

Moral Reasoning 74:
The Theory and Practice
of Republican Government

Lecture 21:
Extensions and Challenges
to Republicanism II

Professor Daniel Carpenter
Harvard University

Major Themes

Generally, consider historical extensions to, philosophical
and historical alternatives to republicanism.

I. Free Labor Critique of Slavery (Abolitionists and early
Republicans)

II. Free Labor Critique of Wage Labor (Jacksonians &
Knights of Labor)

III. Emergence of Progressivism

Republican Tropes in KOL/Populists

Jeffersonian/Jacksonian distrust of large organizations
(govt and economic): distrust of financial system,
Treasury Dept, RRs, corporate industry, etc.

George McNeill (Knights leader): “[T]he power of these
corporations over the government, and over their
employees, [is] equalled only by the power of the
Czar...the question will soon force itself upon the
republican citizens in this form: ‘Shall these great
corporations control the government, or shall they be
controlled by the government?’”

Critique of Wage Labor System

Sandel (p. 169): “Few if any would now challenge the notion of wage labor as such. But in the nineteenth century, many Americans did. For according to the republican conception of freedom, it is by no means clear that a person who works for wages is truly free.”

Critique of Wage Labor System

Sandel (cont.): “Of course, exchanging my labor for a wage may be free in the sense that I voluntarily agree to do so. Absent unfair pressure or coercion, wage labor is free labor in the voluntarist, contractual sense. But even a voluntary agreement to exchange work for a wage does not fulfill the republican conception of free labor. On the republican view, I am free only to the extent that I participate in self-government, which requires in turn that I possess certain habits and dispositions, certain qualities of character. Free labor is thus labor carried out under conditions likely to cultivate the qualities of character that suit citizens to self-government.”

Value of Craft Production

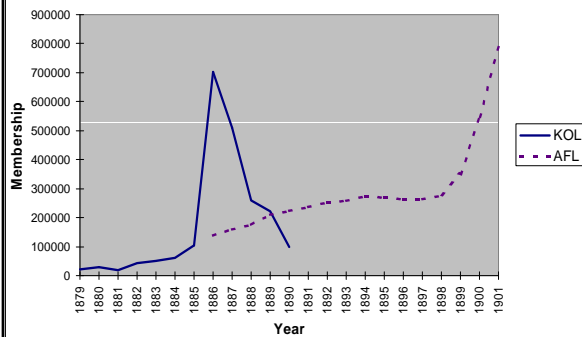
“The artisans, craftsmen, and mechanics who carried out most manufacturing in the early nineteenth century were typically small producers who owned their means of production and were beholden to no boss, at least not as a permanent condition. Their labor was free not only in the sense that they agreed to perform it but also in the sense that it equipped them to think and act as independent citizens, capable of sharing in self-government.”

Notice Jefferson’s basic concerns here: do urban settings, commercial life create “fit tools” for ambitious tyrants?

The Fall of the Knights of Labor

1. Identity and economic diversification – difficult to associate across trades.
2. Ethnic identity and neighborhood networks: associations among various European immigrants difficult.
3. Employers' organized resistance (Kim Voss)
 - study of New Jersey KOL local assemblies
 - KOL 4.28 times more likely to collapse in one-industry towns
 - KOL 2.47 times more likely to collapse where hostile employers' associations appeared
 - New Jersey death rate fed off national death rate
 - Comparison: English employers less hostile

Membership Series for the Knights of Labor and the AFL, 1879-1901



The Fall of the Knights of Labor

4. Racial/ethnic typecasting (Carol Horton)
 - Decline of KOL begins in 1886, w/ Haymarket affair
 - racial/ethnic typecasting (culturalist and critical explanation). [non-native = violent, anarchist]
 - binary opposition category
5. Statist argument (Victoria Hattam): American government (here courts) rarely intervenes in the process, except to favor employers. State favors unions in GB.

Plebiscitary Democracy

Principles:

- I. Inversion of the republican form of petitioning.
- II. Promote Popular Authority and Participation
- III. Bypass mixture of branches, and veto points of mixed regimes
- IV. Subject all features of government to popular choice

Swiss Example

Dates from 13th century at local level.

Legislation 1847; constitutional amendment 1891.

Legislation passed by simple majorities at local level

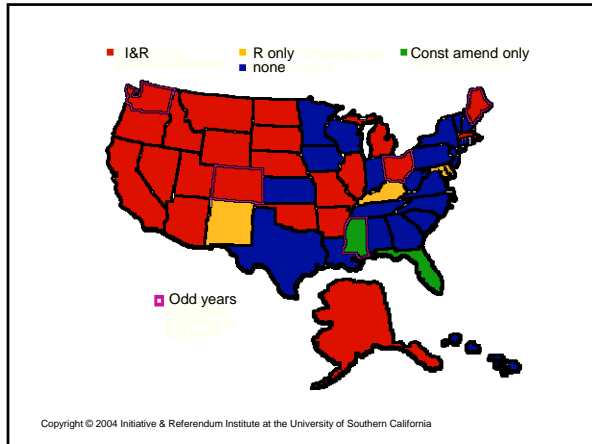
At federal level, “double majority” required (majority of voters, and majority of states); copied from U.S. Congress.

U.S. & Progressive Era

Initiative and referendum favored by socialists and populists (Powderly, Donnelly)

First states: SD, NJ. Then general expansion in 1910s, to envelop most all Western states.

High activity in 1910s (dozens of initiatives per election cycle), but fell off quickly.



State	Date adopted	Type of process available		Type of Initiative process available			Type of initiative process used to propose Constitutional Amendments		Type of initiative process used to propose Statutes (Laws)	
		Initiative	Popular Referendum	Constitutional Amendment	Statute	Direct (DA)	Indirect (DA)	Direct (DS)	Indirect (DS)	
AK	1956	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	
AZ	1911	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
AR	1910	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
CA	1911	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
CO	1912	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
CT	1972	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	
DC	1912	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
DE	1910	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	
FL	1908	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	
GA	1915	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	
IA	1918	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
IL	1908	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	
IN	1914/192	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	
KS	1908	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
KY	1904/72	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
LA	1912	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
MA	1905	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
MD	1911	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	
ME	1914	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
MI	1912	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
MN	1907	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
MO	1902	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
MS	1890/72/88	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	
MT	1900/17	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	
NC	1912	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	
ND	1908	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	
OH										
OK										
OR										
PA										
RI										
SC										
SD										
Totals	27 states	24 states	24 states	18 states	21 states	16 states	2 states	14 states	9 states	

Progressive Era Policy Paradox

SUM: Two dimensions to the Progressive Era. “Progress” in govt efficiency, regulation, welfare rights combined with regression in civil rights policies.

McDonagh: “Yes, the Progressive Era was a period of innovation, launching an American welfare state broadly defined by proactive policies responsive to poverty, the professionalization of government, and the invention of new, direct democracy instruments of governance. It also, however, was a time period marked not only by cultural prejudice toward such marginal groups as African-Americans, immigrants, and women, but one that institutionalized prejudice by means of regressive civil rights policies legislated at the state and national levels.”

Progressive Era Policy Paradox

I. Regressive Civil Rights State.

- A. What happened in terms of voting rights?
- B. Legislative initiatives.
- C. Public forms of racism: lynching.
- D. Anti-immigrant sentiment
- E. woman suffrage delayed

II. Statistical Correlation: From legislative and referenda voting, Eileen McDonagh finds that same voters are voting for welfare rights, govt reform, direct democracy AND regressive civil rights policies.

The Complicated Politics of Direct Democracy

Ellis, p. 41: "But both the left and the right, Democrats and Republicans, are deeply divided over the desirability of the initiative. For every conservative who salivates at the thought of using direct legislation to cut taxes or end affirmative action, there are others who fear it may be used to further the liberal agenda. In Louisiana, for instance, business interests strongly opposed the Republican governor's direct legislation proposal, fearing it would be used to increase the minimum wage or enact environmental regulations that would increase the cost of doing business. And in Texas the Christian Coalition resisted the initiative and referendum because they feared it would be used to legalize gambling. Among liberals, too, fears outnumber hopes. Apart from environmentalists...much of the rest of the left fears that direct legislation will be used to cripple the government's capacity to provide much-needed social services."
