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### Public vs Private

Public systems teach people to depend. They teach us how to move, how to work, what success should look like, and even how to measure our worth. Most people learn to exist as consumers instead of creators. The public American follows the order of systems that claim to protect them, but those same systems quietly influence how they think and live. The private American, on the other hand, finds strength in self-governance and personal accountability. That is the difference between being managed by law and understanding how to live within it.

This project looks at that divide between the consumer public and the private individual who chooses autonomy. It asks how far the state's authority should reach and when a person's right to self-govern begins. Choper examines how the Supreme Court defines individual rights inside a system built for control. Vazquez looks at how the same system limits justice when it chooses not to enforce treaties that protect people. Bernath and Heerman explore how identity is molded through patriotism and nationalism, showing how the public mind can be conditioned by politics. Klein speaks about sovereignty from both a spiritual and legal perspective, while Newcomb shows what happens when people misunderstand freedom and confuse it with rebellion.

Together, these sources reveal how public life trains dependency, and private autonomy requires awareness.

Public systems rely on obedience. They create order but often control the meaning of freedom. Private autonomy challenges that by demanding personal understanding. The private American values knowledge and discipline over blind trust. True sovereignty means living responsibly, not recklessly. It means recognizing that freedom comes with accountability. Each of these sources explores that truth in a different way, showing that freedom only has value when a person knows how to use it wisely.

### Annotated Bibliography

Choper, Jesse H. "Consequences of Supreme Court Decisions Upholding Individual Rights." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 476, no. 1, 1984, pp. 27–40. *JSTOR*

<https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/stable/pdf/1288628>

Choper studies what happens when the Supreme Court expands or limits individual rights. He explains that every court ruling gives new power to some people while quietly taking it away from others. The government often presents rights as if they are gifts from the state, but he expresses to readers that freedom does not come from permission. It already belongs to the

people by nature. Still, every legal victory or loss depends on how much control those in power are willing to release. The law is not neutral, and it never has been. It reflects the beliefs, fears, and priorities of the time period. What society accepts as fair one decade can be completely different or rewritten in the next, showing how public freedom can be. This source supports my topic because it exposes how the public system creates an illusion of liberty. Rights are granted through approval, and that approval often shifts with politics or social pressure. Even when the courts defend freedom, it is still a managed version of it. This source raises the question how much of what people call freedom is actually permission wrapped in legal language. His analysis helps me understand how power flows through public law, defining who gets to exercise independence and who must wait for validation. It also connects directly to my focus on public versus private autonomy by showing that in public systems, freedom always comes with conditions. Choper's argument helps me establish the public side of my project, showing that true liberty requires recognition beyond the limits of government control.

Hanson, Kristin, and Emma O'Dwyer. "Patriotism and Nationalism, Left and Right: A Q-Methodology Study of American National Identity." *Political Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 5, 2019, pp. 967–986. *Wiley Online Library*

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C33&q=Patriotism+and+Nationalism%2C+Left+and+Right%3A+A+Q-Methodology+Study+of+American+National+Identity&btnG=](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C33&q=Patriotism+and+Nationalism%2C+Left+and+Right%3A+A+Q-Methodology+Study+of+American+National+Identity&btnG=)

Hanson and O'Dwyer look at how people in the United States define being a "true American." They use Q methodology, which basically means they asked a diverse group of citizens to rank a set of statements and then analyzed the patterns. What they found is simple but important. People

do not split cleanly into patriotism versus nationalism. Instead, the divide shows up along left and right lines. One side leans toward questioning power and pushing for equality. The other side leans toward pride in the nation, its symbols, and its founding values. Both groups value America, but they express that attachment in different ways. This matters for my topic because it shows how public identity influences private thinking. If national identity is tied to politics first, then people end up borrowing their idea of self from public categories, not from their own convictions. That kind of pressure can make it hard to practice real autonomy. It also explains why debates about flags, anthems, and what counts as good citizenship get so heated. Those symbols are doing more than showing pride. They are acting like tests of belonging. The study is peer reviewed and published in a respected journal. The sample is not huge and it is not random, and the set of statements limits what participants can say, but the method is efficient for mapping shared viewpoints. I will use this source to show that public systems often push identity into team loyalty, while private autonomy asks a different question. Who are you when you step outside the teams and choose values on purpose, not by pressure. This article helps me bridge that gap.

Klein, Rebekka A. "Sovereignty." *St. Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, 2023,  
[https://arizonaua.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UA\\_INST/b8umf9/cdi\\_doaj\\_primary\\_oai\\_doaj\\_org\\_article\\_1b97a6f52c864ee38380a816f8b462ab](https://arizonaua.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UA_INST/b8umf9/cdi_doaj_primary_oai_doaj_org_article_1b97a6f52c864ee38380a816f8b462ab)

Klein writes about sovereignty as a concept that blends spiritual truth and political meaning. She explains that before it was used to describe kings and nations, sovereignty first referred to divine authority, the sacred power that comes from wisdom and moral order. Her work traces how this

idea shifted over time, showing that when people separated spiritual purpose from political control, sovereignty became more about dominance than guidance. Klein teaches that power without moral grounding loses its legitimacy. It may look strong on the surface, but it turns into control instead of leadership. True sovereignty, she argues, can only exist when it is tied to understanding, restraint, and the awareness that every decision affects others. This source connects to my argument because it defines autonomy in its most complete sense. Klein's writing helps explain that the private American operates under a higher kind of authority, one that is internal, ethical, and self-governed. It illustrates our inalienable right to not serve two masters, and our constitutional right of freedom of religion. It is not about ruling others, but about mastering one's own conduct. Real independence, as she describes it, is not the absence of structure but the creation of just and moral order from within. Her balance between theology and law provides a way to discuss freedom that does not reject accountability. Klein's view of sovereignty helps me show that private autonomy can exist peacefully within society when it is rooted in responsibility, and that morality is what keeps freedom from turning into self-destruction.

**Newcomb, Kelly.** "The Sovereign Citizen Movement and Potential Impacts on Lending Institutions." *Poyner Spruill LLP*, 9 June 2025,  
<https://www.poynerspruill.com/thought-leadership/the-sovereign-citizen-movement-and-potential-impacts-on-lending-institutions/>

Newcomb studies how the Sovereign Citizen Movement (which is technically not a legal term) affects legal and financial systems. She explains that while the movement started with people

seeking independence from government control, it often leads to confusion and unintended harm. Many of the individuals involved truly believe they are reclaiming their rights, but Newcomb shows how easily that desire for freedom can become distorted. When people misunderstand the law or rely on incomplete information, they end up misusing legal terms and filing documents that have no standing in court. This not only causes financial damage but can also bring serious legal consequences. Her analysis reminds readers that independence without knowledge or discipline can destroy the very freedoms people are trying to protect. This article gives balance to my project because it adds a real world example of what happens when the search for autonomy goes too far. It shows the danger of chasing freedom without understanding it. That point, specifically, is why I wanted to choose public versus private as a topic because it isn't taught in schools nor is it common knowledge. You have to dig and study relentlessly to comprehend the concepts of autonomy and how to express your inalienable rights. Public America limits freedom by controlling it through laws and regulations, but Private America can destroy it by acting without restraint. Newcomb's work helps me explain that autonomy without responsibility becomes chaos. The true goal is not to reject order but to live within it wisely and consciously. Freedom is not about ignoring the system, but about knowing the rules so well that you can move through them with purpose. Her writing brings the conversation back to truth, that personal sovereignty is not rebellion, but maturity guided by understanding and integrity.

Vazquez, Carlos M. "Treaty-Based Rights and Remedies of Individuals." *Columbia Law Review*, vol. 92, no. 5, 1992, pp. 1082–1140. JSTOR,  
[https://arizonaua.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UA\\_INST/b8umf9/cdi\\_webofscience\\_primary\\_A1992JF34400002](https://arizonaua.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UA_INST/b8umf9/cdi_webofscience_primary_A1992JF34400002)

Vazquez explains how people can use treaties in U.S. courts to defend their rights. He shows that the outcome often depends on who holds power and what laws Congress allows to be enforced. The paper discusses concepts like self execution and what's called authorization, but at its core, it reveals how fragile public protection really is. Even when laws exist to help people, they mean nothing if the government chooses not to act on them. Vazquez gives examples of how courts interpret treaties differently, and how those interpretations can completely change a person's access to justice. Through this, he exposes how uneven the balance of power is between citizens and the state (which you could even say those terms citizens and state are synonyms). What should be a guarantee of fairness often becomes a question of political will.

This connects to my topic because it shows how power ultimately decides what freedom means in the public world. A person can have every law written in their favor and still stand unprotected if the system refuses to recognize it. That reality explains why many people begin looking for private ways to defend their autonomy. They seek out systems of equity and trust that allow them to operate responsibly without waiting for approval. Vazquez's work helps define the limits of the public world and highlights why private structure matters for those who want to live freely and lawfully. It supports my argument that real sovereignty is not about rejecting law but understanding where authority begins and ends. It also connects directly to my main point in this project, which is the difference between being informed and uninformed about our right to privacy and self-governance