

Keywords: Discussion questions, activity

Gov 97: Section 2, 02-04-14

Things to bring

- Article print out
- Activity print out

Logistical Things

- If you haven't signed up for a CA meeting already, please do by tonight.
- For Tuesday section: anyone want to present an article next week?

Agenda

- Vanessa (section 1) and Mia/Tyler (section 2) will present their articles
- Discussion about the readings
- Quick break
- "Build your own democracy" activity

Questions

- What are the merits of representative government? What would Constant say? What would the Federalists say?
- What is the role of representatives in a representative government? Do you think we should pick our representatives by lottery or by election/appointment?
- Should representatives be the one to judge the nature of the "good life" or should we leave that to their constituents? What are the pros and cons of the former? What would advocates of direct democracy say?
- Aristotle's foundational assumption that society is for "noble actions" rather than simply "living together." Which of these do you think should be the basis of society? What would Constant, Tocqueville, or the American Founders say?
- What does Aristotle mean by "common interest" (p 69). How do you evaluate what the "common interest" really is?
- What are factions? What does Madison think about them? Advantages/disadvantages of having them? Do you agree with Madison? Are factions bad for democracy? Does the process of voting/majority rules mitigate the allegedly deleterious effects of factions? Do factions make figuring out the "common interest" easier or harder? Why?
- What are the merits of a federalist system, according to Tocqueville and the Founders?
- What is the role of a size of a society in developing and maintaining democracy? What do different authors have to say about this? Tocqueville? Constant? Federalists?
- Is Tocqueville's piece really a love letter to America? What is he uneasy about? What is the historical context in which he's writing and trying to speak to?

- Do you agree with Pericles that freedom makes a country stronger? What are the mechanisms by which this happens? Would Tocqueville agree?

Back Pocket Questions

- Do Tocqueville and Constant agree about the role of commerce in democracy?
- What does Aristotle say about the propensity for social movements/revolutions among democracies? Are democracies more likely to have revolutions or be born out of them?
- What is the role of civil society in democracy?
- What makes someone a political animal according to Aristotle? – the power of speech.
- Who are Aristotle’s “natural leaders”? – people who are the natural superior of his subjects, but the same kin or kind with them.
- Does Aristotle’s conception of citizen’s match our idea of citizenship today? Should it? Do you agree that the definition of the state is fundamentally dependent on the definition of “citizens”?
- On page 67, Aristotle says each individual, left to himself, forms an imperfect judgment. How would Aristotle react to the idea of representative government?
- How does the definition of liberty differ between the ancients and the moderns? [individual freedoms much more limited among the ancients. Participation equated with freedom among the ancients. “Sovereign in public affairs, slave in private relations”; Moderns are kings in their private life, limited sovereignty in public sphere.]
- Where does the government of Athens fall in Constant’s distinction between Ancient and Modern conception of liberty? What would Pericles say?
- What is the role of slavery in these different conceptions of democracy? Do any of them rely on slavery to support democracy?
- What is the role of commerce in Constant’s theory? Does commerce strengthen or weaken democracy?
- Why didn’t the ancients have representative government?
- Why is representative government they “only one in the shelter of which we could find some freedom and peace today”? (Constant)
- How does Pericles’ conception of democracy differ from the Federalists? Why do you think they differ? Which appeals to you more?
- According to Pericles, what responsibility do citizens have to the state? State to the citizens? How do these responsibilities compare to the relationship between state and citizenship in various countries today?
- What is the distinction between a federal and a national system? What does Madison suggest is more favorable for American democracy? Does he approve of the setup offered by the Constitution?

- Re: Federalist 10. Is the legislative process independent and impartial, according to Madison? What are the implications of this? Should we have an impartial legislature? What would that look like?