

Moral Reasoning 74:  
The Theory and Practice  
of Republican Government

Lecture 25:  
Republican Visions –  
Civic Freedom and Local Community

Professor Daniel Carpenter  
Harvard University

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Major Themes

- I. Individuation of Rights
- II. Perils of Republicanism – Exclusion and Coercion
- III. Citizenship or Coercion? The Case of Mandatory Gun Ownership
- IV. Globalization and Global Citizenship – Republican Critique
- V. Federalism for “small-r” Republicans

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Qs

- (1) Mandatory gun laws
- (2) Anti Wal-Mart
- (3) School uniforms?
- (4) LNG tankers?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## IV. Globalization and Global Ethics

“If our encompassing loyalties should always take precedence over more local ones, then the distinction between friends and strangers should ideally be overcome. Our special concern for the welfare of friends would be a kind of prejudice, a measure of our distance from universal human concern. Montesquieu does not shrink from this conclusion. “A truly virtuous man would come to the aid of the most distant stranger as quickly as to his own friend,” he writes, “If men were perfectly virtuous, they wouldn’t have friends.”

Not just Montesquieu. Also Marx, Rousseau, others.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Is This Logic Wrong?

1. To what extent are our “natural” affinities for local communities informative?
2. KEY POINT: Sandel cautions not neglect of global affairs, but argues against an equality of global citizenship and “local” citizenship.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## IV. Globalization and Global Ethics

“To affirm as morally relevant the particular communities that locate us in the world, is not to claim that we owe nothing to persons as persons, as fellow human beings. At their best, local solidarities gesture beyond themselves toward broader horizons of moral concern, including the horizon of our common humanity. The cosmopolitan ethic is wrong, not for asserting that we have certain obligations to humanity as a whole but rather for insisting that the more universal communities we inhabit must always take precedence over more particular ones.” [Sandel, 343]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## IV. Globalization and Global Ethics

“...the cosmopolitan vision is wrong to suggest that we can restore self-government simply by pushing sovereignty and citizenship upward. The hope for self-government lies not in relocating sovereignty but in dispersing it. The most promising alternative to the sovereign state is not a one-world community based on the solidarity of humankind, but a multiplicity of communities and political bodies – some more, some less extensive than nations – among which sovereignty is diffused. The nation-state need not fade away, only cede its claim as the sole repository of sovereign power and primary object of political allegiance.” [345]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## V. Federalism for “r”epublicans?

“The American welfare state is politically vulnerable because it does not rest on a sense of national community adequate to its purpose. The nationalizing project that unfolded from the Progressive Era to the New Deal to the Great Society succeeded only in part. It managed to create a strong national government but failed to cultivate a shared national identity. As the welfare state developed, it drew less on an ethic of social solidarity and mutual obligation and more on an ethic of fair procedures and individual rights. But the liberalism of the procedural republic proved an inadequate substitute for the strong sense of citizenship the welfare state requires.” [346]

Sandel prefers smaller republics; a gesture to Montesquieu

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## V. Federalism for “r”epublicans?

Linking republicanism to DeTocqueville; republicanism as self-governance.

“Tocqueville stressed the republican benefits of political bodies intermediate between the individual and the state, such as townships. ‘The native of New England is attached to his township because it is independent and free,’ he wrote. ‘He takes a small part in every occurrence in the place; he practices the art of government in the small sphere within his reach; he accustoms himself to those forms without which liberty can only advance by revolutions; he imbibes their spirit; he acquires a taste for order, comprehends the balance of powers, and collect clear practical notions on the nature of duties and the extent of his rights.’ Practicing self-government in small spheres, Tocqueville observed, impels citizens to larger spheres of political activity as well.” [Sandel, 347]

Keep in mind: this is one model of contemporary republicanism, a more communitarian version.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Review and Summary

- A. The Roman Republic and the Machiavellian Model
- B. Tudor/Stuart England and the Lessons of Harrington, Locke and Montesquieu
- C. The American Revolution and Popular Republicanism
- D. The Federalists and Institutional Republicanism
- E. Republicanism's Debates, Legacies and Challenges in American Political History

---

---

---

---

---

---

---