

Moral Reasoning 74:
The Theory and Practice
of Republican Government

Lecture 25:
Republican Visions –
Civic Freedom and Local Community

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Major Themes [Tuesday and today]

- I. Republican Alternatives to the Plebiscite
- II. Individuation of Rights
- III. Perils of Republicanism – Exclusion and Coercion
- IV. [move gun discussion to end]
- V. Globalization and Global Citizenship – Republican Critique
- VI. Federalism for “small-r” Republicans

III. Problems of
Exclusion and Coercion

- A. Exclusion: republican arguments have often been used to exclude people from the civic arena. Women, minorities, the poor and unpropertied.
- B. Coercion – my “community” can be your “nightmare.” Such worries often invoke “slippery slope.” Possible to strike balance? If so, at what level of government?

V. 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.

V. 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]

V. 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]

VI. 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

VI. 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.

IV. Mandatory Gun Laws

Kennesaw, GA, statute of March 1982:

Sec. 34-1 Heads of households to maintain firearms.

- (a) In order to provide for the emergency management of the City, and further in order to provide for and protect the safety, security and general welfare of the city and its inhabitants, every head of household residing in the City limits is required to maintain a firearm, together with ammunition therefore.
- (b) Exempt from the effect of this section are those heads of households who suffer a physical or mental disability, which would prohibit them from using such a firearm. Further exempt from the effect of this section are those heads of households who are paupers or who conscientiously oppose maintaining firearms as a result of beliefs or religious doctrine, or persons convicted of a felony.

Source: <http://www.kennesaw.ga.us/CodeOfOrdinances.aspx>

Town requires residents to get a gun Residents who do not comply will be fined \$10

GEUDA SPRINGS, Kansas (AP) -- This tiny south-central Kansas community has passed an ordinance requiring most households to have guns and ammunition.

Noncomplying residents would be fined \$10 under the ordinance, passed 3-2 earlier this month by City Council members who thought it would help protect the town of 210 people. Those who suffer from physical or mental disabilities, paupers and people who conscientiously oppose firearms would be exempt.

"This ordinance fulfills the duty to protect by allowing each individual householder to provide for his or her protection," said Councilman John Brewer.

"This is simply using the U.S. Constitution -- Second Amendment in particular -- to the city of Geuda Springs' advantage."

Geuda Springs has no local police force; the Sumner County Sheriff's department is responsible for policing the area. Sheriff Gerald Gilkey said the ordinance makes him concerned for the safety of his officers.

"This throws up red flags," he said.

...

Many Geuda Springs residents refused to talk about it, and others were tightlipped, saying outsiders should stay out of it.

"It's nobody's business but our own," said Phillip Russell, who owns a motorcycle shop in the town. "Everybody out of town is making this their business."

Qs for Discussion

- (1) Mandatory gun laws
- (2) Restrictive Zoning vis-à-vis Wal-Mart
- (3) School uniforms
- (4) LNG tankers – Fall River, or a state.

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
