

Green republicanism: a viable alternative?

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Abstract

In this thesis, green republicanism's claim of being a green alternative to liberal democracy, of being an alternative that is better suited to deal with the ecological crisis while retaining human freedom and flourishing, is evaluated. Green republicanism is a relatively young strand of thought, that seeks to realize ecological values through the republican ideal of virtuous citizenship. Since the goal of republicans is to maintain the republic over time in a world that threatens it, republican thought is argued to intersect with values that are advanced in green political theory, such as sustainability and 'green' citizenship. By advancing a rather thick conception of human flourishing and sustainability, however, green republicanism seems to either expect that citizens will end up embracing these values as in some teleological sense, or requires that these conceptions should be the substance of politics. This seems to violate the neo-Roman republican ideal of non-domination, because, for republicans, the common good should be formulated by citizens in an inclusive process of public deliberation. The green republican approach to achieving sustainability, it can be argued, risks removing contingency from politics. Likewise, the green republican emphasis on place and leadership appears to be counterproductive for effectively dealing with the ecological crisis. This thesis argues that sustainability surely is one of the most important values and common goods of our time, but that the contents of it should be decided upon by the people. We may, however, agree to adopt a minimal, universal and scientifically backed conception of sustainability that comes to guide politics and society in a green republican fashion. Starting from this minimal conception of sustainability, the green republican strand of thought may inspire us to enter a necessary debate: that on what we want our common sustainable future to look like.

Preface

Writing one's master's thesis, it turns out, can be a pretty solitary process. Luckily, whenever I was struggling or feeling a bit insecure while writing this thesis, Roos, my amazing girlfriend, was always there to soothe my mind and to remind me that hard work always pays off in the end. And so it does. I want to thank Marcel Wissenburg for acting as my supervisor. I very much enjoyed discussing my work with Marcel and his guidance has proved to be more than positive for the final outcome of this thesis, I believe. I would also like to thank John Barry of Queen's University of Belfast for acting as second reader. It was a guest lecture by professor Barry during a course early on in my master's that sparked my interest in green republicanism. Finally, my parents are the ones who have made it possible for me to pursue a master's degree and have always encouraged me to do so. I want to thank them for believing in me and for unconditionally supporting me along the way.

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1. Introduction

How are we to achieve a sustainable, post-carbon society while simultaneously retaining freedom and human flourishing? The ecological crisis that is climate change

surely is one of the greatest challenges of our time, one that we will have to provide an answer to in order to preserve life on earth (Hoegh-Guldberg et al., 2018). Ever since the ecological crisis has become a hot topic in the 1960s, green political theorists have advocated different ways of creating that society that effectively deals with climate change while safeguarding human freedom. The state for many green political theorists needs to be transformed in order to ensure effective 'green' governance (Barry & Eckersley, 2005). While some argue that the ecological crisis requires more eco-authoritarian styles of government, a significant strand of green political thought occupies itself with seeking new ways of instilling sustainable virtues within citizens (Dean, 2001; Gabrielson, 2008). 'Green' forms of citizenship may prove instrumental here for facilitating the transition toward more environment-friendly behavior. The hegemony of liberal democracy in the western world for many scholars poses bad news for realizing sustainability goals, for it is argued that the state, in order to effectively deal with the ecological crisis, should take a stance and perhaps even has a duty to promote sustainable behavior amongst its citizens. One of the central values that underlie the liberal state, however, is that it should be value neutral and that the state should not interfere within the lives of its citizens by imposing duties (Bell, 2005).

Here comes into play the potential of the republican tradition to advance the sustainable goals that by many are seen as necessary to tackle the ecological crisis. Green republicanism, specifically, is that strand of thought within republicanism that seeks to offer a green alternative to the hegemonic liberal society that is in place in many western nations today. Green republicanism is a relatively young school of thought, that in recent years has been developed and substantiated mainly by John Barry and Peter Cannavò following a revival of the republican tradition. Green republicans use the republican tradition to offer a green alternative for the current 'unsustainable society' (Barry, 2012). The republican tradition, while being far from univocal, in general stimulates citizens to act on the common good that applies to all. A central focus for republicans is how to maintain the republic over time. Through instilling civic virtues within citizens, the republic may be stabilized and eventually passed on to the next generation (Barry, 2012; Cannavò, 2016; Pocock, 1975).

Green political theory and civic republicanism, it has been argued, strikingly intersect on values such as virtuous citizenship as instrumental for stability, sustainability for both current and future generations, freedom and human flourishing

in a post-carbon world (Barry, 2012; Cannavò, 2007; Gabrielson, 2008). Yet, little research exists on this relationship, or, rather compatibility of civic republicanism and green political citizenship. Equally, contributions that concern the apparent tensions within green republican thought are not numerous.

Republican thought, as we will see in this thesis, emphasizes public deliberation as a means of formulating the common good, but the ecological crisis for green republicans seems to dictate an agenda to politics a priori. Likewise, as Cannavò (2018) argues, the ecological crisis for green republicans seems to demand of citizens that they adhere to a specific scientific conception of nature, one that posits a 'thick set of a priori, substantive constraints and ends for politics' (p. 6).

These tensions, along with the lack in existing literature on green republican's practical implications, its normative foundations and its compatibility with green citizenship calls for more extensive scrutiny of green republicanism and allows us to formulate the following research question:

In what sense is green civic republican citizenship better suited to deal with the unsustainable society that is in place today than our current dominant system of liberal democracy?

To provide an answer to this question, I will analyze the green republican claim of being compatible with green forms of citizenships and sustainability in general. Using seminal works on both classic and more contemporary forms of republicanism, I will also focus on the normative foundations of green republicanism in order to substantively reflect on my research question. Engaging with green republicanism in this matter, I believe, may contribute to the rather limited debate on the normative justification of this fairly new republican strand of thought as an answer to the unsustainable society. This thesis may therefore either strengthen or weaken the green republican claim of being a suited, ecologically sustainable alternative to liberal democracy.

This thesis will proceed as follows. First, in order to explain why citizenship is increasingly being opted for as an instrument to advance certain causes, such as sustainability, I will introduce the concept of citizenship, its recent developments and subsequently explore the republican and liberal traditions and accompanying models of citizenship. Because the green republican strand of thought is what I will focus on in this

thesis, I will more thoroughly engage with republican thought and its most important developments. Especially the neo-Athenian and neo-Roman republican strands of thought are of interest here.

In Chapter 3, I will engage with the concept of sustainability. Sustainability is a core value in green political thought and in recent decades appears to have become both widely agreed upon and heavily contested. Sustainability itself, it turns out, has many different conceptions that all appear to imply a particular view on what our common future should look like. Likewise, it implies a particular conception of what our responsibilities toward future generations and the non-human world should be. The concept of the unsustainable society is introduced in order to better grasp this plurality of views within political theory concerning what sustainability should (or should not) look like.

In the fourth chapter, I will introduce green political thinking and outline what may be considered its two main poles: ecologism and environmentalism. Especially the former is of interest to this thesis, since green republican thought sees ecological citizenship as an important means for ensuring sustainability in a fashion that adheres to the ideal of freedom as non-domination. Green ecological citizenship will therefore also be engaged with in this chapter.

Chapter Five will focus on green republicanism, its core values and give an overview of some of the most prominent criticisms that this strand of thought has received in recent times. Likewise, I will provide the green republican response to most of these criticisms. In this chapter, I shall also more thoroughly study the compatibility of (green) republican thought and some of the core values of green political theory.

Having introduced and scrutinized all variables of interest in the previous chapters, in Chapter Six I will give my own substantiated take on what I consider to be the most important drawbacks that come with green republicanism, such as its emphasis on place, the dichotomy that it appears to create concerning the possible scenarios that lead up to sustainability and its blurry distinction between intrinsic and instrumental republicanism. In the conclusion of thesis, I will reflect on my findings and make recommendations for future research.

2. Citizenship

2.1 Citizenship

The idea of citizenship refers to a status which arises with membership of a political community and bestows onto citizens a set of 'reciprocal responsibilities and rights' (Hayward, 2006, p. 435). From the Greek city states to the Roman Empire to modernity, citizenship describes both the relationship between individuals and the state and between individual citizens. In terms of political membership, citizenship always links a specific society with a specific political association; there is no defined set of characteristics that define the practice of citizenship (Pfister, 2012).

As Ruth Lister (1998, p. 15-16) points out, citizenship is contested at every level from its meaning to its political application and, moreover, is highly context-dependent. The way in which citizenship is defined has strong implications for the kind of society and political community that is desired. Citizenship thus may be seen as those social practices that link citizens with the state, or those practices that influence the indirect relationship between certain groups of citizens with 'indirect involvement of the polity of some degree' (Pfister, 2012, p. 4).

The concept of citizenship can be disaggregated into three main elements; legal status, political status (or participation) and membership (or identity). Legal status here means that citizenship is defined in terms of political, civil and social rights, as famously put forward by Marshall (1963). The citizen is a legal person who is free under the law and has the right to claim the law's protection. Political here indicates that citizens are considered political agents that actively participate in political institutions. Finally, citizenship in terms of membership refers to citizenship as being constitutive of one's identity within a political community (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Leydet, 2017; Shachar, Bauböck, Bloemraad & Vink, 2017). Ultimately, citizenship should be seen as a developing institution; a historical process that is perpetually in motion due to its contested nature and that is influenced by context dependency such as tradition, cultural backgrounds and local developments (Pfister, 2012). According to some, citizenship ought to be seen as made up out of a complex interdependent relationship between different aspects of citizenship which all occur simultaneously, a unified nature

of citizenship. Civil, political and social citizenship rights here ought to coincide in relation to each other, not in isolation, a tendency in current theorizing on citizenship (Lister, 2008, p. 4-8).

As Brysk and Shafir (2004) note, in recent years there has been a significant rise of citizenship theory in contemporary political theorizing spurred by changes that affect the sovereign nation-state such as increasing internal heterogeneity of liberal democracies, globalization and mass migration, which blur the boundaries of the nation-state and citizenship. Furthermore, as argued by Isin and Turner (2002), in recent decades the modern conception of citizenship as a status held under the authority of a state has been contested and broadened to include various political and social struggles of recognition and redistribution. Due to this development, 'various struggles based upon identity and difference have found new ways of articulating their claims as claims to citizenship understood not simply as a legal status but as political and social recognition and economic redistribution' (Isin & Turner, 2002, p. 2).

Citizenship is being transformed not by these new functions, but because of its entry into the everyday lives of people who 'fill it with their thoughts, emotions, and deeds to negotiate and understand their own lives' (Hurenkamp, Tonkens, & Duyvendak, 2011, p. 205). As MacGregor and Szerszynski (2003) point out, the concept of citizenship has been 'prefixed' with a number of qualifiers in recent years. The authors name cyber citizenship, corporate citizenship, consumer citizenship and global citizenship as some examples of pairings that have appeared in recent citizenship literature. The old concept of citizenship is increasingly being used to link a new area of political or social movement concern. Because of this development, however, citizenship takes on many different meanings, making it more difficult to 'reestablish any core meaning' (MacGregor & Szerszynski, 2003, p. 2).

Naturally, these developments imply significant consequences for the evolution of citizenship. But to keep our scope confined, I will not further discuss these here. Rather, in line with many theories of citizenship, our main point of reference to further examine citizenship will be the republican and liberal model.

2.2 Republican citizenship

Republicanism was 'rediscovered' as a tradition in political thought during the 1980s, during which historians such as Pocock (1975) and Wood (1969) showed that the

republic tradition, which has its roots in the Cicero, the Greek City-states and the Roman Empire, runs from the thought of Machiavelli and other parts of Renaissance Italy to the works of Harrington, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Madison. These historians showed that republicanism had a great influence on political thought up to the eighteenth century and played a powerful ideological role in the American revolution, contesting the claim that it was mainly Lockean liberal thought that guided it (Laborde & Maynor, 2008). Since then, different political theorists have taken up republicanism as a 'more egalitarian, participatory and/or communitarian alternative to liberalism' (Honohan, 2017, p. 73) and as a better approach to dealing with values such as self-government, civic virtue, freedom from domination and political participation in contemporary times (Honohan, 2003; Laborde, 2013; Laborde & Maynor, 2008; Pettit, 1997; Pocock, 1975; Sandel, 1996; Skinner, 1998).

In classical republicanism, citizens of a state are free if they are independent of external rule and internal tyranny. They have to be self-governing. People need basic political institutions; in a mixed form of government different social forces and institutions are balanced and keep each other in check, to avoid a particular set of interests from dominating others and so that the common good of citizens may be achieved. Citizens must be active; there is positive freedom, in which they accept duties and participate in the political process. By doing so, citizens cultivate civic virtue that helps them formulate and commit to the common good, which ought to take precedence when confronted with private interests. Republicanism thus aims to create and sustain a formative politics, in which the emphasis lies on stimulating the civic virtues that in turn create good republican citizenship (Honohan, 2003; Laborde, 2013). According to Cannavò (2016), these virtues may include:

...a strong sense of civic responsibility; a cooperative attitude toward fellow citizens; appreciation of social interdependence; a willingness to put the common good ahead of private interests and the ability to distinguish between the two; moderation with regard to consumption and wealth; a critical, vigilant attitude toward social and political power structures; courage in the face of internal and external challenges to the political community; pursuit of stability or sustainability in the face of degenerative change; and practical wisdom and courage to think independently, critically, and deliberatively regarding matters of common concern. (p. 75)

In contemporary republicanism, 'civic republican' theorists attempt to incorporate the traditional theory into the modern day world. Apart from agreeing on reconnecting freedom with the common good of citizenship, civic republican theorists disagree on what elements should be central to contemporary republicanism and how they ought to be understood. Civic republicanism thus theorizes on political solutions that fit into particular contexts, instead of one grand theory that applies to all republican states. Like traditional republicanism, contemporary civic republicanism has a strong emphasis on citizens participating in the deliberative process within their political community, to actively engage in shaping what the common good of the community ought to be. As Honohan (2003) puts it:

Civic republicanism addresses the problem of freedom among human beings who are necessarily interdependent. As a response it proposes that freedom, political and personal, may be realized through membership of a political community in which those who are mutually vulnerable and share a common fate may jointly be able to exercise some collective direction over their lives. (p. 1)

Republican liberty does not prioritize freedom from government, but rather collective self-government and virtues that enable citizens to be self-governing, it entails a rather positive conception of freedom (Cannavò, 2016). What is paramount here for civic republicanism, is that citizens ought to have the means to set out the common goals and values for society and help sustain them. What are to be perceived as the common goals or values of society, which ought to be the same for all and can consist out of private goals, should be open to be jointly changed by citizens through processes of deliberation, through which citizens may formulate and contest those goals and values. In the words of Williamson (2010), a republican political regime 'will not be shy in advancing policies and promoting institutional structures aimed at encouraging active citizenship' (p. 180). As noted earlier, civic republicanism here is an active form of self-government. Republicans do not confine this value of freedom as non-domination to political institutions, but rather aim to expand to economics, family and the whole of civil society, it seeks to define the virtues that are needed for citizens to actively self-govern their lives, in order for them and the political community as a whole to flourish. (Cannavò, 2016; Honohan, 2003; Pettit, 1997).

As Barry and Smith (2008) point out, the republican project is to create a secure home for free men and women, not for slaves, and this will not occur naturally but only by 'active citizen political action and the creation of liberty-sustaining practices and institutions, particularly the state and the rule of law – especially constitutional provisions' (p. 2). The republican citizen is thus not someone who acts arbitrarily, impulsively or recklessly, as Dagger (2002), states, but 'according to laws he or she has a voice in making' (p. 147). Through civic virtue, the republic is to be safeguarded against corruption, a term that for republicans denotes our natural tendency to ignore the claims of our community whenever they seem to conflict with the 'pursuit of our own immediate advantage' (Skinner, 1990, p. 304). Civic republicanism thus embodies an active conception of citizenship. As argued by Peterson (2011) this active understanding acts as the organizing principle of contemporary republican ideas and incorporates a commitment to four key, interrelated republican principles. First, Peterson (2011), states, citizens should possess and recognize 'certain civic obligations' (p. 3). Second, citizens must develop an 'awareness of the common good, which exists over and above their private self-interests' (ibid.). Third, citizens must act in accordance with civic virtue and fourth, civic engagement in democracy for Peterson should 'incorporate a deliberative aspect' (ibid.,).

2.3 The republican divide

The concept of republican liberty can be interpreted both in the positivist and negative sense of freedom as famously put forward by Isaiah Berlin (2017). Negative freedom here is associated with the absence of interference of any kind in one's life; I am negatively free to the extent that no one interferes with my activities, I can make free choices, free from coercion. Positive freedom requires one 'to take an active part in gaining control or mastery of oneself' (Berlin, 2017, p. 325). For Berlin, I am positively free to the degree that I attain self-mastery. As famously argued by Benjamin Constant (1988), modern liberty is perceived as being left to the rule of the individual (the liberal ideal), while ancient liberty seems to advocate liberty as the public participating in ruling; a will of the people that is democratically set out by citizens (a more republican ideal).

The divide in the republican school is that between proponents of the Roman-republican schools of thought and that of Athenian republicanism. Athenian, or intrinsic,

republicanism advocates a republicanism inspired by Aristotle, which argues that people are political animals, whose nature is fully realized in a political community in which they actively participate (Maynor, 2003, p. 13). Neo-Athenian republicanism maintains that political participation is an intrinsic good for human flourishing. It is associated with communitarians and has a strong emphasis on civic humanism. Directly participating in the self-governing process of one's community is a way of realizing true freedom, a process that helps individual self-mastery and well-being. Freedom should be understood as being part of a community, and being an active member in that community is a virtue that is legitimate for the state to promote, since this will contribute to true freedom for individuals. Only when human beings participate in self-governance and are able to deliberate about the common good, can they truly be free. It is therefore in the interest of liberty to facilitate and cultivate these virtues. A positive conception of freedom. Civic virtues and citizenship are intrinsic values, that ought to be actively promoted and cultivated by the political community people are embedded within (Laborde, 2013; Laden, 2006; Pettit, 1997).

Neo-Roman, or instrumental, republicanism on the other hand, is more moderate in its stance to promoting individual flourishing through political participation. It is more focused on creating the institutional design necessary for preserving individual freedom; it aims to avoid arbitrary interferences. The state's main purpose is securing individual freedom for pursuing goals they individually set out for themselves and avoiding oppression. As Maynor (2003) points out, this 'weaker' version of republicanism is more attractive to contemporary liberal approaches, since it does not stress 'conformity to a singular ideal of human excellence' (p. 18). Freedom here is not constituted by political participation, as is in Athenian republicanism.

For instrumental republicans, one is not obligated to politically participate and pursue the common good. It thus has a more negative conception of freedom. Citizens here are allowed to pursue private interests; the strong laws and institutions that are in place are based on a shared conception of the common good, which is liberty rooted in self-government, which should take into account diversity of interest. In order to achieve their personal goals, which require liberty, citizens have to adhere to the republican ideal and actively participate in civic life. Only if rulers are forced to uphold the common good deciding upon by the public, instead of following their own interests, can citizens enjoy liberty. Republican civic virtues and stimulating good citizenship here

are not so much intrinsic values, but rather means to an end. Freedom here is thus the absence of arbitrary interference by others; non-domination, a more negative conception. (Maynor, 2003; Laborde & Maynor, 2008; Pettit, 1997; Skinner, 1990).

For instrumental republicanism, Maynor (2006) notes,

...the idea was to bring in as many people and interests as possible and to set down firm rules of conduct to constrain the scope of their power, all the while subjecting each official and their office to public scrutiny so that no individual or group could subvert the common good. (p. 126)

Democratic contestation here is thus instrumental for guaranteeing republican liberty, to ensure freedom from domination by others. Democracy is seen as an important part of free government. But with it, for neo-Roman republicans, come risks that need to be addressed, for leaving them unchecked can realize tyranny and domination 'either in the form of imperium through the state, or in the form of dominium from the people' (Maynor, 2006, p. 127).

2.4 Freedom as non-domination

In his influential attempt to advance a 'republican liberalism', Quentin Skinner (1998) argued that, like neo-Roman republicanism, the neo-Athenian school of thought appears to share the same characteristics of negative freedom as the former, instead of being predominantly positive. Drawing on the work of Machiavelli, Skinner argues that republican liberty here too is seen in an instrumental sense; cultivation of civic virtues and the ability to place the common good above one's own interests was closely related to the maintenance of overall liberty in the republican sense. Not doing so would lead to corruption and chaos, and ultimately a loss of liberty. In Machiavelli's republic, liberty was not maintained through the pursuit of a common good by a virtuous community, but through class conflict, discord and the rule of law. It was the people that kept the rulers ambitions in check, for not doing so would lead to loss of individual liberty (Pocock, 1975; Viroli, 1998). Here, being free to participate in one's political community can also be interpreted as serving to safeguard liberty from interference, from chaos by corruption, a clearly negative notion of liberty. The interference experienced here in the forms of civic virtue and institutions, is instrumental to the attainment of greater liberty. The demands placed on individuals by the republic served to sustain a more

complete system of liberty, not to instill them with intrinsic values (Laborde, 2013; Maynor, 2003; Skinner, 1998).

When seen from this perspective, republican liberty does not seem to differ much from the negative concept of liberty in liberalism, different scholars have pointed out, since both see instilling ideals and virtues through institutions and citizenship as a tool for improving freedom for individuals in a political community. Thus, it was criticized, republicanism adds little to modern political thinking, for it does not seem to add anything distinctively new (Brennan & Lomasky, 2006; Kymlicka, 1998; Patten, 1996; Rawls, 2005).

Philip Pettit (1997, 2011), more than any other contemporary neo-republican thinker, countered this critique by stating that the republican idea of liberty does not fit into Berlin's dichotomy of negative and positive freedom. Berlin's conceptualization is too narrow, Pettit argues; freedom for Berlin can only be conceived of as either the absence of external obstacles to individual will or as the presence of facilities that induce self-mastery, usually through voting facilities through which a common will can be formed. Positive liberty is seen as mastery over the self and negative liberty as absence of interference by others (Pettit, 1997, p. 18). Republican freedom is a distinct conception of liberty, Pettit, argues, that is freedom as non-domination. Pettit (1997) states that the classic negative freedom as being free from interference is insufficient, for there can be domination without interference. A slave that is subject to the arbitrary will of his benevolent master may appear free when his master does not interfere with his actions, but this person is still dependent upon the will of master and prone to his interference; he is dominated by arbitrary power and therefore not free. Domination may take place without interference, and interference without domination. 'I suffer domination to the extent that I have a master; I enjoy non-interference to the extent that that master fails to interfere'. When advocating non-freedom, people fail to see that people may have dominating powers over others, but that not exercising this power does not mean that they are not being dominated (Pettit, 1997, p. 18-23). Interference without being dominated, then, means being interfered with 'without relating to anyone in the fashion of slave or subject' (Pettit, 1997, p. 24).

Interferences that adhere to the ideal of freedom as non-domination are not arbitrary; they may only take place when subjected to checks and controls and when these interferences promise to further the interests of the person that is interfered with.

The state may for example raise taxes and coerce laws, but only in a non-arbitrary way that seeks to promote the public good or in such a way that the non-arbitrary interference is derived from the public good; the interference ultimately here seeks to enlarge the freedom of the community and is held in check by it in a neo-Roman republican sense (Laborde, 2013; Pettit, 1997).

By giving republicanism this new outline, Pettit gave it a more attractive foundation, dealing with the criticisms of the discipline being prone to mob control; of republicanism giving too much power and priority to the collective people being the sovereign. Pettit counters this by stating that people are not the master here over one another. For Pettit's neo-republicanism, what matters is that they have no master at all. The author thus wards off critics that state that republicanism represents communitarian and nationalist thought by pointing out that the neo-Roman emphasis on civic virtue only serves as instrumental for attaining the common good, which is freedom as non-domination. Thus, for neo-Republicanism, the only way to avoid domination is to include as many voices into the political sphere as possible. This way, power is divided to prevent a particular private interest from dominating and all are stimulated to promote the common good (Slaughter, 2005, p. 211). By giving neo-Roman republicanism this new outline, Laborde (2013) points out, Pettit connected neo-republicanism to progressive causes such as women's right and green politics.

2.5 Liberal citizenship

A liberal society is one that is tolerant of different religious, philosophical, and ethical views and wherein individuals are free to entertain different doctrines, express their conflicting beliefs and opinions, and live their lives according to their chosen projects and life paths. (Freeman, 2017, p. 2)

Having its roots in the seventeenth century in the works of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, liberalism is considered to be the dominant strand of political thought in the modern world. At its core lie individual (negative) freedom, autonomy, universalism and the individual's relationship with the state, translated into concepts such as natural rights, consent and constitutionally limited government. This focus was developed first in aforementioned seminal works of Locke and further expanded upon in the thought of John Stuart Mill, Alexis de Tocqueville and Benjamin Constant - among others. According to some scholars, liberalism superseded republicanism in the nineteenth century as the dominant ideology in the Western world, defending individual freedom

against the backdrop of growing social and state power. Individual rights and constraints on government were sought liberal instruments to protect individual freedom (Freeman, 2017; Honohan, 2017). Among the 'bedrock principles' of classical liberal theory, Schuck (2002) argues, we may consider:

...the primacy of individual liberty understood primarily as freedom from state interference with one's personal development and projects; a very broad protection of freedom of inquiry, speech, and worship; a deep suspicion of state power over individuals; the restriction of state coercion to those areas of activity in which individuals' conduct affects others; and a strong though rebuttable presumption in favor of privacy, markets, and other forms of private ordering. (p. 134)

One can argue that the right for all to hold private views and interests may produce conflict, for some diverging moral ideas and interests cannot be reconciled on. Liberalism attempts to address this issue by creating authoritative political institutions (ie the state) to secure peace and at the same time treat all citizens in a fair manner. Although the state is thus in place to secure equality and peace, itself may present a threat of oppression and thus ought to be constrained; in some liberal conceptions of the role of the state, it ought to be a neutral institution that may not promote any particular vision of the good life or other values. The core of contemporary liberalism, then, is the relation between the state and the individual, and the constraints on the former to maximize freedom for the latter. Freedom for liberalism is not thus not a goal that the state ought to promote, it rather represents a constraint on government; the ultimate liberal value is that people ought to be free to pursue their private interests (Gaus, Courtland & Schmidtz, 2018; Honohan, 2017).

The liberal perspective is open to recognize some forms of common good; other than in republicanism the common good here is understood in terms of the aggregate of individual goods. Liberalism does not prioritize shared goods or a broader conception of the common good that applies to all, nor does it emphasize the importance of civic virtue; for liberals, the common good or the good of society is nothing but 'a numerical sum of the best interests of the people who constitute it' (Klosko, 2013, p. 107). The liberal emphasis on respect and equal freedom in recent decades has led to a new egalitarian liberal strand of thought in which there is an emphasis on social and economic equality and state-led redistribution of goods to realize these goals; a theory of social justice. This field of contemporary liberal thought is championed by John Rawls' theory in which equal freedom and the difference principle, according to which a

just society arranges social and economic inequalities such that they are to the greatest advantage of the least well off representative group, are the two basic principles.

Egalitarianism and reciprocity are central values for liberalism; no social group advances at the cost of another. This dominant form of political liberal theory appears to seek universal ground rules for society, that 'permit a fair and equal pursuit of the chosen life plan of every individual person in the context of a political order focused on impartiality, relative inclusiveness and distribution of goods and services works to the benefit of all and especially the least well off' (Freeden, Sargent & Stears, 2013, p. 342). Since Rawls' canonical works, much of liberal theory has been concerned with responding to his theory of social justice and its implications, primarily regarding the distribution of equal social and economic opportunities. (Freeden, Sargent & Stears, 2013; Honohan, 2017; Gaus, Courtland & Schmidtz, 2018; Rawls, 2005, 2009).

Liberal citizenship centers on being protected by the law, rather than participating in its formulation or execution; it is rather a legal status than part of everyday life, as republican citizenship would have it, in which this status is mainly defined as political liberty. The main aim of this liberty, in line with the liberal tradition, is to maximize individual liberty from interference by other individuals or the authorities. The law and rights, for liberals, must be universal, the same for all, for if they are not the same, then the freedom provided is not freedom for all. Rights are the means of securing and valorizing the individual, Lister (2008) points out; they protect the individual, their property and their choices. Citizens, however, exercise freedoms mostly in the world of private associations and attachments rather than in the political domain. Liberal citizenship thus is foremostly a formal, and in principle universal, legal status protecting individuals. With this form of citizenship come rights and duties, which transcend the differences between people. Other than for republicanism, self-government for liberals is not an essential part of citizenship. A liberal theory of citizenship emphasizes the equality of rights for each citizen and how these rights enable individuals to pursue their aims and goals in life (Honohan, 2017; Leylet, 2017; Lister, 2008; Walzer, 1989).

As Lister (2008, p. 9-14) states, liberal citizenship is egalitarian at heart; the fate of each person should not be determined by birth, but through this person's own efforts. The individual should be entitled to equal rights and therefore the conditions to pursue their own way of life, as long as it does not harm others. To prevent power from

becoming concentrated, a necessary condition in order for citizens to pursue their own conception of the good life, each citizen is given equal political worth. 'Thus, for liberal citizenship, the individual becomes a member of the political community through the granting of universal rights which secure for the individual the freedom to life, liberty and property' (Lister, 2008, p. 9).

Community, a crucial value for republicans, is of less importance for liberal citizenship. In a Lockean sense, the only obligation liberal citizens have is to respect the rights other individuals enjoy; all other duties are rooted in consent; it is up to the individual to choose whether he or she wishes to take on certain obligations. Each individual thus is to be granted equal rights, for this way each citizen is part of the political community in an equal manner; a way of preventing absolutism. The universalism advanced here through liberal citizenship is thus 'both a way of securing membership as well as a principle of justice' (Lister, 2008, p. 10).

It is not through participation that the one attains the highest good of freedom and liberty, but rather through the enjoyment of the private sphere, in which one is free to pursue one's own preferences free from interference by others, as long as this happens within the boundaries of the law and thus does not inflict harm on to others. Both society and community for liberal citizens have no substantive existence apart from the people who constitute it. Likewise, the state is neutral and has limited functions that mainly are in place to protect rights; the government here is seen as a means to attain this end (Klosko, 2013, p. 106-109; Lister, 2008, p. 10-12; Schuck, 2002).

2.6 Non-domination and non-interference

As we have seen, republicans call for a more active citizenry and popular involvement in political activity, for liberals, there is a deeper focus on consensus, limited government and electoral representation of interests. Whereas republicans emphasize the deliberative process through which the common good is formed, liberal citizens see politics more as an aggregation of individual interests, in which the political arena is perceived of us as a marketplace on which different interests compete (Honohan, 2017). Moreover, as argued by Skinner (1990, 1998) and Pettit (1997), whereas liberalism conceives of liberty as freedom from interference and thus 'not essentially connected to any form of government, republicanism conceives of liberty as freedom from

domination, and thus only possible in a self-governed society' (Laden, 2006, p. 348).

Neo-Roman republicans see domination as impeding liberty and therefore are more willing to interfere into the lives of citizens in order to preserve an 'undominated status' (Laden, 2006, p. 345.). As Laden (2006) points out, mandatory civic education and voting, for example, are favored by republicans, for they are necessary to 'preserve the self-governing character of the state, and thus the non-dominated status of citizen' (p. 350). Concerns that these interferences may impose constraints on the personal interests of citizens for republicans are less important than risking freedom as non-domination. If interferences are applied in a non-arbitrary manner or deals with arbitrary, dominating power some wield over others, freedom, through interference, may actually be enhanced for republicans in a non-dominating matter (Lovett, 2018). Liberals, opposed to republicans, prioritize freedom as non-interference. For liberalism, interfering with personal liberties to safeguard citizens from domination is not acceptable, for this interferes with personal liberty and thus limits freedom of individual choice (Laden, 2006).

Freedom as understood in liberal terms of non-interference is thus a function of 'how much choice someone is more or less intentionally left by other individuals and groups' (Pettit, 2003, p. 388). Non-interference holds that every option, preferred or unpreferred, 'must be accessible—every door must be open' (Pettit, 2011, p. 693). In this chapter, I have explored the concept of citizenship. I have outlined the development of citizenship and both the republican and liberal models of citizenship. In the following chapters, the republican ideal of non-domination and its compatibility with newer strand of republican thought, specifically regarding green politics, will be scrutinized further.

3. The (un)sustainable society

3.1 Sustainability

Sustainability according to many is the crucial variable for mitigating the consequences of the current environmental crisis. As Hopwood, Mellor, and O'Brien (2005) state, sustainability and sustainable development do not have one unified philosophy; some proponents agree that society drastically needs to change, but others, as we will see later on, argue that society may continue at least some of its current pace regarding sustainability. There are thus many debates regarding the nature of sustainable development. Sustainability and sustainable development have many different meanings and therefore lead to many different responses (Hopwood, Mellor, & O'Brien, 2005). Although many definitions of sustainability exist, I will here use the version that was defined by the seminal Brundtland report titled *Our Common Future*, which defines sustainable development as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*' (WCED, 1987, p. 40).

According to Blühdorn (2017), the Brundtland report sparked eco-political promise; this conceptualization of sustainability would be able to address new social and ecological concerns that surfaced in advanced consumer societies. This version of sustainability would take in account the hopes and interests of those who were hoping to achieve a sustainable future for all, whilst simultaneously retaining economic development and growth. In practice and in theory, however, staunch criticism has risen in recent decades regarding sustainable development as a means of confronting the global ecological crisis. As Blühdorn (2017) points out, sustainable development, sustainability and ecological modernisation are ubiquitously present, but they have become 'fuzzy concepts' (p. 2), that, rather than stimulate the formulation of an agenda and help create commitment to structurally transform the liberal consumer capitalism that here is associated with unsustainable behavior, seem to be 'tools for artificially extending its life expectancy' (ibid., p. 4).

Sustainability as formulated in the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 aimed to advance sustainable development goals, which emphasized sustained and inclusive economic growth (Kopnina, 2016). According to Kopnina (2016), this formulation can be

interpreted as a signal that due to invested interests - or perhaps even due to plain ignorance - of a multitude of consumers and stakeholders, sustainability becomes 'nothing more than a talk shop' (p. 113).

Sustainable discourse, to a certain extent, thus camouflages the incentive of stakeholders to prevent the radical ecological transformation that for many scholars is deemed necessary for actual ecological sustainability to be realized. What else proves problematic, Bebbington and Gray (2001) point out, is that while sustainability is essentially a global concept that should be taken up by states and its peoples, 'it is impossible to ignore the business hegemony within which all discussions of sustainability appear to take place' (p. 559).

3.2 The unsustainable society

As we have seen, many different conceptions of sustainability exist. While some of these conceptions overlap when it comes to designating what is unsustainable and what a sustainable future should look like, it can be argued that what lies at the core of each conception of sustainability is a particular view on what matters most; a view on what is most important to preserve for the future. Brian Barry (1999) is right to point out that the core of sustainability is that a certain X should be preserved and maintained into the indefinite future, leaving open for dispute what the content of that X should be. The content of sustainability, Barry (1999) states, 'will depend crucially on what we think matters' (p. 101), a point I will return to later on in this thesis. What I will mainly focus on here is the tendency within green political thought to question liberal democracy's capability to effectively deal with the ecological crisis. For many green thinkers, the hegemony of liberalism in the Western world is one of the structural problems that lie at the base of dealing with the ecological crisis.

For ecologism - a green strand of thought that opts for more radical, ecocentric measures when it comes to achieving sustainable behavior and a 'green' society in general (Dobson, 2007, p. 3)¹ - the liberal democratic state is seen as 'incapable of enabling the new ethic of responsibility which would be necessary if the behaviour of individual citizens was to become governed by ecological priorities' (Doherty & De

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In chapter four I will more thoroughly engage with ecologist thought.

Geus, 1996, p. 1).

The ecological crisis for many green thinkers demands that the state takes on certain values in order to achieve sustainability. This however seems to be at odds with the fundamental liberal thought that the state ought to be neutral; its role is to be limited to defending those rights that ensure individuals to pursue their own version of the good life. As Bell (2002) points out, the claim is that in promoting a green agenda the state would be advancing 'a particular conception of the good life' (p. 712), but, Bell continues, liberal neutrality requires 'that the state should not support any particular conception of 'the good life'' (ibid.). Moreover, the liberal view of nature as being the property of man proves problematic for achieving sustainability. Bell (2005) attempts to deal with this environmental critique of liberalism by arguing that the liberal emphasis on rights may incorporate environmental sustainability if nature comes to be seen as a provider of basic rights. According to Bell (2005, p.183), the human right to a habitable environment may be a sufficient claim to ensure that society takes up action for sustainability. According to Lynn White (1967), it is not liberalism per se, but Judeo-Christian thought that has encouraged overexploitation of nature by emphasizing the superiority of human beings over all other creatures and nature as being created for the sole purpose of being used by humanity.

Other authors not only criticize liberalism, but, due to the ecological crisis, argue that human behavior and society as a whole need to change. Garrett Hardin (1968) in his influential *'The Tragedy of the Commons'*, for example, warns that ensuring (economic) freedom in an unregulated world will end in tragedy, for all will try to maximize profit on a short term basis, not taking account any sense of limits or regulations. Harding illustrates this point through his analogy of herders who, while having full knowledge of 'the mounting public cost that the pursuit of private gain will bring' (Eckersley, 1992, p. 14), effectively spoil the commons by letting their sheep overgraze them. Robert Heilbroner (1974) similarly argues that due to human nature, we will not want to give up our way of lives and the privileges that come with it in order to achieve a sustainable future. If humankind is to survive, Heilbroner argues, authoritarian states capable of rallying obedience will be needed to enforce the transition toward sustainability. If we as society are to make the turn from our fixation upon growth toward sustainability and stability, external constraints and interferences will be necessary. For this school of 'survivalist' thinkers, liberal democratic citizens are

self-centered and focus on private gains rather than the collective goals of society, which, in this case, is the survival of humankind. Only if a significant amount of individual liberty is given up to a central authority can sustainability be attained effectively.

For Robyn Eckersley (1996), liberal democracy systematically underrepresents ecological concerns, for it only represents 'existing citizens of territorially bounded political communities' (p. 206). Non-citizens, such as future generations and non-human species and 'all those who may be seriously affected by environmental decisions made within the polity but who cannot vote or otherwise participate in the political deliberations and decisions of the polity' (Eckersley, 1996, p. 208). Moreover, for Eckersley, the public ecological concern is underrepresented in liberal democracy, for environmental protection here largely depends on public interest advocacy that is aimed at ensuring long term protection goals and has to compete against well-resourced interest groups that are able to advance particular short-term interests. For Eckersley (1996), this is because liberal democracies 'pre-suppose partisan political competition between selfish actors in the struggle for who gets what, when and how' (p. 209). According to Eckersley, liberal democratic framing devices may reduce environmental claims into claims that can be compromised on, while these claims should come to be seen as universal rights. Eckersley (2004) argues for a more ecocentric approach, an 'ecological democracy', in which, Eckersley states, 'all those potentially affected by ecological risks ought to have some meaningful opportunity to participate, or be represented, in the determination of policies or decisions that may generate risks' (p. 243).

Ingolfur Blühdorn (2017) states that liberal democracy helps maintain a consumer society that produces unsustainable behavior. Symbolic politics in these societies make up political commitments and policies to tackle climate issues, reflecting the political and economic elites are not genuinely committed to the values they are advertising and thereby deceive the electorate and credulous consumers with false promises and insufficient policies. Both policies and political commitments that claim to advance sustainability here are part of these symbolic or 'simulative' politics; these commitments effectively help politicians sustain systems of unsustainability, politicians who are unable or unwilling to actually confront the economic, cultural, and political root causes of this unsustainability (Barry, 2012; Blühdorn, 2007, 2017; Kopnina,

2016). This in turn leads to what John Barry (2012) calls 'gesture politics' (p. 2), in which people 'only seem too happy to change to using energy saving light bulbs, but not to curbing their overall carbon footprint' (ibid.) - producing reluctance to significantly alter one's consumption patterns. The environmental crisis in unsustainable societies is increasingly normalized; just like mass unemployment, comprehensive environmental change and the incremental consumption of nature have long become a normal, if unpleasant, aspect of modern life. With the sense of urgency on the effects of climate change lessening due to framing it as less imminent than predicted by alarmists and promises that with minor adaptations the crisis indeed can be solved, it is becoming ever more difficult to mobilise the political will and capacity to alter advanced consumer democracies' trajectory of unsustainability (Blühdorn, 2011).

As Blühdorn (2007) points out, in these unsustainable societies, where there is a consensus among political elite and the electorate that drastic measures to counter the ecological crisis are necessary and where there is an unprecedented accumulation of eco-political knowledge and attempts of implementing more environment-friendly policies, what has so far been accomplished has at best 'tackled symptoms but never addressed the root causes of environmental decline' (p. 252). Moreover, the conception of sustainable development that is agreed upon in the unsustainable society, as briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, is counterproductive to realize the radical transformations deemed necessary in order to achieve actual sustainability and actually may serve as a cloaking and/or greenwashing device for systems of unsustainability. As Foster (2014) points out, sustainable development 'deflects attentions from what is really wrong with us in the present by concentrating on the future consequences of our actions, and on the obligations of justice to future people that in preparing those consequences we are allegedly breaking' (p. 14). Moreover, the paradigm of sustainable development, that, Foster states, for a long time has been a 'beacon of international eco-politics' (2014: 3), has increasingly come to be regarded as 'an irretrievably misconceived framework and a delusive policy goal' (ibid.)

As Barry (2012) states, the main problem produced by the consumerist mechanisms at work in the unsustainable society, is that those that benefit from unsustainability, those that exploit people and the planet, are 'willing to do everything to realize sustainability, except stop their unsustainable lifestyles and transform the

underlying social and economic dynamics that cause unsustainability' (p. 7). The unsustainable society is thus *a society which is locked into a politics of unsustainability and accompanying economic and cultural systems of unsustainability*. It is fixated upon economic growth, which relies on a consumerist attitude among the masses. Backed by simulative politics, the discourse of sustainability in this society helps perpetuate systems of unsustainability, for formulating a conception of sustainability that integrates a focus on future generations and responsibilities subtly neutralizes the possibility of addressing current unsustainability through adopting radical transformations.

3.3 The sustainable society

In the ideal sustainable society, in short, there is what Barry (2012) calls 'low-carbon, high quality of life' (p. 11-19), where social innovation is as important as technological innovation, where sufficiency replaces maximization and where 'economic-security for all replaces unequally distributed economic growth' (ibid.). Here, maximum human flourishing is achieved while 'staying within the regenerative capacities and thresholds of the sustainable use of the various ecological resources of our finite planet' (Barry, 2012, p. 19). To adopt a minimal conception of what a sustainable society ought to look like, Wouter Achterberg (1996) provides a rather adequate definition. For Achterberg, a sustainable society is 'a society arranged in such a way that the tendency to sustainable use of the environment is *inherent to it* (emphasis added), in much the same way as the tendency to unsustainability seems inherent to the capitalistic order' (p. 168).

4. Green political theory and ecological citizenship

4.1 Green political theory

Green political thought experienced a serious increase in interest among scholars during the 80s and 90s of the twentieth century, which was highly influenced by the increased global interest and awareness regarding environmental issues and the rise of green politics due to global ecological issues such as pollution, peak oil, scarcity of resources and the extinction of multiple species. Issues that all could be linked to mismanagement of ecological systems. Environmental concern has since then become more acute because of the fear that unchecked economic growth is endangering both the survival of the human race and the very planet it lives upon (Wissenburg, 2004; Barry, 2014).

Rachel Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring*, a critique of the damage done to wildlife and the human world by the increased use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals, is often considered to have been the first work to draw attention to a developing ecological crisis, followed by the *The Limits to Growth* report by Meadows, Meadows, Randers and Behrens III (1972) on the alarming effects of unchecked economic growth. Broadly defined, green political theory seeks to understand the relationship between political philosophy and environmental outcomes. It asks what political system is best for achieving more sustainable, environment-friendly outcomes, how nature is 'politically represented and given rights' and what citizen's role ought to be (Schild, 2016). All schools within the field tend to agree to the premise that there are natural limits to growth; that earth's capacity to carry the results of consuming its resources has a tipping point, one that is not set out by economics and the industrial society (Radcliffe, 2000). As Andrew Dobson (2007) puts it:

...ecologism makes the Earth as physical object the very foundation-stone of its intellectual edifice, arguing that its finitude is the basic reason why infinite population and economic growth are impossible and why, consequently, profound changes in our social and political behavior need to take place. (p. 12)

The earth itself, ecologist authors claim, had been a present yet invisible factor in much of modern political ideology. It needed a voice; its interests ought to be equated to that of the human world, which is regarded too anthropocentric regarding the position and use of the natural world.

Green political theory stands for a broad spectrum of theories in each of which the ecological global crisis is dealt with on a different theoretical basis. All schools within green political theory theorize on how the systems of consumerism and unchecked economic growth that keep the unsustainable society in place ought to change either radically or more gradually, the latter implying that these systems may stay in place, but need to be transformed in a manner that does not risk both human flourishing and the future existence of the non-human world (Barry, 2008; Dobson, 2003). Moreover, there appears to be consensus among many green political theorists that in order to effectively deal with the current environmental crisis, a renewed view of citizenship is required, in which environmental/ecological ideas are supported by more deliberative and participatory forms of democracy. As Carter (2007) points out, a wide array of green political theorists emphasize that there is a need for active 'ecological citizenship' (p. 65), for the transition to a sustainable society requires a fundamental change in beliefs, attitude and behavior; merely restructuring institutions is seen as insufficient.

Green political theory can be seen as an attempt to lay bare the 'internal contradictions of current norms and as an attempt to persuade people of the rightness of an alternative perspective on society's received attitudes to human-nature affairs' (Barry, 1999, p. 42). Green political theory challenges the human-centered worldview which was shaped by Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke, Hobbes, Spinoza, Bacon and Descartes. Green political theory, however, wishes to extend the moral community beyond the human species to include both the non-human world and future generations. What makes green political theory political, Dobson (2007) argues, is the 'fact that we are able to identify aspects of a green society distinguishable from the preferred pictures of other ideologies' (p. 12). To get to the core of green political theory, I will here focus on what are considered to be its two main poles: ecologism and environmentalism, from which the discipline originated in the last decades of the twentieth century and has expanded ever since.

4.2 Environmentalism

'Environmentalism' refers to ideas and theories that are characterized by the central belief that human life can only be understood in the context of the natural world. As such, it does not confine itself to specific types of policies, but rather a wide arrange of

beliefs, including scientific, religious and political approaches. According to Dobson (2007), environmentalists address environmental problems by advocating for a managerial approach; such problems may be solved without fundamental changes in contemporary thinking or 'patterns of production and consumption' (p. 2-3). The ecological crisis should be dealt with, environmentalists believe, but only in such a way that human flourishing is not endangered. It is thus more human-centered (or anthropocentric) than eco-centered. According to Barry (2014), it is more of a 'single issue' (p. 153) green politics in the sense that it may focus on resource or pollution management; it is not so much of a fully fledged ideology as is ecologism.

4.3 Ecologism

Ecologism formulates a distinct, more radical vision of nature and the place that humans should have within it, one that is more 'eco-centric' instead of anthropocentric. For ecologists, radical changes need to take place in politics, the social aspect of life and, most importantly, in the ways in which we relate to the non-human natural world (Dobson, 2007, p. 3). In his influential works on green political thought, Dobson, who coined the term 'ecological citizenship', states that ecologism should be considered as the true 'dark green' perspective on achieving the sustainable society. Dobson states that the two schools of thought resemble a minimalist and maximalist approach to green political theory, environmentalism being the minimalist approach in which less stringent conditions apply in order to qualify as environmentalist, and the maximalist one requiring more strict, more narrowly defined conditions which are more radical and challenge contemporary patterns of consumption more vigorously (Dobson, 2003, p. 220, 2007, p. 10).

4.4 The green debate

Within the field of green political theory, a fundamental debate has taken place between proponents of eco-centrist approaches and those of more anthropocentric ones. The core of the debate here is to what extent the assumed anthropocentric tendencies of modern society need to be reined in; whether this requires a more ecologist approach, valuing the entire non-human nature world and therefore adopting radical counter-measures to limit growth, or a more anthropocentric one, that, for example, would allow the current economic system in place to continue, advocating less radical, gradual reforms that will benefit both sustainability and human welfare.

But for ecologists, it is not just about the non-human world threatening the human world when its resources are ultimately run down. Even if resources were inexhaustible, ecologists argue, there may still be good reason not to approach nature as solely being instrumental to humanity (Brennan, 2002; Dobson, 2007; Eckersley, 1992). For this thesis, what is of specific interest is the emergence of ecological citizenship in recent years as a new key concept that is instrumental for achieving more sustainable, environment-friendly means of conduct and thinking among individuals in the current consumer-oriented, unsustainable society. In recent years this form of citizenship has become an important element i.e. instrument in and for the transition to sustainability for many scholars (Barry, 1999, 2002; Dobson, 2007, p. 106; Lafferty & Meadowcroft, 1996).

4.5 Ecological citizenship

Ever since environmental degradation became a political issue in the second half of the twentieth century, extensive debate has taken place regarding what political system is most suited to deal with unsustainable behavior. As we have seen, for some, liberal democracy is problematic, since the liberalized and industrialized world is part of the problem and therefore should be replaced (Barry, 2012; Eckersley, 1993). Liberal democracy would not be suited for making the lives and behavior of citizens more sustainable, since at the core of liberalism lies an emphasis on (negative) freedom from interference. Moreover, liberalism would have a problematic conceptualization of the environment as being at the full disposal of human beings (Barry & Wissenburg, 2001; Bell, 2005; Jagers, 2009).

Different approaches within green political theory have been posed as more ecologist alternatives to liberal democracy, including eco-authoritarian forms of government (Heilbrunner, 1974) and calls for more democratic or deliberative forms to counter the profit-driven regimes that allegedly produce liberal democracy's damaging ecological effects (Dryzek, 1990; Hayward, 1998). The debate in recent years has moved from the right form of government to the question under what circumstances individuals would be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to counter environmental degradation, for the scale of the ecological crisis transcends the borders of the nation state.

Among green political theorists increasingly appears to exist consensus that

active ecological citizenship is needed to counter the ecological crisis, for merely reconstructing existing institutions does not appear to be enough to achieve the changes in individual behavior necessary to set in motion the transition to a sustainable society (Carter, 2007). According to this view, Schild (2016) argues, citizens must hold ‘particular values toward the environment and conceive of themselves as part of a global environmental politic’ (p. 23). Ecological citizenship recognizes motivational values as social justice, responsibility and compassion as motivational values. Where liberal and civic republican conceptions of citizenship are based on virtues that are in place to protect the community through courage and sacrifice (republicanism) or citizen rights (liberalism), ecological citizenship is an ‘interpersonal relationship among strangers’ (Jagers, 2009, p. 20); the life one lives affects that of others, which means one has a responsibility and obligations to those others. The political space of ecological citizenship, Jagers (2009) states, is thus determined by the extent to which ‘the behaviour of citizens affects others negatively’ (p. 20), rather than by the boundaries of the nation-state.

Different conceptualizations of ecological citizenship have been developed in recent years, the variety of which I will keep limited here to keep our scope confined. The main debate within the field, however, seems to take place between proponents of either liberal or more civic republican forms of ecological citizenship. ‘Ecological’ or ‘green’ civic republicans, which will be our main focus here, see the environment as a common good, which ought to take precedence when confronted with individual interests and prioritize on instilling virtues within good ecological citizens through duties and obligations. ‘Ecological’ liberals, however, see this view as incompatible with the reality of today’s world and instead, roughly put, focus on rights to achieve a more sustainable society, in which human rights should be extended to also cover the basic right for humans to a healthy and stable environment (Barry & Wissenburg, 2001; Dobson, 2007, p. 217).

5. Green republicanism

5.1 Green republicanism

‘Green republicanism’ is a relatively young school of thought that fuses together the republican focus on instilling civic virtues and the primacy of the common good with the

ecological concerns of green political theory (Barry, 2002, 2008; Cannavò, 2016). For green republicanism, the main concern is how to build a 'green' sustainable post-carbon and post-capitalist society in current liberal democratic nations without compromising liberty and human flourishing (Barry, 2012). Green republicanism seeks to separate free market-capitalism as the dominant economic political system from the democratic liberal system, for it is the unchecked growth of this political economy that is one of the main sources of unsustainability (Barry, 2008). As argued by both John Barry (2012) and Peter Cannavò (2007), who to date have provided the most valuable contributions to the field of green republicanism, the core values of republicanism in many aspects intersect with those of green political thought. One of these intersections concerns Barry's conception of active citizenship understood as ecological stewardship. In this form of citizenship, duties and rights are prioritized and the decentralized state is seen as necessary for promoting the common good of sustainability; its priority is to put forward policies that can promote crucial human values that promote both human and non-human flourishing (Barry, 2002).

Like republicans, green political thinkers do not believe that the state should be value neutral; patterns of consumption ought to be scrutinized, affairs which are deemed to be private for liberalism. Simply put: The emphasis within the republican tradition on the common good and virtuous citizenship is in line with green political theorists' effort to restrain excessive self-interest and its environmentally detrimental effects. In republicanism, there is an emphasis on the primacy of the common good; virtuous citizens ought to give priority to the common good when it clashes with private interests (Cannavò, 2016; Gabrielson, 2008; Williamson, 2010: 264). As Dobson (2003, p. 223) points out, both civic republicanism and political ecology invoke sacrifice. For republicans, the individual makes sacrifices to the cause of the republic. For political ecologists, the individual sacrifices (unsustainable) desires to the extent that is required in terms of environmental sustainability.

Sustainability is a central value in republicanism, for its main problem is how to protect and maintain the republic or city-state in the long term; how to stabilize it for future generations in a (natural) world that threatens it. Since many prominent republican thinkers see the republic as indefinite, as spatially and temporally limited, the need to attend to the sources that can maintain it through time is paramount, as is 'the obligation of present and founding generations to pass on the republic' (Barry &

Smith, 2008, p. 6), one that is a specific historical community embedded in 'a particular natural environment' (ibid.). Reminding the public of the fragility of the republic that itself is constitutive for both the individual and the community she is embedded in is a tool here to instill the civic virtues that are needed to sustain it (Barry, 2011; Pocock, 1975).

Sustaining the republic here is thus a common good, a value for which republican citizens have a duty to promote and prioritize - how to 'extend the life of a specific historical community and its cherished and hard-won values and practices, especially freedom, in a world ruled by forces beyond full human control' (Barry & Smith, 2008, p. 2). As Cannavò (2007) notes, this struggle against fortune and human nature in the republican tradition - a struggle against morally corrosive, corrupting forces that may taint republican citizens - has its corollary in 'a struggle against nonhuman nature' (p. 8). Because of the belief that the republic is limited in terms of time and space, Cannavò says, Machiavelli in *'The Prince'* depicts fortune in terms of physical destructiveness. Concerning fortune, Machiavelli (2008) describes it as:

...one of those violent rivers which, when they become enraged, flood the plains, ruin the trees and the buildings, lift earth from this part, drop in another... And although they are like this, it is not as if men, when times are quiet, could not provide for them with dikes and dams so that when they rise later, either they go by a canal or their impetus is neither so wanton nor so damaging. (2008, p. 363)

Facing fortune, safeguarding the republic against human and nonhuman threats, is thus a core concern for republicanism. Republican theorists, Barry (2012) notes, 'remind us that our vulnerability to natural disasters and our ultimate dependence on the natural world—and our concomitant dependence on one another—is the fundamental starting point for any sort of politics' (p. 229).

What should thus be the main priority for green republican politics, Barry (2012) argues, is to focus on 'removing or limiting obstacles and imperatives as opposed to directly and positively trying to achieve human flourishing' (p. 278). Concerning the role of the state for green republicans, Barry (2012) states:

In particular, one of the main functions of such a green republican state is to regulate the market in order protect the community from its corrosive effects, in order to enhance community resilience. In this we find the long-standing republican politics of the common good conjoined with a distinctly green and ecological conception of the common good. Green republicanism can therefore be understood as the recasting

of civic republicanism as a theory of freedom, to one of freedom and flourishing within ecological, social, and psychological limits. (p. 278)

Barry (2012) goes on to state that if inequality or economic growth can be shown not to enhance human flourishing, then they 'need to be removed or reformed' (p. 278). Policymaking for green republicans involves meaningful engagement of 'concerned and affected citizens' (ibid., p. 271) through citizen juries, public enquiries and other 'deliberative innovations' (ibid.)

Republican theory is anthropocentric, as argued by Pettit (1997, p. 137), for it focuses on the wellbeing and flourishing of human beings within a political community. That does not mean, however, it cannot share green political theory's imperative to counter the human-made ecological crisis². Especially that environmental damage that is inflicted by some agency and thereby contributes to an ecological catastrophe that will harm human life, Pettit states, exercises a form of domination over those who are affected. 'They live, at least in some part, at the mercy of that agency: it can harm them or not harm them, interfere in their lives or not interfere, at its pleasure' (Pettit, 1997, p. 138); it thus harms the non-dominated freedom that is prioritized by neo-republicans. Regarding environmental concerns in republican thought, Pettit (1997) notes:

That any damage is done to the environment—the environment of subgroups, of the society as a whole, or of all societies on earth—means that there is an assault on at least the range of our undominated choice. The damage is bound to mean that the costs of our exploiting various opportunities are raised or that certain opportunities are closed to us: at the limit, as in nuclear devastation, it may mean that few opportunities remain. Even if the damage comes about inadvertently, then, or as the aggregate outcome of individually innocent actions, it counts as a loss in the ledger-book of republican liberty. (p. 138)

As we have seen, republicanism is concerned with sustaining the stability of the republic over time by instilling civic virtue (Honohan, 2003; Pocock, 1975). Green republicanism focuses on (de)regulating those unsustainable practices and institutions that make up the unsustainable society, such as consumerism, social injustice and the

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Although Pettit states that republican thought and environmental concerns are very much compatible, the author questions the ability of radical environmentalism - or ecologism - to reach anyone outside of the green movement with its claims. According to Pettit, the language of radical environmentalism is 'too specialized, too intimately associated with a particular perspective on the world, to have the sort of general validity for which we should look in a medium of political debate' (1997, p. 136).

depletion of the natural world that comes with it. For green republicans, these morally corrosive practices risk corrupting citizens into a state of dependence, threatening the process of cultivating civic virtues and thereby the stability of the republic itself. What is thus of utmost importance for virtuous green republican citizens, is that these unsustainable practices (that make up the unsustainable society) are reined in by invoking civic republican ecological citizenship, a point I will further elaborate on in the section below.

5.2 Green republican (ecological) citizenship

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Barry's (2012) green republicanism seeks to instill the civic virtues that are needed to develop sustainable citizenship, virtues that are to address the structural causes of unsustainable development and other infringements of sustainable development that underlie environmental degradation, such as human rights abuses or social injustice. Sustainable development here can be interpreted as denoting a commitment to a different type of society, Barry states, at the heart of which lies a commitment to a new view of development that includes economic, environmental, and social bottom lines. It goes beyond environmental citizenship, which, according to Barry (2006), only addresses the immediate effects of environmental degradation and is too narrowly defined to invoke the kind of citizenship necessary to change the unsustainable society. The civic republican tradition is compatible for Barry's ideal of green republican citizenship, because it encompasses more spheres such as the political, cultural and economic to instill civic virtues, instead of only focusing on the environmental dimension. Environmental citizenship does too little to encourage individuals to significantly alter their behavior when it comes to consumption, promoting virtuous citizenship or combat injustice. Green citizenship is thus both instrumental and intrinsic here for achieving the sustainable society³.

Citizenship for green republicanism precedes the creation of institutions to support it; for green republicans it may be used to change people's behavior and values in order to get them to adhere to green civic virtues. Green citizens make green states, Barry argues in favor of this approach, not the other way round. To actually achieve the

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Green republican citizenship is instrumental for achieving the sustainable society, but since this society is a goal in itself and is reached through virtuous political and social participation that, for republicans, is constitutive of identity and necessary to construct the common good in a republican way, it can also be considered having intrinsic value, a point I will further explore in the following chapter.

sustainable society green citizenship is used to construct an ecological identity that keeps it in place. 'Resistance is fertile' (Barry, 2006, p. 33), is Barry's thesis for this resistant perspective, in which civil disobedience regarding unsustainable practices and values ultimately will consecutively lead to greening citizenship and society. In line with the republican tradition, green civic republicanism combines civic virtues with active green citizenship in order to protect and sustain the sustainable society, for 'there is the ever-present danger that citizens can forget, become soft, and be lured by the attractions of a fully private life of consumption' (Barry, 2012, p. 253).

Economic activity here should not lead to citizens turning their gaze inward, forgetting their public and civic duties. Barry's green republicanism criticizes contemporary liberal green citizenship for privileging liberal contractual rights over civic-republican conceptions of active and responsible sustainable citizenship, which lies at the core of green republicanism. Barry (2012) argues that to achieve a green society, green citizenship is needed, which not only challenges the environmental dimensions of the unsustainable society but also the social ones. Green citizenship here not only seeks to achieve environmental justice, but also social justice by stimulating public participation in decision-making that aims to attain sustainable development. A social contract in the liberal sense for green republicanism is thus not needed, for citizens here are the ones that are responsible and contribute to the common good; to the rules that apply to all (White, 2012).

At the foundation of Barry's green republicanism lies the core civic republican thought that in order to pursue the common good, people need to think and act as virtuous citizens that on the hand promote that common good and on the other prioritize it above private interests whenever the two collide. Likewise, as put forward by Sagoff (1988), sustainability will only be achieved if individuals act as citizens instead of consumers. This does not, however, mean that simply turning consumers into citizens or condemning the consumer-market relation is sufficient. The goal for green republicanism, in this case, is to cultivate and support mindful consumption and to balance the extremes of excessive consumption and no consumption at all. Sustainable citizenship requires instilling ecological virtues, which are not confined to consumerism but rather apply to all the different dimensions that make up daily life, including the political, private and cultural sphere. Green republican citizenship here thus requires

engagement with the political struggle against 'market and state-based forms of inequality, injustice, and ecological unsustainability' (Barry, 2006, p. 38)

Merely focusing on one of the aspects that the unsustainable society is made up of, is too narrow, too ineffective for green republicans. Green republican liberty, as Fremaux (2019) points out, 'must be defined positively as a set of capabilities guaranteed by a fair access to social provisions and a strong vision of social justice' (p. 10). For Fremaux, this means that the focus of political theory ought to be shifted from 'procedural institutions and abstract issues of "fairness"' to the 'very concrete mechanisms of social, economic life and structural relations that produce injustice' (p. 10), those mechanisms that Barry, Fremaux states, calls the 'politics of actually existing unsustainability' (ibid.).

Dobson (2007), identifies post-cosmopolitanism as a third form of ecological citizenship next to the predominant liberal and civic republican version, in which citizens are to think in terms of citizenship beyond the state. The civic republican and liberal versions of ecological citizenship disagree over the meaning of rights and responsibilities and the role of virtue, but, roughly put, Dobson states that it is only on this element of citizenship that they appear to disagree. When seen like this, the seemingly fundamental disagreements between the two are rather 'a comfortable accommodation characterized by skirmishes in one corner of the big tent they've constructed, rather than by challenges that might change the shape of the tent itself' (Dobson, 2007, p. 217). Post-cosmopolitanism thus attempts to accommodate for both republican and liberal civic values by constructing a theory of ecological citizenship that asks individuals to see themselves embedded within a global community of citizens in which all are interconnected and therefore have an obligation to live good sustainable lives in which all limit the harm that is caused unto other through one's own unsustainable behavior (Dobson, 2007).

Curry (2000), like Barry, seeks to advance a 'ecological republicanism' by extending republican's political community to include the natural world, without becoming eco-centric. Curry applies the civic republicanism ideal that it is paramount for the political community to be stable, to be sustainable, through active citizenship, which implicates that advancing the common good for citizens means to act in a way that both benefits the sustainability of the community and nature, for nature is part of the larger community. The common good here is maintained by active citizenship, that

protects the common good against corrupting self-interest. Place and locality thus play an important role in the public political process.

Curtin (2003) similarly argues for a 'ecological community' in which active republican citizenship constructs that community. The author uses a communitarian conception of republicanism to point out that public practices are what partially define moral identity, which allows us to think beyond the community solely defined as a human-centered one. Barry's green republicanism in a similar vein as these authors uses republicanism to instill green citizenship, but, unlike them, does distinguish between the human community and the non-human world, which rather has a relational ethic rather than the two being integrated in one grand community. Ecological citizenship here mainly is instrumental in order to attain sustainable behavior; intellectual virtues on ecology and moral virtues such as self-restraint and foresight are acquired through the practice of citizenship; greening of citizenship here is a means to create an identity that is in line with the aims of Barry's ecological citizenship understood as ecological stewardship (Barry, 1999, p. 35, 2002, p. 145; Gabrielson, 2008).

5.3 Critics of green republicanism

Before further scrutinizing the inherent tensions that seem present in green republican theorizing (which I will do in Chapter Six), it is important to give a brief outline of existing criticisms that have been directed at or may be applicable to the green republican strand of thought.

The most obvious critique of the civic republican view on active citizenship as ecological stewardship as advanced by Barry, is that it is too demanding, too focused on civic duties; it reduces other interests individuals might have, or other identities they otherwise may achieve; it risks people developing a too one-dimensional view. As Kymlicka and Norman (1994) note on civic republicanism: 'Political life is superior to the merely private pleasures of family, neighborhood, and profession and so should occupy the centre of people's lives. Failure to participate in politics makes one a radically incomplete and stunted being' (p. 362).

Different scholars argue that the process of participation through which virtues civic republicanism seeks to instill in citizens insufficiently accommodates for ethical and cultural diversity, for dissent and minorities (Laborde, 2013; Latta, 2007).

Habermas (1997) criticizes the republican tendency of constructing politics as a process through which an ethnically and culturally homogenous community is to be created; civic republicanism seems to coerce people into a view of the common good, good civic virtues and desirable citizenship; there is no room for deviant perspectives or minorities that diverge from this conception of the good, they have little to no room to disagree about what the common good ought to be; there is little room for value-pluralism.

Moreover, as Cannavò (2016) points out, the ecological crisis that is climate change seems to demand citizens to adhere to scientific conceptions of nature, that posit a 'thick set of a priori, substantive constraints and ends for politics' (p. 12). The overriding and perhaps even coercive common good here would be defined in advance, and not through the desired republican public, constitutive process of deliberation. A green republican assumption here seems to be that empowered political communities of virtuous green citizens will end up embracing ecological values, that determine the political agenda (Meyer, 2001). The climate crisis, Cannavò (2016) notes, 'thus seems to greatly narrow the scope of deliberation and contestation and to dictate an ecological agenda to politics' (p. 12).

According to Latta (2007), Barry's green republicanism has a strong emphasis on the 'we' in green citizenship, in which citizens have a moral obligation to right the wrongs of the unsustainable society as much as one in general has the moral obligation to help those who are suffering and 'rectify injustices that we have done/are doing that cause that suffering' (Barry, 2006, p. 45, cited in Latta, 2007, p. 382). Latta states that in this conception of green citizenship, justice and democracy are to be politicized as part of the effort of sustaining society, which may imply including the voices of the subaltern. However, Latta, argues, Barry only seems to regard green citizens as those that have an obligation to rectify injustice; the 'we' in green citizenship here seems to neglect a 'silent and passive 'them'' (p. 382), those that suffer injustice, who are characterized as marginal political subjects.

Barry (2006, 2012) partly addresses these critiques by arguing that the republican ideal of freedom as non-domination certainly emphasizes the importance of active citizenship. It does not, however, force citizens to adhere to one commonly held view of the public good. As in Pettit's (1997) conceptualization of republican freedom as the absence of domination, multiple private conceptions of the common good may exist,

‘as long as they do not threaten or undermine the freedoms and practices of the common public/political life of the community’ (Barry, 2006, p. 26). Citizenship is primarily a means for securing liberty, Barry states, quoting Pettit, rather than an end in itself. Being free from arbitrary power means this freedom is institutionalized, which in turn requires active participation of citizens and defending and contesting the common good.

Politics for Barry are thus not superior over other forms of life; politics is a constitutive element of a political order in which freedom can be created and sustained. Green republican freedom therefore requires that as many voices as possible contest the common good, to prevent one particular (private) interest from becoming too powerful. Sustainable citizens are free to have their own identities and private interests, meaning that for green republicans, instilling green civic virtues of citizenship, of which public participation is the most important, is both a way of stabilizing the future and a tool that allows for human beings to flourish. Green republican citizenship here is seen as both instrumentally and intrinsically important, which, for Barry, deals with the critiques of it insufficiently accommodating for dissent, value-pluralism and green republicanism being too burdensome regarding civic duties and responsibilities

To be a good green citizen for Barry does not implicate that interests of nonhumans or others should be promoted over one’s own interest, but rather that one’s own interests ought to be assessed in the light of the interest of others (Barry, 2002, 2006, 2014). According to Barry (1999):

When faced with social-environmental problems good ecological citizens are motivated to seek solutions in which human and nonhuman interests are rendered as compatible as possible. In order to satisfy as many interests as possible of course requires that there be a willingness to compromise as well as an openness to persuasion through public debate. (p. 232)

Green republicanism thus defends itself against these allegations of being an eco-authoritarian strand of thought by prioritizing public participation and freedom from domination; the state may only interfere to prevent citizens from being arbitrary dominated by others, to prevent one private interest becoming dominant. The common good is the democratic outcome of public deliberation by citizens. The ecological crisis may not call for different forms of politics, as is argued by eco-authoritarian thinkers,

Barry (2006), states, but instead for more and different forms of democratic politics and participation.

As Honohan (2006) notes on the republican notion of the common good: 'Rather than there being a single authoritative account of the common good, what constitutes it in different instances has to be determined through deliberation among different perspectives, and is always open to change' (p. 199). Drawing on the work of Pettit (1997), Barry (2012, p. 258) states that for green republicanism, contestation of the common good is just as important, perhaps even more important than consensus. This, however, does not fully resolve the theoretical tension that comes with the instrumental republican emphasis on contestation and deliberation to formulate the common good. In the following chapter, I will further analyze this tension.

6. Green republican non-contingency?

6.1 The common good

As we have seen in Chapter Six, green republicanism responds to allegations of it being a coercive strand of thought, that imposes a preconceived conception of sustainability as a common good, by appealing to contestation and deliberation. According to Barry (2012, p. 258), who draws on the instrumental republican perspective on freedom as non-domination, the common good for green republicanism is not determined a priori, but through a process of deliberation and contestation, in which all can have a say. What

is important here, is that Barry, quoting Pettit (1997), believes that citizens ought to have a responsive, contesting role regarding politics and implementation of the common good rather than one of action. In Chapter Three, we learned that civic republican citizens are to act as several editors of government policies and actions Honohan (2003) states, rather than 'joint authors of political decisions' (p. 236). What is thus most important for instrumental civic republican politics, is that non-domination is to be at its core, meaning that all decisions should be contestable and that the state should track the common interests of its citizens to prevent one particular interest of becoming dominant (Honohan, 2003, p. 237).

The common good that guides politics for republicans should not be pre-political and, due to existing diversity in contemporary societies, can only be determined through deliberation in which all voices have equal political weight. By opting for deliberation to define and contest the common good, individual judgment is invoked, instead of sacrificing this to community opinion (Honohan & Jennings, 2006). Deliberation here should give all the possibility and inclination to participate in formulating the common good, which, after it is agreed upon, guides republican politics. Many instrumental neo-republican thinkers, including Pettit (1997), are weary to introduce extensive participation, for it is deemed both not feasible and, more importantly, may realize the republican fear of tyranny by majority. What is thus paramount for this republican strand of thought, is that 'exercises of power in every area of life are contestable by all, and that all have a say in determining the conditions of one's life' (Honohan & Jennings, 2006, p. 217). For neo-republicans, the people are to be seen as the source of legitimate power. But aspiring to discern the common will has problematic, authoritarian implications. It is thus the people themselves that ought to define the common good through deliberation, not government, nor an agenda of a particular individual or collective other than the whole of society. The role of government is to act on the common good that is defined by citizens, while keeping track of interests and keeping all decisions and institutions open to contestation (through forums and courts, for example). As Peterson (2011) points out, it is this commitment to public deliberation by citizens that 'prevents the common interest from being singular, marginal and pervasive' (p. 67). The political process that is the formulation, enactment and contestation of the common good is thus a formative process for republicans, which involves 'habituation, persuasion and education rather

than coercion' (Peterson, 2011, p. 72).

6.2 Pre-political conceptions of the common good

For green republicanism, the instrumental focus on the formation and enforcement of the common good points to a tension we briefly touched upon in Chapter Five. What appears troublesome here, is that the ecological crisis seems to demand a pre-political conception of the common good - one in which sustainability for Barry appears to be the logical outcome of the deliberative process that produces the common good. This reasoning however seems to constrain the formulation of the common good, which, for civic instrumental republicans, should be an open-ended process. Moreover, the green republican focus on sustainability and social justice as common goods that are instrumental to maximize human flourishing by keeping domination at bay imply a particular conception of the common good, a conception green republicanism appears to believe human beings will naturally end up at as common goods as in some teleological sense; as if these values are the objective republican values that are shared by all - that are crucial in order to pass on the republic to the next generation. If the goal of public deliberation is to prevent the common good from becoming singular and cast in stone, than the green republican assumption it is only common sense for citizens to end up at sustainable policies seems rather contradicting regarding the core civic republican ideal of non-domination.

Green republicanism expects citizens to adopt sustainable policies that will help turn around what are branded by Barry (2012) as the 'unsustainable lifestyles' (p. 7). But when non-domination is to be at the core of green republican freedom, is this approach to politics not one particular conception of sustainability that is seen as the ultimate solution for the unsustainable society that for green republicans is seen as the root cause of the climate crisis?

The green republican response to this criticism, as stated by Barry (2012), would probably be that the republican concern for context and particularity signifies that there is 'no one model of sustainability or mode of political and economic life which while achieving resilience, is also one that is applicable to each and every human community' (p. 227). For Barry's green republicanism, there is not one size of sustainability that fits all; different communities have different objectives when it comes to facing the (environmental) dangers that threaten the local non-human world they are embedded

within.

But while Barry (2012) states that sustainability for green republicans does not come in one size, the core values that for Barry make up green republican sustainability, such as social and ecological justice, are conceptualized in a rather fundamental and specific manner. In other words: Barry argues that for green republicanism the context and particularity of a community will determine what sustainability will look like for that community, but this mainly seems to apply to the process of formulating real life, practical solutions for environmental problems. The normative contents of green republican sustainability, however, seem to remain, regardless of the particular contexts of any human community. It therefore seems that sustainability here may differ in size and technicality when it comes to local contexts, but the content of the fundamental values that lie at the core of sustainability here seems to be rather prefixed. Local communities may choose to face the ecological crisis in a way that fits the needs of their local environment, as long as this is done in a manner that adheres to the core values of green republican sustainability. While this may leave some room for autonomous decision making, it again appears to predetermine the goals that society should aspire to achieve and violates the instrumental republican ideal of freedom as non-domination.

Discerning the common will a priori is a no go-zone for instrumental republicans, for it implies coercion on behalf of a particular preconceived conception of the common good, one that is likely to not be shared or agreed upon by all and is not the result of public deliberation. It is exactly for this reason that public deliberation must be used to define the common good, for in this arena all are stimulated to think in terms of common interests, at least from a normative point of view (Cohen, 1997). What is key for instrumental republicans, is that the common good is formulated and contested by citizens. They are the ones who collectively enter a system of self-government, to ensure freedom as non-domination. Through public deliberation and contestation, one interest is prevented from becoming too powerful. It therefore seems contradictory that green republicanism appears to expect citizens to adopt a preconceived agenda for politics; that of sustainability and green politics, whilst it ought to be citizens themselves who, through deliberation, decide to form and consecutively pursue sustainability as a common concern and thus as a goal for society. The state should, for republicans, not be value free, but it ultimately should be citizens themselves who decide what those values

are; they determine what values are most suitable for sustaining the community all are embedded within over time. As Cannavò (2018) states, the common good ‘grows *out of* (original emphasis) political action rather than setting the parameters of politics in advance’ (p. 5).

We have seen in Chapter Three that many different conceptions of sustainability have come into existence in recent years. Many modern day conceptions of it prove to be rather ambiguous and discussions about what sustainability should entail seem to divert attention away from actually having to deal with the systems that produce unsustainability. But despite these reservations, the minimal definition of sustainable development as put forward by the Brundtland report, I believe, is hard to argue with in the light of the current ecological crisis that threatens the future existence and welfare of life on earth. Based on comprehensive scientific evidence, we may agree that there is a need for sustainable development in order to preserve that life.

For green republican politics, the persuasiveness of this argument to accept sustainability in order to preserve life on earth means that it will *possibly* be the end result of public deliberation regarding the common good. One cannot, however, *a priori* expect sustainability as advanced by green republicanism, or any other particular value, to be the logical end product of public deliberation. One group prescribing the desired end result of deliberation and with it the commonly shared concern and goal for society as a whole has a very authoritarian and coercive undertone. This predominance of sustainability within green republicanism seems to violate instrumental republican freedom as non-domination and the way in which the common good ought to be formed. As Fremaux (2019) points out, green republicanism aims to be an ‘inclusive’ strand of thought, in that it considers

...all areas of social life and social interaction, including production and consumption, family life, child-care, education, spiritual life, interpersonal relationships, arts, modes of communication, and so on, as being part of the political realm. Therefore, all these domains are potentially subject to democratically mandated and legitimated state interference and regulation. (p. 222).

It thus crucial that the values that underlie social life and that come to guide politics are decided upon by the public in an inclusive deliberative process, rather than the other way around.

6.3 Political considerations regarding the common good

One of the core values of green republicanism, as we have seen, is that there are ecological limits to growth and that these limits are to be respected and acted upon. As the future of the republican society is threatened by the unsustainable behavior that is the root cause of the ecological crisis, adhering to ecological limits is a common concern and a common good for all, for not doing so may result in the destruction of society itself. What is most important here, as Cannavò (2018) points out, is that in breaching ecological limits 'we are disrupting and threatening the fundamentally stable conditions that have allowed human civilization to flourish' (p. 6). Cannavò goes on to state that this implies that respect for ecological limits 'does not dictate the structure of political life but makes politics, and arguably most human endeavors, possible' (ibid.). Using this line of thought, Cannavò (2018) states, we can distinguish between thick and thin conceptions of nature in relation to politics: 'A thick conception sees the natural world as embodying a set of prescriptions for the substance of political life, whereas a thin conception sees the natural world as setting external bounds or limits within which politics can freely operate' (p. 7).

Now we may categorize green republicanism as adhering to a thick conception of nature, since the non-human world has limits that we ought to respect; the unchecked economic growth and consumerist, unsustainable practices that come with it and help sustain it, according to Barry, are what is causing the ecological crisis. By creating virtuous ecological citizens, green republicanism aims to create more sustainable behavior, in order for ecological limits to be respected and the ecological crisis to be mitigated. In other words: the ecological crisis and transforming the unsustainable behavior that, in the eyes of green republicans, causes it and uphold what it deems as the unsustainable society are what appear to be the prescriptions for the substance of political life. Still, if we accept Cannavò's claim that respecting ecological limits is necessary for civilization to exist and thrive, green republicanism's emphasis on achieving the sustainable society through instilling civic virtues proves to be problematic, for it either dictates or presupposes a particular conception of what this society looks like and how it is to be achieved. Naturally, the threats that jeopardize the stability and future existence of the republic are a common concern for its citizens. In this sense, ecological limits indeed are to be respected from a normative point of view. But, again, for republicanism *it ought to be up to citizens themselves how to respect them.*

Moreover, although a wide consensus exists among scientists regarding the ecological crisis and its causes, many different perspectives are in place when it comes to mitigation and the consequences for both the human and non-human world. Some believe nature ought to be transformed, that climate change offers chances to diversify it. According to this view, limits are to be overcome; the ecological crisis here is seen as an opportunity. Since human beings are adaptive creatures, climate changes, for proponents of this view, opens up the possibility to reshape nature in a way that maximizes both human and non-human flourishing (Shellenberger & Nordhaus, 2009). According to Erle Ellis (2011), 'we must not see the Anthropocene as a crisis, but as the beginning of a new geological epoch ripe with human-directed opportunity' (p. 43).

Ecomodernists, on the other hand, argue for an alternative liberal-humanist response to long-term environmental threats. According to this view, radically different technologies will be needed if earth's population is to enjoy 'freedom, equality and prosperity in a carbon-constrained world, and that states are the only actors with both the political and technical capacity to facilitate necessary innovations' (Symons & Karlsson, 2018, p. 685).

Ecomodernists, Symons and Karlsson state, reject the conventional goal of green political theorists to 'harmonize' with nature. Rather than cutting back on economic growth, ecomodernists propose intensifying production in fields such as energy, agriculture and urban forms as strategies to counter greenhouse gas emissions and leave room for nature. As Symons and Karlsson (2018) point out, ecomodernists 'advocate further separation from nature via technological innovation that shrinks our 'ecological footprint' (p. 686). Ecomodernists thus reject the idea that individual action offers an effective path to sustainability; the answer is rather to be found in technology.

Other environmental thinkers, such as Lovelock (2010), are more pessimistic regarding our chances to cope with the ecological crisis, and argue that earth itself through climate change is acting as a singular organism that is currently regulating its climate in order for earth and the life on it to prosper. Barry (2012), in his work on *Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability*, argues that to achieve the sustainable society in which high levels of human flourishing are achieved in a post-growth, carbon-constrained manner, what is required is to fundamentally question the 'dominant narrative of 'progress' qua orthodox economic growth, greater resource use, energy growth, consumerism, and so on' (p. 278). For Barry, society cannot proceed with

business as usual if the ecological crisis is to be dealt with.

What this very brief summary of different green theoretical positions shows, is that although one can agree on the existence of the ecological crisis and its causes, the morally right course of action is endlessly contestable, for this course of action is dependent on one's moral convictions; we can all agree on the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for not doing so risks destroying our planet (although here too, a minority of 'climate deniers' exists), but the number of different theorized scenarios and theoretical positions that claim to deal with this threat are abundant⁴. This again points to the unignorable tension that is present in green republicanism; what a republican society ought to be like in order for sustainability to become internalized, even if the goal is to safeguard the continuation of the republic, is *a political consideration*, meaning that if it is not shared or deliberated on by all in a democratic polity, it automatically implies coercion regarding those who do not share this ideal. It thus appear to fulfill the classic republican critique that for republicanism, society and its citizens are to be ordered according to either preconceived or undemocratically imposed conceptions of human nature and the common good. As Cannavò (2018) points out:

The republican tradition has always been about realizing universal values of non-domination and/or civic engagement in particular, contingent, ecologically limited settings through an open-ended, participatory politics. Republicanism must therefore navigate the tension between enhancing liberty as political participation and non-domination on the one hand and recognizing how human and nonhuman nature set limits on and to some ways constitute the substance of politics on the other. (p. 38)

Presenting the transition toward the sustainability society as inevitable, Barry (2012) states, 'does not remove the issue of political debate, choice, and decision-making between options' (p. 276). Barry argues that there are many ways to manage this transition. What this means for Barry (2012), is that there is no 'automatic, non-political way in which this can be done. To rather state the obvious, the transition away from actually existing unsustainability is a quintessentially political project, one that...

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Naturally, there are many, many more distinct theoretical and practical approaches regarding the mitigation of the ecological crisis. For reasons of practicality, I have limited down my pick of different positions to those few which I believe are fairly representative of the wider spectrum they are embedded within.

requires a specifically republican approach and sensibility' (ibid.).

But although one can argue that although consensus exists on the inevitable character of the ecological crisis that is climate change, this does not guarantee that citizens through deliberation will formulate the common good in a manner that is coherent with Barry's conception of sustainability and the sustainable society. Moreover, as argued earlier, it again demands the ecological crisis to be the substance of politics. It either presupposes that citizens will prioritize the ecological crisis and are willing to change their unsustainable ways, or that the state, acting from intrinsic republican motivation, will 'force' sustainability upon its citizens, for unsustainability is what stands in the way of human freedom and flourishing.

6.4 Limited scenarios

The aspiration of green republicanism to pursue the sustainable society I believe creates a dichotomy for the scenarios that are possible for green republicans to achieve this goal. Specifically, for green republicanism, the role and predominance of sustainability seem to limit the number of possible scenarios for a sustainable politics to two: one in which sustainability and non-domination are guaranteed by constitutionalizing sustainability in a deliberative democratic manner and a second one in which sustainability exists without non-domination.

In the first scenario, in which sustainability is constitutionalized to become part of the rule of law that is crucial for republicanism, this particular conception of sustainability is what guides the substance of political life; citizens are expected to end up at this conception through deliberation, for it is a common concern for republican citizens to safeguard the republic and thus to deal with the ecological crisis by changing their unsustainable ways and the mechanisms that hold the unsustainable society in place, ultimately producing informed green citizens through participation. It is the scenario that Barry (2012) advances. As I have argued, this scenario does seem to provide a quite comprehensive vision of what the sustainable society ought to look like, which violates the instrumental republican focus on non-domination, for it ought to be up to citizens whether and how to transform society. This scenario thus presupposes that ecological limits should inform the substance of political life a priori of the actual formation of the common good.

From a republican perspective, what poses another potential problem for this scenario is that the common good should always be open to contestation. The common good and the law that comes forth through it thus ought to be responsive and open to adaptation. When sustainability is constitutionalized, one can wonder to what extent effective contestation is possible at all, although a green republican response to this could be that sustainability is a general common good and concern that all have agreed upon in a deliberative process. It is thus not the general conception of sustainability that is open to contestation, but more so its application in everyday life. From a green republican point of view, one has no reason to argue with sustainability itself, for it is a common and good that applies to all equally. It is universal, for not dealing with the ecological crisis threatens to destroy the welfare and future of society itself. It is thus expected that the need for sustainability is agreed upon by virtuous green citizens and that freedom as non-domination is guaranteed, for society is guided by a conception of sustainability that all agree to.

As argued by Hayward (2001), some core values such as ecological security and social welfare should not be open to contestation, majoritarian rules and political decisions in a republican polity, for from these values the public interest may be generalized (Hayward, 2001, as cited in Fremaux, 2019: 227). For Fremaux (2019), the green republican shift toward ecological virtue within citizens will take time. Because of that, the fate of the social and ecological conditions that are required to achieve these virtues need to be protected; they cannot be risked by being placed in the hands of 'uncertain and suggestible popular sentiments' (p. 232). For Fremaux, the green republican transition toward sustainability cannot be susceptible to mob rule. The barrier of the fundamental law, Fremaux argues, is therefore 'erected as the last line of defense of the common good' (p. 232).

In the second scenario for green republicanism, sustainability exists without non-domination. In this case, sustainability is seen not only as what should be the substance of political life, but is actively enforced to be the substance of political life. Sustainability and the sustainable society here are to be seen as intrinsic values rather than instrumental. If it is seen to be instrumental, sustainability's primary goal is to avoid human suffering and maximize human flourishing. To do so, citizens decide what sustainability should look like. Through this method, it is not one particular conception of sustainability that guides politics, but one that is both decided upon in a deliberative

process and open to contestation. This way, freedom as non-domination is safeguarded. An intrinsic (or neo-Athenian) republican approach to sustainability, however, as outlined in this second scenario, has no problem when it comes to enforcing a particular - though perceived as fundamental - conception of sustainability as the dominant one. Likewise, for intrinsic republicans, the values that underlie the practices that are necessary for republicans to form virtuous citizens, such as education and civic participation, do not need to be decided upon by citizens, but may be discerned before the formative process of politics takes place. In this case, sustainability is thus what dominates the lives of citizens, under the presumption that sustainability is a necessary component for dealing with the ecological crisis *and* helps achieve a more just and free society by dealing with unsustainable practices.

There are two things that we may deduce from these two green republican scenarios. First, as we have seen, not only should it be up to citizens alone to decide whether to adopt sustainable values at all, our short trip into the spectrum of different theoretical positions regarding the mitigation of the ecological crisis revealed that these scenarios are rather abundant. What this points to is that although Barry states that the green republican transition toward sustainability will involve political decision making, his conceptualization of green republicanism, by prioritizing republican freedom as non-domination and human flourishing and his particular conception of what sustainability and the sustainable society look like, severely limits the number of scenarios that would be possible for politics under a green republican regime. As Marcel Wissenburg (1998) points out in his work on green liberalism, what a sustainable society ought to look like is a matter of normative formulation; it is an open ended process. I believe this point equally applies to green republicanism in the sense that in order to define sustainability, a society first must question itself what kind of world it wants to achieve:

We may also expect the introduction of the notion of limits to growth and resources, and with it that of sustainability, to lead to questions of a substantive normative nature. A sustainable society need not be one big Yellowstone Park – we can imagine a worldwide version of Holland stuffed with cows, grain and greenhouses, or even a global Manhattan without the Park to be as sustainable and for many among us as pleasant as the first. (Wissenburg, 1998, p. 81)

Second, the distinction between instrumental republicanism which prioritizes freedom as non-domination and intrinsic republicanism is rather blurry for green republicanism, especially regarding the emphasis on sustainability as a common good. As we have seen, Barry (2012) states that republicanism does demand that privately held conceptions views of the good conform to some standard or master conceptualization. This plurality of views of the good may exist, as long as they do not undermine the freedoms and practices of public and political life, including the 'ecological conditions for its sustainability' (p. 270). We have also learned that Barry (2012) advances a view on green republican politics as focused on 'removing or limiting obstacles and imperatives as opposed to directly and positively trying to achieve human flourishing' (p. 278). Barry argues that if inequality is 'impeding human flourishing' (ibid., p. 278), or if economic growth beyond a certain point 'can be shown not to enhance human flourishing' (ibid.), then they need to be 'removed or reformed' (ibid.). What is thus the primary function of the state in green republicanism, Barry points out, is to 'remove or lessen obstacles rather than positively providing opportunities or resources' (ibid.). This reasoning applies rather well to instrumental republicanism, for the goal of politics is to avoid domination by addressing those 'obstacles' that impede human flourishing and freedom.

Where the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic republicanism becomes blurry, however, is when Barry sets out what human flourishing, which here is mostly tied to sustainability, ought to look like. As Barry (2012) states, what ought to be done to face the ecological crisis is to identify 'the point beyond which economic growth under capitalism is not only compromising human flourishing, undermining the life-sustaining systems of the planet' (p. 276) . A key aim for politics, Barry argues, is thus 'how to achieve high levels of human flourishing with low energy and resource use' (ibid.).

For Barry (2012), to move beyond actually existing systems of unsustainability we will require a shift towards a "post-growth' economics of sufficiency' (p. 276). Barry (2012) argues that this transition is 'not regressive or simply motivated by ecological necessity, but in fact represents a much improved, as well as a more resilient social and political order' (p. 276). What this reasoning shows, again, is that although Barry uses an instrumental republican approach to politics to safeguard the republic and its citizens against systems of unsustainability that threaten human flourishing and the

future of the republic itself, what motivate green republicanism here is the vision of a 'more resilient social and political order' (Barry, 2012, p. 276). It is thus what citizens ought to aspire to; a quite specific vision of a sustainable society. This specificity comes across as more of an intrinsic approach to green politics and the sustainable society, which, for Barry, proves instrumental for attaining human flourishing. It is however the intrinsic motivation toward the sustainable society here that appears predominant; citizens ought to aspire to attain to this goal, for it is in this green republican society that they are free and can flourish within 'ecological, social, and psychological limits' (Barry, 2012, p. 278). Moreover, it is a particular conception of what human flourishing ought to look like.

6.5 Non-contingency in green republican politics

Some arguments advanced by Mathew Humphrey (2004) can be used to further build on this critique of green republicanism. Focusing on the relationship between liberal democracy and green political ideals, Humphrey argues that among many green political theorist in recent years a necessary connection has been established between liberal democracy and ecological values. According to Humphrey, liberal democracy is increasingly being seen as the only right form of government when it comes to delivering ecological values. This necessary connection, however, for Humphrey (2004) implies that the desire to pursue these two political goods simultaneously results in 'an attempt to forge a non-contingent link between these two goods when such a link is neither necessary nor plausible' (p. 116).

As Humphrey argues, seeking to forge a 'non-contingent conceptual relationship between ecology and democracy' (p. 125) rigs the democratic system 'in favour of the environment' (ibid.); it is a form of wishful thinking. As does green republicanism, this approach to ensuring that ecological values are acted upon seeks to eliminate contingency from politics (Humphrey, 2004, p. 125). According to Humphrey, this reasoning has become a general trend in both ecocentric environmental ethics and ecocentric political theory. The former 'seeks to render environmental protection non-contingent as an ethical demand' (Humphrey, 2004, p. 125), while ecocentric political theory 'seeks to render a non-contingent relationship between ecological outcomes and democratic processes' (ibid.). But contingency, one can argue, may be seen as constitutive of both liberal and instrumental republican politics. By taking this

constitutive element away from politics, an agenda is dictated to it, one that does not appear to be decided upon by the public. More specifically: ‘...liberal democracy itself is now taken as the only appropriate vehicle for delivering ecological goods, which may rule out in principle other forms of political agency in green politics’ (Humphrey, 2004, p. 115).

What is thus important for Humphrey, is that green values (and all values in general, for that matter) are decided upon through public debate and within the contingent sphere of politics. As Humphrey (2004) notes:

If we accept that there are good reasons to hold green values (on, say, justice-based grounds) and also good reasons to be a democrat (such as holding to the epistemological argument for democracy and not believing your green beliefs to be infallible) then the search for a non-contingent, watertight and necessary connection between ecology and democracy becomes redundant. Better that one grasps the nettle of contingency and argue in the public sphere for your values and beliefs. If we believe that green arguments are good arguments, and we believe in the power of the best argument to ultimately convince, then environmentalists can embrace liberal democratic decision-making processes, contingency and all, and continue to make the case for green values. (p. 125)

What we can take from this reasoning for green republicanism, is that green political values should not be what guides politics a priori; politics should not be centered around ecological norms. What we can infer from Humphrey’s line of thought for green republicanism, is that it ought to be the people themselves who, through deliberation, contestation and civic participation, attempt to persuade one another regarding green political values as common concerns for all. From this, civic participation, education and perhaps even compulsory civic service - which Barry (2012) is a proponent of for invoking green republican civic virtues - can be shaped accordingly, in line with these ideas, that have been open to contestation and remain to be so for all. This way, civic and political participation remain instrumental for protecting the political community over time, in line with instrumental, neo-Roman republican thought and freedom as non-domination is safeguarded, for the interferences into the lives of citizens that may be necessary to accomplish or instill certain ecological values are decided upon by the public⁵.

Following Pettit (1997), freedom from domination is more important than freedom from interference for republicans. There can be interference without

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In the conclusion of this thesis, this point will be elaborated on more substantively.

domination, and domination without interference. But when applied to green republican sustainability, a value that, for green republicanism, is a common good that allows for interferences into the lives of citizens in order to accomplish the transition that is needed to stop unsustainability, interferences are justified by appealing to a particular conception of sustainability and of what the sustainable society ought to look like. If citizens by themselves end up embracing these values (through discord and deliberation), only then can such interferences be truly justified and legitimized as necessary for upholding the law that citizens decided upon - a process which safeguards freedom as non-domination. What thus seems to be missing in green republicanism, is the mechanism that leads from green republican ideas to acting on them and internalizing them in a manner that adheres to instrumental republican freedom as non-domination. Is it perhaps through leadership? As Barry (2012) points out, leadership is:

...not necessarily a danger to even radical forms of democratic politics... a transition away from unsustainability and the creation of low-carbon, high quality of life societies and economies will require forms of facilitative and inspiring political leadership, without which this transition will most probably not take place. (p. 224)

One can wonder, however, to what extent leadership squares with republican freedom as non-domination, for especially inspiring leadership has rather popular, manipulative undertones to it. That is not to say that leadership cannot facilitate this transition, but with powerful leadership come into play interests of power; a hierarchy between citizens and political leaders, the latter of which may develop an interest in foremostly upholding their position of power rather than to facilitate the transition to the unsustainable society in a instrumental republican matter in which the people exercise self-rule.

If the goal of civic republicanism is to guard the republic against corruption, one can argue that - although a 'founding' leader is allowed according to classic republicans - power should remain in the hands of the people, which are stimulated to develop civic virtues, such as civic participation, that ought to protect them from morally corrosive, corruptive practices. Inspiring leadership by a few here may risk corrupting that very leadership by the lure of power, which in turn may lead to a word-deed gap, in which deceiving citizens can prove instrumental for consolidating power.

6.6 The role of place in (green) republicanism

A final point of critique on green republicanism concerns its emphasis on place. As canonical republican thinkers such as Machiavelli have pointed out, republican citizens are locally embedded and bound by a particular history and location (Viroli, 1998; Pocock, 1975). It is within empowered communities that citizens have a need to tend to the environment around them, for it is this the wellbeing of this environment on which the republic and its inhabitants dependent for long term stability and flourishing. Moreover, as Dagger (2001) states, place is important to republicanism because it strengthens 'the sense of publicity – of being part of a public' (p. 169).

According to Barry (2012), the environmental and traditional specifics of a community largely determine a community's political possibilities:

...a small, arid country with a lot of oil and historically ruled by a hereditary prince faces a different set of constraints than a large, historically democratic country rich in a variety of natural resources. Both countries may aim for a republic in which citizens can realize all the values that it is possible for men to realize in this life, but their institutions and practices must be designed to allow this particular group of people to manage the resource base at their disposal effectively and deal with the threats they face. (p. 225)

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, Barry argues that for green republicanism, human communities, due to local contexts and traditions, will require different forms of political and economic life and sustainability in order to effectively face the ecological crisis. Sustainability for green republican communities, Barry states, does not come in one size that fits all.

But when it comes to making the transition toward sustainability, this emphasis on particularity in space in time for republican communities seems problematic. One can argue on the contrary that the ecological crisis is a global, interdependent and complex matter that requires extensive international cooperation and determination toward a single goal; mitigating climate change and its effects by reducing greenhouse gas emissions⁶. One could argue that we need a more cosmopolitan view when it comes to facing the ecological crisis, rather than being focused on the specific threats that

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It should be noted, however, that this approach to global problems also may be criticized, for the implication that global problems require that citizens think of themselves as being part of a global community may prove to be counterproductive. As argued by Dagger (2001), it may exactly be the republican politics of place that provide the conditions for civic engagement that in turn produce virtuous citizens that come to see the world as an interconnected place. In turn, citizens come to see the ecological crisis as an interdependent problem.

threaten a specific community.

If different communities are encouraged to have different workable conceptions of sustainability that are based on their particular surroundings, history and the threats they face, tackling climate change on a global level through cooperation risks becoming even more complicated and incoherent than it already is right now. For example, a seafaring island (republican) community may have more of an incentive to effectively deal with rising sea levels due to the ecological crisis than a mountain (republican) community, which has less incentive to do so for the short term consequences of the ecological crisis threaten the stability of this community far less. Although I agree with Dagger's thesis that the republican politics of place are exactly what help shape the conditions that are needed for civic virtue to take shape - and from which citizens can consecutively develop a sense of (global) interdependence when it comes to the ecological crisis - I would argue that adopting distinct conceptions of sustainability in a green republican fashion may prove counterproductive for dealing with the ecological crisis. Instead, as I will argue in the conclusion of this thesis, we may instead adopt a more minimal, singular conception of sustainability that all may adhere to if we are to effectively deal with the ecological crisis: one in which all agree to cutting the emissions of greenhouse gases to or beyond a certain scientifically determined threshold, regardless of local contexts.

In this chapter, I have set out to formulate a series of criticisms regarding green republicanism. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I will further reflect on my findings and make recommendations for future research.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Overview

In this thesis, I have scrutinized the relatively young strand of thought of green republicanism. Specifically, I have sought to analyze whether green republican citizenship is more suitable for maximizing sustainability without compromising freedom than is liberal citizenship. First, I analyzed the concept of liberal and republican citizenship, which seem to be at odds with one another regarding the role of rights and duties. Republicanism seeks to instill civic virtue within citizens in order to safeguard society against corruption, whilst liberalism, roughly put, is more focused on maximizing negative freedom through rights and by securing autonomy. In republicanism, the neo-Athenian (or intrinsic) strand maintains that political participation is an intrinsic good for human flourishing, while the neo-Roman (or instrumental) strand is more focused on creating the institutional design necessary for preserving individual freedom.

Freedom as non-domination is a core value for neo-Roman republicanism. This freedom holds domination may take place without interference, and interference without domination; a slave may be treated well by a benevolent master, but is still subject to the arbitrary will of this master. Likewise, interferences may be justified when they are derived from or uphold the common good. For republican freedom as

non-domination, arbitrary interference and private interests are to be prevented from becoming too powerful, of becoming dominating, by subjecting them to checks and balances and by including as many voices as possible into the deliberative republican process of formulating the common good. I introduced green political theory, within which green republicanism is embedded. I briefly scrutinized the environmentalist/ecologist distinction within green political theory, arguing that when compared, environmentalism tends to be more anthropocentric, while ecologism has a more radical vision regarding nature and the place that humans should have within it, one that is more 'eco-centric'. Within green political theory, the concept of ecological citizenship has been introduced as a means of making citizens aware of their interdependence with one another and the non-human world, appealing to their responsibilities when it comes individual (unsustainable) behavior that affects others. Green republicanism incorporates this concept by constructing the sustainable society as a common good that ought to take precedence when confronted with private interests. As in green political theory, the republican tradition prioritizes sustainability, for the most important goal for republicanism is how to sustain the indefinite republic in a world that threatens it both internally (through corruption) and externally (through environmental threats).

I explored some of the existing criticisms that apply to civic republicanism and green republicanism. Some scholars accuse the republican strand of thought of being too burdensome for its citizens; that all should adhere to one conception of the common good. Barry responds to this criticism by noting that (green) republican citizens are free to have private conceptions of the common good, as long as these do not jeopardize the freedoms and practices of public and political life. Being a good green citizen for Barry does not implicate that interests of nonhumans or others should be promoted over one's own interest, but rather that one's own interests ought to be assessed in the light of the interest of others.

In Chapter Six, where I focused on what I consider to be the most important drawbacks of green republicanism, I argued that the green republican emphasis on sustainability has problematic normative implications, for it implies that either a preconceived conception of sustainability as a common good that ought to guide politics and coerce citizens into adopting it as a virtue or that citizens are expected to end up politically adopting sustainability as in some teleological sense. The ecological crisis for

green republicanism appears to set an agenda for politics, whilst, from a normative point of view, republican citizens themselves ought to define the common good in order to prevent freedom as non-domination from being compromised. Although Barry states that republican citizens do not have to adhere to some master standard of the common good, that a plurality of private interests may exist, I contend that if non-domination is to be at the core of green republican freedom, it seems rather problematic that one particular conception of sustainability that, for green republicans, is seen as the ultimate solution for the unsustainable society, is to be the crucial common good that guides society and is what constitutes those values that underlie the practices that are used to instill civic virtues.

This green republican approach to green politics seems to narrow down the scenarios that are possible to achieve sustainability to two: one in which sustainability and non-domination are guaranteed by constitutionalizing sustainability in a deliberative democratic manner and a one in which sustainability exists without non-domination. One can argue that approach to politics attempts to remove contingency from it, rigging the political system in favor of the environment, whilst contingency is exactly what defines both republican and liberal politics.

What lies at the heart of John Barry's conceptualization of a green republican sustainable society is a particular conception of what sustainability and human flourishing ought to look like, which seems to reveal a more intrinsic republican view regarding political life within green republicanism than a neo-Roman one. Although Barry argues that republicanism does not require 'one size' of political life and sustainability that fits all, that human communities require distinct forms of politics and sustainability, I contend that the core green republican values that underlie this reasoning (such as ecological and social justice) still determine what sustainability and politics should aspire to. I argue that while communities here are given some autonomy in a practical sense, in that they, for example, may decide what technicalities need to be dealt with in order to face the ecological crisis, the goals for sustainability and politics seem to be set a priori. The normative foundations for sustainability, political and economic life here thus do not appear to be the end result of the desired republican process of deliberation among citizens.

Leadership in green republicanism may prove counterproductive in facilitating the transition towards sustainability, for the power that accompanies this position of

inspiring facilitator may prove to produce that what republicans fear most: corruption. Sustainability is hard to argue with in the light of the ecological crisis, therefore, it can be possibly be the outcome of the deliberation among citizens that produces the common good. Finally, I contend that the local contextuality of communities that green republicanism emphasizes is suboptimal for achieving sustainability, for when different conceptions of sustainability are allowed to exist, based on specificities in time and space of a particular community, there may be less incentive to effectively face the ecological crisis, which is an interdependent problem that requires extensive cooperation toward a single goal.

7.2 A more minimalist green republicanism

What do my findings imply for my main research question? Is green civic republican citizenship *better suited to deal with the unsustainable society that is in place today than our current dominant system of liberal democracy?*

Based on the findings in this thesis, one could argue that green republicanism brings with it too much of an intrinsic, neo-Roman emphasis on sustainability, unsustainability and that the former is a common good that society should aspire to realize in order to safeguard and eventually pass on the republic in terms of both ecological and social justice.

It seems that by prioritizing and specifying what is unsustainable and sustainable, and, more importantly, by aspiring to realize a particular conception of human flourishing, at the core of green republicanism lies a normative ideal that is defined a priori of the formative process of deliberation that ought to guide republican political life. Thus, if this indeed is an intrinsic approach to politics, it violates the neo-Roman republican ideal of freedom as non-domination. But even if this is not the case, one cannot expect to be common sense for citizens to arrive the sustainable society through the deliberative processes that green republicanism envisions.

As we have seen, many different, possible scenarios exist when it comes to facing the ecological crisis, some of which are not even close to the sustainable goals that green republicans aim for, both in a normative and practical sense. And when we approach politics from an ideal of non-domination, this should not be problematic; different conceptions of the common good may exist, as long as they do not threaten the existence and wellbeing of the political community. More specifically: if we know that

comprehensive scientific evidence exists for the causes and effects of the ecological crisis, then in a green republican fashion may we adopt a fundamental, law-like goal for society to mitigate that crisis; we may adopt a minimal conception of sustainability that holds that we are not to exceed a certain scientifically determined threshold if we are to preserve life on earth. Adhering to the natural limits that are set out by this definition of sustainability may influence political decision making. But in order for this minimal conception of sustainability to become actual law, before it may become to be viewed as a virtue, as one of the universal values that inspire the republican processes that aim at instilling virtue within citizens, such as education and civic service, citizens through deliberation and contestation, have to give their consent.

Andrew Dobson (2003) is right to point out that scientists will only be able to tell us 'that practice P is likely to push us over a threshold once we have told him/her to whom or to what the threshold applies... and this cannot be determined by science alone' (p. 147). But if we are to follow the ideal of freedom as non-domination in a neo-Roman republican fashion, I would argue that we in fact may agree to adopt and consequently commit ourselves to this minimal conception of (environmental) sustainability that holds that ignoring certain thresholds will endanger the future of the earth and all life upon it. With this minimal conception of sustainability, citizens have more room for private views of the common good. They may hold different conceptions of it, as long as these does not violate this universal definition of sustainability, that, in a non-dominating way, can be seen as a derivative of the common good.

In a republican fashion, citizens may still be stimulated to engage in public debate regarding what they consider to be the best course of action to achieve the goal that is sustainability. By doing so, different viewpoints are exchange in a deliberative manner, educating citizens and forcing them to think in terms of the common good in order to persuade one another. In this scenario, the sustainable order that is envisioned by Barry is but one of the possible outcomes. A global Manhattan without the park, an ecomodernist society which seeks to counter ecological deterioration through technological innovation or maybe a more ecocentric approach in which wilderness ought to take over once again may be the outcome. As long as these outcomes can be framed within the framework that is provided by the minimal conception of sustainability that is advanced here, they are but three of many possible scenarios that citizens will have to decide upon.

One of the things we can take from green republicanism, is that if sustainability is to be realized and attained, citizens indeed ought to be stimulated to take into account the state of the planet, and, consequently, develop the virtues that are necessary to act upon that state. Through civic participation are citizens to develop their own specific viewpoint regarding this common good, but in such a way that the future of the republic, of planet earth, is formulated as one of the priorities of our time, both to preserve the wellbeing of our own communities and its surroundings as that of the planet itself. Civic green republicanism thus can inspire a formative politics within which citizens, through political and civic participation, develop a sustainable type of citizenship, in which the only constraint is the agreed upon minimal conception of sustainability. As argued, the scientific consensus that exists regarding the ecological crisis may inspire us to formulate that fundamental law that stimulates a minimal, universal conception of sustainability. In a civic republican fashion this law may become the last line of defense of the common good that is the future of society itself, that inspires stimulating civic republican virtue in a non-dominating way. The exact content and requirements of citizenship thus cannot be dictated or predicted here; citizens themselves are to construct that type of citizenship that takes place within the framework that is the minimal conception of sustainability.

If we are to deal with the ecological crisis that is climate change, we will need to alter our behavior. That alteration, however, ought to be ultimately decided upon by citizens themselves. We therefore can take inspiration from the emphasis that green republicanism places on instilling virtue as a means of securing both freedom as non-domination and sustainability. What we can take from more liberal models, however, is that this process may never effectively decide the path society is to take without making such decisions subject to democratic deliberation and decision making. It may be a case of wishful thinking, however, if we are to believe that the persuasiveness of green ideas alone and our common interest in pursuing them will be enough to convince society to act upon them. This is why this thesis concludes by stating that if we are to realize a minimal conception of sustainability that is agreed and acted upon by society, some form of interference will be necessary. Specifically, a form of interfering that may never become dominating, but that is necessary for educating citizens and stimulating the idea of sustainability as not what dictates the goals for society and human flourishing, but that is substantiated by scientific evidence and is only to be seen as necessary for

securing a safe and sound future, the route of which is open to be influenced by all, as long as all adhere to the limits that are scientifically set. In a sense, this may also limit some scenarios, but only those that deny the most minimal, universal, scientifically backed conception of sustainability. From this basis, we may enter in the deliberative, republican-like style of debate that is necessary for us as a political community to determine what our sustainable future will look like.

This approach to politics and sustainability may not be the most effective method when aiming to achieve effective sustainability in the short term, but if we are to safeguard freedom and autonomy, it may be a necessary path to take from a normative point of view.

7.3 Future research

In this thesis, I have mainly sought to contribute to both the rather limited field of green republicanism and the more general debate within green political theory regarding green citizenship. I have sought to provide new starting points for debate concerning the role of leadership, place and interdependence within green republicanism. This thesis' most important contribution to the strand of green republicanism, however, I believe, is the focus it places on some of the theoretical tensions that are present within green republican thought. Specifically the rather fundamental tension that arises from the green republican emphasis on freedom as non-domination and what appears to be a rather neo-Athenian, intrinsic concept of sustainability and human flourishing has not been explored that thoroughly in existing literature. As I have argued in this thesis, this tension begs the question whether the combination of freedom as non-domination and any particular conception of sustainability can be defended at all from a neo-Roman, instrumental republican point of view. To further substantiate the field of green republicanism, I believe this complex question needs to be studied more extensively.

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