

Reviews

Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village,
Daniel H. Deudney (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006),
384 pp., \$35 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

With *Bounding Power*, Daniel Deudney makes a masterly contribution to the renaissance of classical political theory in contemporary thought about world politics; in this regard he follows Michael Doyle and others in demonstrating how a fresh reading of the historical traditions that lie behind contemporary theoretical formulations can generate new perspectives on both theory and practice. In the case of Doyle's work, a key theme has been exploring the intellectual roots of liberalism in international relations and the contours of liberal peace theory—the idea that liberal democracies are not disposed to go to war against each other. For Deudney, meanwhile, the central subject is republicanism, and in particular the idea that the republican tradition of thought about security—with its recognition of the interplay of changing material contexts (geographical and technological) and the conditions that engender mutual restraint—ought to be taken far more seriously in contemporary debates about global security. An important insight generated by Deudney's reconstruction of the republication tradition, with consequences for foreign policy and the practice of world politics, is that in the “global village” changing technology invites and even compels the notion of political organization and “union” at the global level.

Long in gestation, *Bounding Power* is a vigorously argued and sophisticated book, which contains a number of important strands of discussion that combine to make the case for what Deudney labels “republican security theory.” One important strand of the book is its reconstruction of the concepts of anarchy (an absence of authoritative order) and hierarchy (order established through subordination), and their reorientation around Deudney's new formulation, “negarchy,” characterized by the presence of mutual restraints with a primary role in generating ordered relationships. Two of the heroes of Deudney's intellectual reconstruction are Hobbes and Locke. Hobbes develops his argument for sovereign power as a means by which to depart from anarchy, whereas Locke argues for the need to enhance freedom without jeopardizing law and order. In other words, Hobbes moves to one extreme, absolutism, and Locke to the other, liberalism. Deudney argues that republicanism—which recognizes both the interests of governments and the need to preserve public sovereignty—resolves the dilemma of having to opt for either extreme by combining different degrees of anarchy and hierarchy at different levels of political life. Deudney is particularly successful in this effort to trace the arguments of classical political theorists as if they were engaged in a single, historic debate

around the republican security model, a theoretical formulation that might most broadly be expressed through the ideas that (1) security and insecurity are generated, respectively, by the presence or absence of restraints on violence; and (2) that such “restraints” may be provided either by material contexts (such as the presence of a geographical barrier or the absence of advanced weaponry) or have to be actively constructed by political agents.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Deudney’s ultimate interest is in the contemporary evolution of global governance and the role of the republican model in this process. In this regard, *Bounding Power* parallels some of my own work. In a 1999 article in *International Studies Review*, I argued that three models are in competition for predominance in the global system. These models—the Westphalian, the Philadelphian, and the Anti-Utopian—highlight three separate trends: state sovereignty, popular sovereignty, and loss of sovereignty. The article associated each trend with a different key variable. Thus, I argued that the vitality of nation-states helps to mobilize symbolic and cultural identities in the Westphalian direction; technological innovations push the globe in the Philadelphian direction; while demographic and environmental degradations pull the earth in the Anti-Utopian direction.

Up to a point, Deudney’s argument maps onto my own intellectual terrain. However, what he downplays is that Westphalian, Philadelphian, Anti-Utopian, and, by extension, *republican* thoughts are evident in the political and intellectual histories of many *non-Western* countries, as well as in his reconstructed Western tradition. Deudney’s approach may therefore itself be challenged for its effort to originate a fresh template for international security

thinking that negates perspectives beyond one particular tradition. Moreover, one has to wonder whether the most fitting way to combat the current primacy of realist thinking is to argue instead simply for the primacy of republicanism. In his concluding chapter, Deudney correctly points out that in the United States both the Westphalian and Philadelphian models remain strong, with the former anachronistically and atavistically reasserting itself while the rest of the world becomes more Philadelphian. In my view such competition among diverging images of the global village must be captured not by elevating republican security theory above all other models but by elucidating the ways in which such divergence is generated.

Deudney has certainly opened new vistas of classical political theory to international relations scholars: Aristotle, Montesquieu, Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, Mahan, Kant, and others are all reinterpreted within the frame of republican security theory. To Deudney, the debate between realism and liberalism has been too narrowly focused, and only by taking advantage of the more comprehensive vantage provided by republicanism can one see the full picture, historical and contemporary. The contemporary international political landscape is drawn as one of increasing interdependence, with projections of a move toward government at the global level. At least in this book, Deudney leaves his answer to how future revolutions in terms of communications and weapons technologies might facilitate increasing interdependence and world government for interested readers to speculate. But some will be unsatisfied that the process by which we get to world government is not made clear. In particular, how can such an outcome be reached while

avoiding too much violence and too stiffening a hierarchy, the avoidance of which are after all the very aims of republican security theory?

Take nuclear weapons and the possibility of nuclear terrorism: How do we prevent further nuclear proliferation? Once proliferation is accommodated, or not sufficiently strongly punished, it encourages nuclear weapons acquisition. So how do we persuade nuclear weapons states to give up their weapons? Will the United States lead the way? Will it follow in the steps of

Queen Elizabeth I, the sovereign queen who established absolutism, enfeebling medieval actors in England and beyond? Hopefully the logic of republican security theory can play out without too much bloodshed or imposition.

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