

Contributing to the Commonwealth.

Civic Duties in Modern Germany and the United States

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Summary

This dissertation within the field of political theory inquires into modern formulations of the duties of citizenship. This is done by entertaining a historical and theoretical approach geared towards better understanding and appreciating one fundamental aspect of modern democratic societies and their polities. More specifically, the dissertation analyses and contrasts *intellectual* and *institutional* formulations of civic duties in two of the most influential modern democratic societies in the Western world: Germany and the United States of America, chiefly from the end of the nineteenth century to the most recent past. A particular though not exclusive emphasis of the inquiry lies upon the intellectual and institutional development of three core civic duties in the two national contexts: *taxpaying*, *servicing in the military*, and *schooling*. These three duties are (or were) the most important and most burdensome legal burdens placed upon a great number of citizens in these two national contexts, and, partly for that reason, feature very prominently in the respective collective consciousness and corresponding political debates.

By means of this historical and theoretical inquiry, the dissertation pursues five interrelated objectives: first, it provides a more general systematic and comprehensive analysis of civic duties. Second, it reveals the connection of the core civic duties with modern state development and nation-making. Third, it reconstructs and reconsiders diverse traditions and instances of political thought from the late nineteenth to the early to mid-twentieth century that articulate the ethical foundation and institutional realisation of civic duties. Fourth, it inquires into the seemingly rather recent relative demise of civic duties in public political and academic thought in the last couple of decades. And fifth, building upon the analyses, it reassesses the role of duties in modern practices and theories of citizenship. This results in a normative theoretical case for partially duty-based citizenship under contemporary sociopolitical conditions, which takes issue with influential philosophical and political currents, in particular libertarianism and exclusively rights-based liberalism.