berlin defined. In his conception, one is free as long as he doesn’t meet with any obstacles in reality. But in the republican conception, one would be no longer free when he might be intervened by the others, depends on other’s arbitrary intention, or is dominated. Liberty as non-domination, as republicans understand, has a broader meaning than negative liberty.\(^{(34)}\) But on the other hand, the republican conception of liberty doesn’t have the full-range meaning of positive liberty as Berlin defined. Certainly it takes a step out of a fort of negative liberty in that it has a broader meaning than the latter does.\(^{(33)}\) However, even though republicans have stressed the importance of participation and virtue, “the primary focus is clearly on avoiding the evils associated with interference,”\(^{(36)}\) not on advocating the subordination to moral agency. As they stated, republicans may have in fact taken a way to positive liberty, but they don’t presuppose a doctrine that would lead to metaphysical monism and totalitarianism as Berlin feared. Liberty as non-domination isn’t supposed to have dangerous aspects that Berlin attributed to positive liberty.

\(^{(33)}\) “Domination can occur without interference, because it requires only that someone have the capacity to interfere arbitrarily in your affairs; no one need actually interfere.” Pettit 1997, p. 23. “What, then, divides the neo-roman from the liberal understanding of freedom? What the neo-roman writers repudiate avant la lettre is the key assumption of classical liberalism to the effect that force or the coercive threat of it constitute the only forms of constraint that interfere with individual liberty. The neo-roman writers insist, by contrast, that to live in a condition of dependence is in itself a source and a form of constraint. As soon as you recognise that you are living in such a condition, this will serve in itself to constrain you from exercising a number of your civil rights. This is why they insist, pace Paley, that to live in such a condition is to suffer a diminution not merely of security for your liberty but of liberty itself.” Skinner 1998, p. 84.

\(^{(34)}\) But republicans don’t converge on this point. Skinner once stated that the republicans have offered simply an “alternative account” of negative liberty, by saying that freedom will be lost not only by dependence but also restraint or constraint. See Skinner 1998, pp. 82-83. Pettit, on the other side, insists that a person will lose freedom only when he is dependent on an arbitrary will of the other, that is, dominated. See, Pettit 2002, pp. 339-353.

\(^{(35)}\) “The conception is positive to the extent that, at least in one respect, it needs something more than the absence of interference; it requires security against interference, in particular against interference on a arbitrary basis.” Pettit 1997, p. 51.

\(^{(36)}\) Pettit 1997, p. 27.
If that is the case, the republican conception of liberty would transcend Berlin’s dichotomy. It is neither negative nor positive liberty, but is put, as it were, between them. According to Pettit, the conception of liberty as non-domination, which “fits on neither side of the now established negative-positive dichotomy” is “a distinctively republican conception, as I believe.”

4) Republican classification of republicanism

If republicanism is to be classified, it seems more useful to divide it into, in place of the strong and moderate version, a cultivating-virtue (CV) and participating-deliberation (PD) version. I have argued elsewhere that the appropriate republican theory of law in the modern society would be the PD rather than CV version. How different is this division from the liberal classification? Certainly it shares with the liberal classification an interest to see whether or to what extent civic republicanism would have the validity in our modern world. Modern republicans would agree with pluralists and liberals on the potentiality of civic republicanism to provide a theoretical clue for refiguring a public base in the pluralist society. However, it would go beyond such an expectation: rather it aims to find a fundamental way to overcome the liberal public/private separation and re-consociate the public and the private. It will go beyond the liberal classification — here I pick up some remarks on the basic idea from my argumentation.

Liberal theorists, as often criticized by radical democrats like Chantal Mouffe or Sheldon Wolin, tend to undermine the ideal of democracy and self-government by entrenching as an immovable given the conception of justice and the constitutional regime it specifies and alienating them from political engagement of citizens who have their own interests and conceptions of the good. This liberal separation of the public and the private is, as examined in sect. 3, exemplified in Rawls’ differentiation of the political conception of justice and comprehensive doctrine: the former is

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(38) Pettit 1997, p. 51.
(39) For readers who want to know the detail, see Omori 2006 (though not written in English).
(40) They tend to criticize the liberal theory of justice for impoverishing the political. See Mouffe 1993 and Wolin 1996.
supposed to be “freestanding” of the latter. Certainly the liberal separation must be important because it aims to alienate individual liberties and rights from turbulent political process and defend private lives against interference by the government. However, it is problematic because it forgets that the constitutional regime which protects individual liberties and rights was created and has been legitimated by democratic deliberation in which virtuous citizens take part. In other words, it has a problem of neglecting the public legitimacy of the legal framework. It is in this context, I suppose, that the retrieval of civic republicanism has attracted much attention in these years. Civic republicanism is expected to a philosophical approach to restore the ideal of democracy and self-government by re-consociate the public and the private, which were once separated within the liberal framework.

Here it is necessary to understand civic republicanism by dividing it into two distinct versions. The CV version is set up, on the basis of the Aristotelian doctrine, to bring private persons up to public citizens by cultivating civic virtue in small communities such as church or township. This approach may be characterized by civic education: a direct conversion of personality. This is no doubt widely overlapped with the strong version of republicanism in the liberal classification, which is supported by Sandel and Oldfield. Although it is one of the republican approach to re-consociate the public with the private, but it seems inadequate in our modern world. Inadequate not because it is inconsistent with the value-pluralism, but because it lacks actual democratic channels to construct the public framework, through which people can discuss on what kind of conception of justice and constitutional institutions should govern our society. It aims to bridge only a psychological gap between the public and the private: self-government would realize only in the minds of allegedly ‘virtuous’ citizens.

On the other hand, the PD version is designed to deliver private voices into public institutions by multiplying channels of collective decision-making and enlarge forum of dialogue and communication. This approach is supported by theorists of deliberative democracy, such as Jürgen Habermas or Frank Michelman. It may be characterized by the re-organization of the public and the private: a permanent modification through deliberation. It enables private persons to have opportunities to make or change public
decisions, through taking part in informal spaces, discussing on their common affairs, making agreements on them. It aims to multiply and enlarge deliberative process ranging from daily lives to formal institutions.

Then does the PD version correspond to the moderate version in the liberal classification? Certainly it is partially overlapped with the moderate version in that it endorses a variety of perspectives and opinions which participants have and offer in deliberative forum and is willing to count them into public decisions. In this sense, it approves value-pluralism — but doesn’t regard it as a given fact. It expects to mitigate conflicts, if not to bring a reconciliation, among values in the deliberation. The PD version depends on a capacity of deliberation because of its following consequences: giving the participants opportunities to revise their initial preferences or naked desires through exchanges of their perspectives, making them rethink the property or priority of their diverse conceptions of the good by mutual persuasion, or offering them agenda about fundamental issues of justice and law.\(^{(42)}\) Needless to say, it won’t be easy for diverse citizens to make an agreement on public issues in our pluralist society. But the PD version of republicanism, even if an unanimous resolution is ultimately impossible, will never give up a hope that diverse citizens can cooperatively decide on their common affairs by themselves: a dream of self-government.

Perhaps from the Berlin’s and other liberals’ like Rawls’ viewpoint, even the PD version, not to mention the CV version, would be unacceptable as the moderate version of republicanism in the pluralist society. Inacceptable because they would think that it will try to overcome value-pluralism, not to accept it as a given fact. However, republican theorists of law, with deliberative democracy, will go beyond the liberal framework.

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\(^{(41)}\) I cite here only Habermas 1992 and Michelman 1988.

\(^{(42)}\) ‘The central idea here is that politics has a deliberative or transformative dimension. Its function is to select values, to implement “preferences about preferences,” or to provide opportunities for preference formation rather than simply to implement existing desires’. Sunstein 1988, p. 1545.
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