

Radical Republican Citizenship for a Mobile World

Ciudadanía republicana radical para un mundo en movimiento

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ABSTRACT: Migrants invariably and unavoidably experience domination under the nation-state centered concepts, categories, and institutions that structure our political thinking. In response, we need to build new forms of citizenship, including local, regional, transnational, and supranational forms of belonging, accompanied by meaningful, democratic, political power. In this paper, I examine historical and present-day alternative models of political organization as possible viable alternatives to state-centric liberal democracy. It begins the task of assessing these models using radical republican theory that grounds non-domination in the active and equal participation of people subject to power. I have three broad aims. First, we need to break down the native-migrant dichotomy to highlight commonalities and search for solidarities among migrants and other marginalized and oppressed groups, including indigenous groups. Second, I seek to awaken the political imagination. Many people do not believe there are viable alternatives to liberal democracy centered around the nation-state. In response, we should draw attention to the ways in which the nation-state's hegemony is fragile and fragmented and the ways in which sovereignty is complex and contested. Most importantly, we need to consider alternative models for inspiration. Third, we need tools for assessing the desirability of alternatives and for building new forms of citizenship. In what follows, first I explain why the dominant, nation-state centered model of political organization is unable to deliver justice in today's world, or, indeed, address the collective dangers that humanity faces. I next provide a sketch of a radical republican vision that provides normative guidance our thinking about alternative institutions. I end by using this radical republic vision to reflect on possibilities to guide efforts to remake the world.

Keywords: Migration, Migrant, Marginalized Groups, Democracy, Politics, Citizenship, Radical Republic.

RESUMEN: Los migrantes, invariable e inevitablemente, experimentan dominación bajo los conceptos, categorías e instituciones centrados en el Estado-nación que estructuran nuestro pensamiento político. En respuesta, necesitamos construir nuevas formas de ciudadanía, incluidas formas de pertenencia locales,

regionales, transnacionales y supranacionales, acompañadas de un poder político significativo y democrático. Este artículo examina modelos alternativos, históricos y actuales, de organización política como posibles opciones viables a la democracia liberal centrada en el Estado. Comienzo esta tarea evaluando estos modelos desde la teoría republicana radical que fundamenta la no dominación en la participación activa e igualitaria de las personas sujetas al poder. Tengo tres grandes objetivos: primero, romper la dicotomía nativo-migrante para resaltar los puntos en común y buscar solidaridades entre los migrantes y otros grupos marginados y oprimidos, incluidos los grupos indígenas. Segundo, busco despertar la imaginación política. Muchas personas no creen que existan alternativas viables a la democracia liberal centradas en el Estado-nación. En respuesta, debemos llamar la atención sobre las formas en que la hegemonía del Estado-nación es frágil y está fragmentada, así como las formas en que la soberanía es compleja y disputada. Lo más importante es que debemos considerar modelos alternativos para inspirarnos. En tercer lugar, identificar herramientas para evaluar la conveniencia de alternativas para construir nuevas formas de ciudadanía. En lo que sigue, primero expondré por qué el modelo dominante de organización política centrado en el Estado-nación es incapaz de hacer justicia en el mundo de hoy o, de hecho, de abordar los peligros colectivos que enfrenta la humanidad. A continuación, ofrezco un esbozo de una visión republicana radical que proporciona una guía normativa a nuestro pensamiento sobre las instituciones alternativas. Termino usando esta visión de República radical para reflexionar sobre las posibilidades de guiar los esfuerzos para rehacer el mundo.

Palabras clave: Migración, migrante, grupos marginados, democracia, política, ciudadanía, República radical.

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I. THE NEED FOR NEW MODELS OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The dominant model of sovereignty is grounded in a model of states in which a People exercises self-determination over a sharply delineated territory. Social scientists have criticized this model for its methodological nationalism, a bias in which scholars uncritically import the perspective and assumptions of the nation-state into their research (Beck, 2000; Wimmer & Glick, 2003). Under this bias, the "People" is conceived as a sovereign entity composed of citizens united by shared ethnicity and culture, bound together by obligations of solidarity in a particular, fixed place. This model of sovereignty and of the state has structured research, shaping the questions investigated and the evidence considered. It has also ren-

dered some phenomena (e.g., transnational processes, minority nations, the non-citizen population) invisible.

This dominant model is more than a tool for understanding the world. It is also a normative conception, defining notions of authority, legitimacy, citizenship, and justice. The descriptive and normative dimensions reinforce each other. Claims about the nature of sovereignty and political organization lead to notions of what is possible and how things should be. It shapes our responses to questions about who belongs, who can make and enforce rules, and who is owed what. These normative notions in turn shape the nature of sovereignty and political organization. For example, our conceptions of what citizenship *ought to be* affects political and legal decisions about *who counts* as a citizen; our account of political authority affects how we respond to proposals for increased supra or sub-national authority.

The complex ways in which descriptive and normative features are intertwined provides an entry point for a critical intervention. When a model fails to adequately reflect the reality of political society, this calls into question the adequacy of the normative account. Theoretical developments in the social sciences have drawn attention to the shortcomings of this model. These combine with political and legal developments that challenge its viability, particularly the ways in which space, place, and governance have been transformed. Few of these transformations are unique to the twenty-first century (though the exponential growth and sophistication of big data and algorithmic governance arguably provide governments and corporations with unprecedented capabilities for intervention). Nonetheless, the combination of their scope and intensity challenges the adequacy of conceptions of membership, sovereignty, and territory that developed concurrently with the rise of the nation-state.

The first problematic methodological nationalist fiction is the sovereign state, conceived as exercising power over and on behalf of an ethnically homogenous, territorially bound citizens. This ignores how many states have two or more nations, with varying levels of political autonomy and recognition. State territories have never mapped neatly onto ethnic groups and this fiction that states ought to do so has played no small role in ethnic cleansing and genocide. Moreover, this conception reifies settler colonialism, erasing indigenous people, who are often included on inequitable terms, while simultaneously possessing their own forms of sovereignty.

States are internally fractured in other ways. There are significant cultural and ideological divisions between rural and urban populations. Global cities are often more closely connected to peer cities at the other side

of the globe than to their rural neighbors (Sassen, 2001). Cities also exert power against state and federal governments, for example, when sanctuary cities extend protections toward immigrant populations or refuse to cooperate with federal law enforcement (Hoye, 2020; Paik, 2020). In all of these examples, competing political units fracture the unified notion of the state.

Similar problems arise for the idea of a People, which central to democratic and for republican thought, since it is identified as the source of legitimacy and authority. Under a methodological nationalist perspective, state power is justified on behalf of the People, to whom it is expected to be responsive. Citizenship is defined as membership in a territorial state, dismissing rather than engaging possibilities of subnational, supra-national, or transnational political membership.

This conception of the people as a body of citizens does not reflect reality. Equal status is at the core of the ideal of citizenship, but it is far from realized. Even when people enjoy formal equal status, racism and anti-blackness continue to undermine real equality. Immigration also belies the ideal of citizens with equal rights, introducing hierarchies in which groups are assigned unequal rights and statuses (Cohen, 2009). Immigrants often lack core right of citizenship such as the right to vote in elections,¹ the right to remain indefinitely in the territory, and access to core social benefits. Nowhere is this more starkly illustrated than by illegalized populations, who form a precarious workforce that is often central to state economies.

The other dimension of the people is the ideal of shared ethnicity and culture. The prominence of indigenous peoples, minority nations, and immigrant groups puts to rest the ideal of shared ethnicity and culture. In many places, it is reasonable to speak of “super-diversity”, in which people’s lives are shaped by an interplay of ethnicity and many other factors, including immigration status (which assigns different rights), race, gender, age, language, religion, access to resources and services, spatial distribution, labor market experiences, transnational connections, and much else (Vertovec, 2007).

The other untenable fiction of methodological nationalism is the bounded territory. Many lives transverse state borders (Basch *et al.*, 1994). Millions of families are transnational and many people have dual or multiple citizenships. Even more central to this project is the way in which sovereignty is fragmented and dispersed, with power—including juridical power—exercised across borders in complex ways (Krasner, 1999).

¹ Though some states and many substate units allow immigrant voting (Pedroza, 2019).

The conception of borders promoted by nation-states does not correspond to legal jurisdictions, since states habitually shift legal borders beyond their official borders at their convenience (Albahari, 2015; Shachar, 2020).

Furthermore, technology has intensified the transformation of space. Many of us are familiar with workplaces and schools that have shifted into video conferencing, connecting us on screens that peer into each other's homes, often hundreds or thousands of miles away. Political organization has also moved online, both with transnational human rights movements (including transnational indigenous movements), and, alarmingly, terrorist groups and far right activists, who learned early on to use the Internet to foment their ideologies.

Finally, big data and surveillance has given governments and industry new ways to exercise power, largely unconstrained by borders or by public oversight. We don't need to invoke hyperreality or the metaverse to recognize that community and connection have changed and that, correspondingly, we need new forms of political organization and mechanisms to address abuses of power. As the rise of transnational far right and terrorist networks illustrates, some of the most pressing problems are both delocalized and interconnected by highly complex, causal chains (Beck, 2006). The most alarmingly is anthropocentrically-driven climate change, which connects to migration since it is presently leading to human displacement, sometimes across international borders. Not only does any credible response to climate change pose collective action problems that the state system has so far been unable to overcome, but it challenges us to rethink our relationship to land, borders (both human-made and ecological), and political authority (Ochoa, 2020). The combination of all of these developments demands that we construct new models to understand democracy, the legitimate exercise of power, equality, and much else.

II. RADICAL REPUBLICANISM

So far, I have claimed that features of political organization, law, and cultural division, along with problems that we face today call for rejecting the dominant model of sovereignty structured around an ideal of the nation-state. Two questions arise. First, what am I proposing in its place? Criticism isn't sufficient. We also need to experiment with potential viable, alternative models. Second, what normative resources do we have to guide our judgments about alternative models? What reasons can we provide

for why they might be better? In this section, I focus on this second question, drawing on the republican tradition.

Scholars differ on the core features of republican philosophy and who counts as a figure in the republican tradition. At its core is the ideal of non-domination, understood as freedom from arbitrary interference. Republicans insist on the equal status of citizens to guard against domination, along with institutional mechanisms that allow citizens to shape laws and policies limiting their freedom and to contest abuses (Pettit, 1997; Skinner, 2012) Of particular importance for most republicans is the active participation of citizens to prevent domination and oppression.

What distinguishes a *radical* republican tradition (Leipold et al., 2020)? Radical republicanism, as I understand it, has at its core the conviction that existing structures of power are rotten and that structural change is necessary for justice. In other words, radical republicanism is revolutionary, aiming at disrupting and changing an unjust social order. Radical republicans insist on the active participation of all people in governance, which requires expanding the *demos* to empower disenfranchised and marginalized groups. Let me propose four features of this account: its anti-racism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, anti-nationalism, and anti-sedentarianism.

First, radical republicanism is anti-racist (Mills, 2015). It adopts the perspective of groups such as African Americans and colonial subjects that have not only been excluded from the *demos*, but who have been denied recognition of their status as persons. Radical republicanism recognizes that white supremacy is at the core of injustice and that its abolition demands more than reforming legal, political, and economic institutions so they live up to their professed ideals; it involves shifting power so that people can insist that their demands be met.

Melvin L. Rogers draws on the nineteenth century African American thought of Frederick Douglass, David Walker, Hosea Easton, and Martin Delaney, demonstrating, *contra* Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit (who are widely credited with rescuing republic thought from the shadow of liberal conceptions of freedom of non-interference), that republicanism was very much alive in the nineteenth century. He points out that for these thinkers, "To enjoy liberty requires not merely freedom from the arbitrary whim of particular agents of laws that limit arbitrary power, but a transformation of the system of cultural value in which blacks occupy a lower position of worth" (Rogers, 2020, p. 63).

Rogers distinguishes between political slavery and chattel slavery. The notion of political slavery, prominent in the Roman tradition, is based on the idea that people are denied a status that they are potentially owed.

In contrast, under chattel slavery, “The problem was not the denial of a status within a political community already acknowledged as one’s due, but the denial of the very idea that any political status at all might be due to one” (Rogers, 2020, p. 79). Passing just laws and procedures for their enforcement is insufficient when the oppressors refuse to recognize that the people they are oppressing are possible political agents. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw observes that “Because rights that other Americans took for granted were routinely denied to Black Americans, blacks’ assertion of the «rights» constituted a serious ideological challenge to white supremacy” (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 1365). The radical republican approach centers marginalized groups who have had to assert their rights.

Second, radical republicanism is anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. It is acutely aware of the ways in which colonial states continue to dominate colonized people. Decolonization is an ongoing project that needs to be actively pursued. Furthermore, imperialist states continue to exercise power abroad, depriving people in other political communities of meaningful self-determination. Adom Getachew has documented how, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, anticolonial nationalist such as Kwame Nkrumah and Eric Williams saw the need for postcolonial federalism to ward off domination from imperial powers, leading to the Union of African States and the West Indian Federation (more on this below) (Getachew, 2019).

Perhaps controversially, radical republican theory’s commitment to anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism entails that it should also be anti-nationalist. This is controversial since anti-colonial struggles have often invoked nationalism, which is commonly seen as opposed to empire. Nationalism has indeed been strategically valuable to many groups struggling for recognition. Proclaiming one’s self a nation, as opposed to a mere community or interest group, allows the group to justify claims to self-determination and special rights. Nonetheless, the strategic use of nationalism disguises its exclusionary nature or, as Andreas Wimmer puts it, “Nationalism was the main ideological tool to justify why the principle of equality doesn’t apply to every human being but only to the citizens of the state” (Wimmer, 2021, pp. 4-5).

Mahmood Mamdani sees nationalism not as the culmination of a unified colonized people embodying its self-determination, but rather as a culmination of strategies of divide and rule imposed by colonial powers: “the emergence in the postcolonial situation of a violent nationalism following from the creation of minorities under indirect rule. The minorities the colonizer created in the colonies sought, after independence, to become the nation” (Mahmood, 2020, location 82, Kindle). Nandita Sharma sees nationalism not as opposing imperialism, but rather inheriting

its legacy, drawing on imperialist practices of separating groups of people through racist legal and social classifications (Sharma, 2020, p. 88). She argues that the nation-state not only has not, but that it cannot meet the promise of national self-determination (Sharma, 2020, p. 275). Similarly, in her colonial genealogy of the modern state, Radhika Mongia has illustrated how the British responded to the abolition of slavery by reproducing the racialized hierarchies of empire through the control of indentured labor (Mongia, 2018). Our contemporary understanding of national sovereignty emerges from a racial project, which continues today. Against the ahistorical view in which nation-states emerged in the European Treaty of Westphalia, Mongia reveals how “nation-states” bear the scars of empire.

Though radical republicanism is anti-nationalist, it does not necessarily call for the abolition of territorial states. Any plausible set of political institutions that will mitigate domination will be multilevel. Once we acknowledge the diversity and pluralism of individuals and communities within territories, it may turn out that territorial states remain a useful site for democracy, if there are issues that can neither be plausibly resolved at a local nor a global level. Notice, though, that these territorial states will not be *nation-states*. Also, insofar as something resembling territorial states is justifiable, it will either be for practical reasons (e.g., it makes sense to build on existing infrastructure and institutions that are organized around states) or because it best permits realizing radical republican values.

Third, radical republicanism takes the migrant as a central, subversive figure (Nail, 2015). To fully grasp this point, it’s important to recognize that, as E. Tuck and K.W. Yang emphasize, “Settlers are not immigrants” (Tuck & Yang 2012, p. 6).² Settlers erase indigenous peoples, using violence to impose their laws and epistemologies and to extract resources and usurp land (Wolfe, 2006). Immigrants join communities under the community’s terms and do not have the power to impose their will. The figure of the migrant intimately connects to decolonial projects. Mongia writes:

If the chief characteristic of colonial rule is a set of legal differentiations, which entail differential entitlements and differential treatment for different subjects, that today *all* states embody a *historically produced* colonial dimension, with the citizen/migrant distinction as a, perhaps *the*, primary axis of such differentiation. (Mongia, 2018, p. 150)

Nation-states embody this colonial legacy of differentiation and separation for the purposes of domination. As Jennifer Chacón, in her commentary on *Indian Migration and Empire*, observes, Mongia’s genealogy

² See also Sharma & Wright (2008).

of how the British used nationality to implement a racist agenda resonates with legal scholarship that draws on critical race theory to show how migration regulation “carries out a continuing racial project using neutral language and technologies tied to nationality” (Chacón, 2021, p. 261, citing García Hernández, 2013; Johnson, 2000; Vázquez, 2015) The history of immigration enforcement is a history of racism, in which law and policy drew and redrew the boundaries of whiteness (Roediger, 2006). Nandita Sharma writes:

A crucial first step toward decolonization, then, is dismantling the borders between people categorized either as National-Natives or as Migrants and rebuilding our solidarity across—and more importantly *against*—the “nations” and nation-states that depend on these categories of their existence. (Sharma 2020, p. 276)

The migrant becomes a central figure for radical republicanism since it poses the challenge: how do we provide equal status for people excluded both by law and by the imagination from the political community? This is starkest for refugees, who are often *de facto* stateless people. At the same time, the figure of the migrant opens new conceptions of belonging.³ The importance of migrants for radical republican thought is two-fold. First, while state power and structurally racist institutions exclude them from full membership, migrants simultaneously belong to the community. They experience differential inclusion, calling into question the pernicious dichotomy of legal/illegal that structures the state-centric imagination. Migrants may be excluded from the franchise and deprived of rights to protect them from invasive, unaccountable policing, but, at the same time, they are parents, workers, members of churches, school districts, neighborhoods, and much more. Moreover, they are often members of transnational families and communities. Attention to the many forms of migrant belonging helps free us from state-imposed conceptions of citizenship and encourages us to recognize the fluidity and complexity of membership.

Second, migrants often actively claim membership (Bloemradd, 2021; García, 2021). Migration itself is a claim to belonging, something migrants assert every time they cross a border. But migrants are also politically active, demanding recognition and asserting their rights (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; De Genova, 2017; Isn & Nielsen, 2008; Sager, 2018b). Migrant demands are a resource to help us recognize what is wrong with our cur-

³ Nicholas de Genova draws attention to the ongoing struggles around citizenship, in which states’ effects to produce a people simultaneously creates states of exceptions

rent political structures, to redress wrongdoing, and to imagine new models of membership and politics. Indeed, migrants' decision to freedom of movement against state deportation regimes is not only a form of resistance, but an assertion of political possibility. As Nicholas De Genova observes, "freedom of movement supplies a defiant reminder that the creative powers of human life, and the sheer vitality of its productive potential, must always exceed every political regime" (De Genova, 2010, p. 59).

Taking into account anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and anti-nationalism and emphasizing the centrality of the figure of the migrant, we can highlight these central features of a radical republican account:

- 1) *Participatory imperative*: People must have significant influence, especially at the local level, to shape policy. This includes, where appropriate, the right to vote, run for office, the power to speak and to protest in public fora, access to a free press and social media, as well as the ability to exercise rights such as freedom of association and freedom of speech and expression.
- 2) *Contestatory imperative*: Robust mechanisms, including legal mechanism, must exist at every level to allow people to contest domination. People must also enjoy protections so that they do not suffer retaliation for contesting perceived injustices.

These two imperatives are central features of every republican account. To them, I add a third.

- 3) *Anti-oppression imperative*: Our starting point is not an ahistorical, idealized world, but rather the world as it is, scarred by legacies of colonialization and imperialism, by anti-blackness, and by racialized and gendered oppression. Our baseline assumption is not colorblindness or the assumption that formal rights or sovereignty is sufficient to end domination. Rather, we acknowledge that the world is broken and that bandages and salve do not suffice to heal it.

These imperatives must link to the design of political organizations, which, in turn, will need to resist the formation of rigid categories and identities and dichotomies of us and them. Solidarity needs to be grounded on common interests and connections and the need to overcome collective action problems, rather than shared ethnicity or culture. Additional features of this radical republican vision include:

- 4) Membership must be fluid, with low entrance and exit costs. Inclusion should be determined not be place of birth or the nationality of one's parents, but rather by subjugation to domination. Borders should be largely open and people should be free to travel, work, and settle

without the threat of state (or corporate) violence. As discussed above, fluid membership does not mean that we should abolish territorial political units. Nor does it mean that membership will be unstable. Place matters for many reasons, including the institutions that exercise power over where we live are the ones best positioned to dominate us.

- 5) Territorial-based governance is unlikely to be sufficient, so deterritorialized and transnational governance must be democratized so that people have real opportunities to participate in and to influence decision-making. Using sovereign states as proxies for people qualified to represent their interests is at best insufficient and, at worst, contributes to the domination of internal minorities.

The project is to found a new republic —a new *public thing*— in which the public corresponds to the actual people(s) and where people are free from domination. What follows can only be a sketch of possibilities and resources.

III. BUILDING A RADICAL RES PUBLICA

What models are available for building a *res publica* that is anti-racist, anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, and anti-nationalist and that takes the migrant as a central figure? If we are to determine a more adequate set of institutions, norms, and laws for today's world, we need to interrogate different levels and units of analysis (e.g., local, regional, transnational, global) and agents (e.g., corporations, NGOs, international and transnational organizations, entrepreneurs, diaspora, etc.). Citizenship will need to be reconceived; instead of belonging exclusively to nation-states, it will need to track the many associations and institutions that exercise power and influence over people's life. This means reviving and constructing models of multilevel citizenship of overlapping and nested polities that were the norm before the rise of the nation-state (Bauböck, 2018; Maas, 2013). Just as membership will need to be fluid, we also need to recognize that institutions should change as capacities for domination change.

We also need to recognize that identifying the relevant political units and their rules for membership is insufficient to secure non-domination. Participation and contestation are necessary, but insufficient conditions for non-domination. Anti-racism and resisting white supremacy must be at the forefront of institutional design, so we will need to be alert to the ways in which allegedly inclusive polities systematically exclude and dominate parts of the population and take action to mitigate this. At times,

this will involve giving groups special rights, including self-determination rights when this serves the ideals of non-domination and anti-racism. In many contexts, there is a need for significant, forward-looking reparations (Táiwò, 2022).

The topic of reparations should not be seen simply as occurring within states and directed to individuals. There are large questions of distribution of resources. An important, anti-capitalist strain of republican thought calls attention to the dangers of economic dependence and corporate domination (Kohn, 2022; Laborde, 2010; Thompson, 2019). These distributions are troubling regardless of their origins, but they often have colonial and imperial histories of political domination and resource extraction. A commitment to non-domination calls for us to redress these inequities and to change institutions so that they are unlikely to reoccur.

Furthermore, institutional design cannot just be a matter of designating types of political organization (e.g., world government, multinational federalism, transnational governance, urban polities, etc.). It also needs to mediate between them. Access to multiple polities can be a form of anti-power, providing sites to contest injustice and exit rights to escape it. Contrary to myths of absolute sovereignty, jurisdictions can and frequently do overlap. Nonetheless, there need to be mechanisms for resolving disputes.

What institutions does a radical republican perspective support? Let's begin with the claim that any set of institutional structures must guarantee people's capacity to exercise and enjoy universal human rights. This is a fundamental precondition for non-domination. Non-domination depends on people's access to basic rights to life, liberty, and security, as well as freedoms of speech, expression, association, and movement, among others. In conventional liberal accounts, the nation-state gains its legitimacy because it guarantees these rights. The default institutional arrangement is the sovereign, territorial state that is responsible for the people within its territory.

Centering the figure of the migrant and the anti-racist imperative casts doubt on this arrangement. Lukas Schmid has argued that even if states have the right to use force to exclude immigrants, they only have the moral right to enforce these rules if the institutions of exclusion robustly respect basic human rights (Schmid, 2022). Schmid adds that dominant conceptions of sovereignty that prioritize control and authority makes *robust* support for human rights unlikely. States' abysmal record in respecting migrants' rights bears this out (Jones, 2016); this requires radically rethinking our conception of sovereignty.

If we center the figure of the migrant—as I claim a radical republican account should—any set of institutions that robustly guarantees non-domination will have largely open borders (Hoye, 2018; Sager, 2020). Non-domination demands both exit-rights and easy access to full membership rights through the principle of *jus domicile* (Bauder, 2012). This follows from the participatory and contestatory imperatives: any political unit that has the power to dominate people (and this will be all political units that exercise power over people in particular places) needs to give people substantial powers to shape and contest policy. Mandating that groups of people such as immigrants have fewer rights is an example of divide-and-rule that is intolerable under a radical republican vision.

Similarly, a commitment to anti-racism and serious engagement with the realities of colonialism and its ongoing legacy demonstrates the inadequacy of the sovereign state model. As James Bohman observes, anti-imperial republican thinkers recognized that the domination of the colonies was a transnational problem and called for extending republican institutions into a transnational federation against European imperialism (Bohman, 2008; c. f. Muthu, 2003). In *Worldmaking after Empire* Adom Getachew revisits the model of postcolonial federation that she sees as central to anticolonial worldmaking (Getachew, 2019, p. 108). Kwame Nkrumah and Eric Williams “viewed the creation of regional federations as a mechanism for achieving nondomination within the international sphere” (Getachew, 2019, p. 108). The formal equality of the international state system does not translate to substantive equality. In response, Nkrumah and Williams put forward the Union of African States and the West Indian Federation as institutional means to address the limits of the postcolonial state:

As small economies tethered to metropolitan and global markets, postcolonial states were unable to achieve self-reliant economies. Governing a larger political space and operating at a regional rather than national scale, a federation would create a larger, more diverse regional economy that would slowly begin to undercut relations of dependence and could pool resources for regional economic development. (Getachew, 2019, p. 107 and 108)

Whatever the long-term prospects of a world state (Wendt, 2003), we need intermediary political arrangements that respond to the real inequalities that rive our world.

So far, I have pointed to general features of a radical republican world (e.g., open borders) and mentioned transnational federalism as a form of anti-colonial worldmaking. Political organization at a regional and even global scale will be necessary, especially for tackling global problems, such as climate change. We should not lose sight, though, of how place

matters. Domination is often most acute when it reaches into the places we live. In many aspects of our lives, local politics is what is most significant and where they are likely to have a substantial opportunity to participate in decision-making. Even without more radical experiments such as participatory budgeting (Fung & Wright, 2011), people have an opportunity to organize and to participate in governance through town hall or school board meetings. Most people in the world today live in cities, so we need forms of urban citizenship (Bauböck & Orgad, 2020). Given the increasingly prominent role that cities play and their transnational connections, it no longer (if it ever did) make sense to conceive them as political units directly subordinate to regional governments or to states. Indeed, cities can serve as important buffers against regional or national domination (though, at the same time, this also means they have the power to dominate the people in their sphere and to resist attempts from larger political units to remedy this).

I will end with a few remarks about virtual spaces. As has become acutely clear in recent years, social media platforms poses both a threat to and an opportunity for democracy. While it is a mistake to ignore the ways in which the digital world relies on material processes (e.g., resource extraction, infrastructure [Crawford, 2021]), we are still a long way from coming to terms for the ways in which power operates independently of particular places. Big data, AI, and the Internet are by their very nature transnational, eluding effective intervention by any single country. We have yet to figure out how to design digital spaces that support, rather than undermine democracy (see, e.g., Forestal, 2017). Nor have we sufficiently explored the ways in which cyberspace is a sphere of domination, both in what it enables (e.g., anti-democratic interference) and who it excludes (e.g., those without resources to access the online world or the savvy to navigate it).

I suggest that radical republican thought provides resources for thinking about the virtual world and its regulation. The virtual world in many ways exemplifies fluid membership, with low barriers to participation and many opportunities for inclusion. But it also poses dangers. Anonymity provides protection for political dissenters, while simultaneously enabling abusive trolls (Véliz, 2019). In designing online architecture, we should highlight the participatory imperative, which support access to online spaces, and balance them with the contestatory and anti-oppressive imperatives, which mitigate against their abuse (e.g., through spreading fake news and hate).

What I have sketched here is the beginning of the larger research project. I have tried to show how a radical republican vision can begin

to bring together diverse traditions of thinking about political organization and citizenship, revealing common threads between anti-colonial and anti-racist thought and approaches to political theory that center migrants. By highlighting the ways in which groups of people have been excluded, we can begin to work toward a world that minimizes non-domination, in large part by bringing about the conditions for inclusion and meaningful participation.

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