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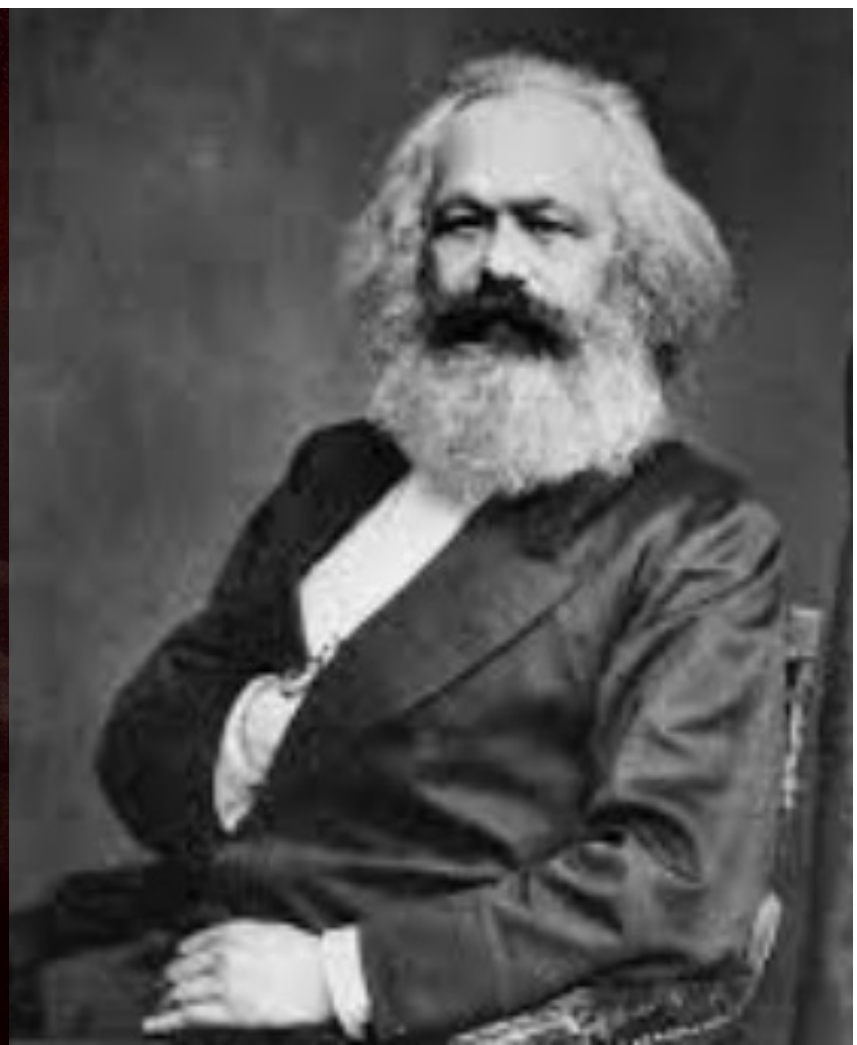
Getting Real About Parties In 20th Century Social Science

Lecture II

Political Parties for and Against Democracy

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The Philosophical Critics: Rousseau, Madison and Marx



Three Terms in Play When Thinking About The Relations Between Democracy and Political Parties

I. Democracy

- A. Direct Participatory
- B. Representative

II. Parties in General

- A. Inherently Elite or Oligarchic?
- B. Various and Potentially Participatory

III. The Particular Kind of Parties Present in Theory or Practice

- A. Common Good vs. Factional ("By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." [Madison, *Federalist Papers*, No. 10])
- B. Positive vs. Negative Partisanship
- C. Sufficiently Cooperative vs. Hyper-Competitive Partisanship
- D. Policy Oriented vs. Personality Driven or Identarian Party Competition

IV. Kinds and Degrees of Connection Between Party Elite and People

- A. Are Party Elites Responsive when Public Opinion is Reasonable and Inclusive
- B. Do Party Elites Resist (The real protection against would-be authoritarians has not been America's firm commitment to democracy but, rather, the gatekeepers--our political parties." (Steven Livitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 2018))

Rousseau on the Relation Between Individual and Social Freedom and Autonomy: Citizens Must Author and Own the Will That Governs Them

“Nature commands every animal, and the beast obeys. Man feels the same impetus, but he realizes that he is free to acquiesce or resist; and it is above all in the consciousness of this freedom that the spirituality of his soul is shown. For physics explains in some way the mechanisms of the senses and the formation of ideas; but in the power of willing, or rather of choosing, and in the sentiment of this power are found the only purely spiritual acts about which the laws of mechanics explain nothing.” (Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Men*, Masters, ed., p.114)

“Find a form of association that defends and protects the persons and goods of each associate with all the common force, and by means of which each one, uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before.’ This is the fundamental problem which is solved by the social contract...

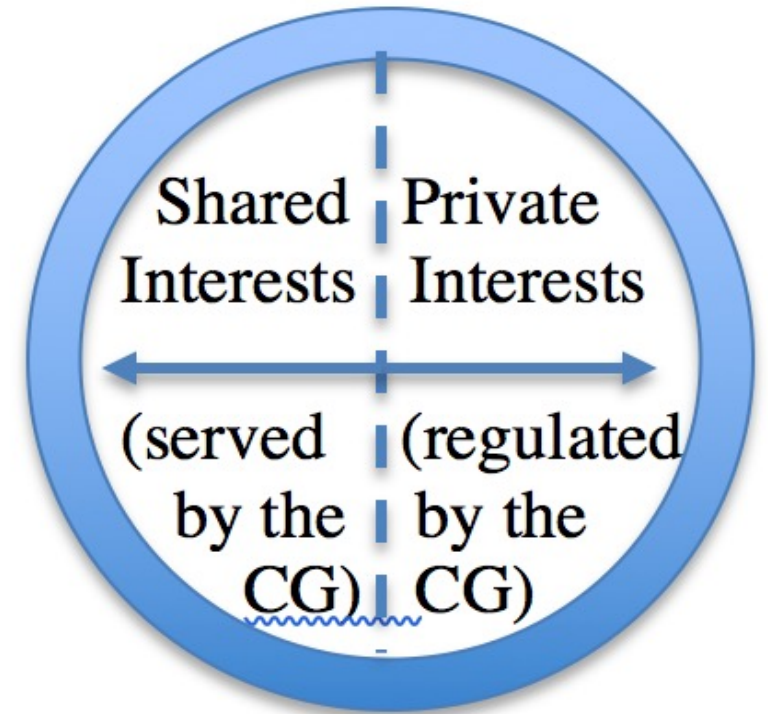
If, then, everything that is not of the essence of the social compact is set aside, one will find that it can be reduced to the following terms. *Each of us puts his person and all of his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.*” (Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Masters, ed., I:VI, p.53)

Some Related Ideas from Rousseau's Account of Democracy: Persons Acquire Dual Identities as Both Citizens and Subjects

Content of Roles/ Identities and their Interrelations	Duplication of Roles/ Identities	Sovereign/People (collective) and Citizens (individuals)	State (collective) and Subjects (individuals)
Content of Role/Identity	State/Subjects	Active in Making the Law	Passive in Obeying the Law
Sovereign Citizen		Regulate the Private Interests of Subjects to Promote the Common Good from the General Perspective of a Citizen	Evaluate Obedience to the Law from the Perspective of a Citizen who is also a Private Person with a Particular Identity and interests

Idea of the Double-Generality of the General Will:

1. Must Come from All; and
2. Must Apply to All



The Will of All vs. The General Will

Why the Problem of Factionalism Threatens Generality

It follows from what has gone before that the general will is always right and tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people are always equally correct. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad.

There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills: but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the general will remains as the sum of the differences.

If, when the people, being furnished with adequate information, held its deliberations, the citizens had no communication one with another, the grand total of the small differences would always give the general will, and the decision would always be good. But when factions arise, and partial associations are formed at the expense of the great association, the will of each of these associations becomes general in relation to its members, while it remains particular in relation to the State: it may then be said that there are no longer as many votes as there are men, but only as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and give a less general result. Lastly, when one of these associations is so great as to prevail over all the rest, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a single difference; in this case there is no longer a general will, and the opinion which prevails is purely particular.

It is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to express itself, that there should be no partial society within the State, and that each citizen should think only his own thoughts... But if there are partial societies, it is best to have as many as possible and to prevent them from being unequal... (II.III, p.61)

Summary of Rousseau's Rejection of Parties

- I. Political Legitimacy Requires that All Affected by the Exercise of Political Power be able to Regard that Will that Directs that Power as a Will that they Have Co-authored to a Sufficient Degree that it Remains in a Meaningful Sense Their Will
- II. This in Turn Requires that All Be Equally Included in the Process of Forming a Shared Will and that the Law Applies Equally to All; *and*
- III. That a Common Good Orientation to Politics Prevails (that citizens aim to promote in politics interests that are common to all) and that Citizens Reason About the Common Good Individually and Independently
- IV. When these Two Conditions are Met, All Have Good Reason to Accept the Collective Will as their Own even when they Disagree with its Content
- V. When Factions or Parties Develop, They Pursue their Good in Place of the Common Good
- VI. This Danger is Particularly Acute in a Two-Party System Splits Politics into Two Main Competing Factions

Madison's View of Factions and Parties from Federalists 10

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community...

As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the former will be objects to which the latter will attach themselves. The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties.

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property...The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government.

Summary of Madison's Realism About Parties and Their Institutional Moderation

- I. Minimum Sociological and Psychological Realism are Necessary when Designing a Constitution
- II. Political and Individual Freedom are Bound to Produce Reasonable Disagreement about the Character of the Common Good and Individuals and Groups Politically Motivated by Other Ends so the Idea that Public Opinion and Will can be Consensual Must be Discarded
 - A. Reason is Fallible
 - B. Reason and Opinion are Influenced by Self-Love and Passion
 - C. In Modern Commercial Society, Objective Conflicts in Material Interests Rooted in Class Differences Cannot be Eliminated
 - D. In Modern Free and Diverse Societies Conflicts in Religion and Political Ideology also Cannot be Eliminated
- III. Parties will Form on the Basis of these Axes of Disagreement and Conflict and will tend to “fall into mutual animosity” and Aim to “vex and oppress each other”

Madison's Solution: Institutional Moderation of Partisan Competition

- I. While Factions Cannot be Eliminated, still Need to Avoid Forms of Government in which “the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties; and...measures are too often decided...by the superior force of an interested and over-bearing majority.”
- II. Good Governmental Institutions Cannot Eliminate but it Can Modify Partisan Competition by Regulating, Interfering with and Structuring it so that it Ultimately Serves the Common Good
- III. Institutions Can Encourage an Internally Heterogenous Society and the Fragmentation of Overall Majorities into Multiple Cross-cutting Political Differences (e.g. Federalism and a Bicameral Legislature with Competing Principles of Representation and a Presidential System)
- IV. Representative Democracy—or Republicanism--and the Principle of Enlightened Leadership (Paine's Dictum: Representation Perfects Democracy)

Madison's Account of Democratic Leadership

“The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people.” (Madison, Federalists #10)

“the principle of representation was neither unknown to the ancients nor wholly overlooked in their political constitutions. The true distinction between these and the American governments, lies IN THE TOTAL EXCLUSION OF THE PEOPLE, IN THEIR COLLECTIVE CAPACITY, from any share [in government].” (Madison, Federalists #63)

The Sociological Critics: Max Weber, Robert Michels, Joseph Schumpeter and Maurice Duverger



Max Weber's Realist Account of the Distinctiveness of Mass Democracy In the Context of Modern Society

- I. Enormous Populations Make Simultaneous Participation other than Infrequent Voting for Representatives Impossible
- II. Vastness of Territory Requires Administrative State
- III. Resultant Complexity of Administrative Bureaucracies
- IV. Mass Communication Technologies Enable Indirect, Vicarious and Passive Forms of Political Experience
- V. Increasing Culturally Complex and Differentiated Society Demands Differentiation and Expertise and Creates Space for Value Conflict

Weber's and Michel's Accounts of the Bureaucratization of Political Parties: The Iron Law of Oligarchy

- I. The Scale and Complexity of Modern Society Make Ours an Age of Organization and Bureaucracy
- II. Defining Characteristics of Bureaucracy
 - A. Selection by Competence and Role Defined Accordingly
 - B. Rationally Established Hierarchy
 - C. Regular Contractual System of Appointments and Promotion
 - D. Regular Technical Training
 - E. Fixed Salaries
- III. Bureaucracies Essential Advantage: Most Efficient Means of Exercising Authority: Can Only Fight Bureaucracy with Bureaucracy So no Matter What Ends Are Pursued, Bureaucracy is the Necessary Means (2 e.g.'s German Social Democrats and Greens)
- IV. Relative Powerless of Individual Within Bureaucratic Machines
- V. Social Consequences of "Bureaucratic Domination:" levelling, plutocracy, spirit of formalistic impersonality

Weber's and Schumpeter's Skepticism About the Possibility of Rational Mass Public Opinion Formation

- I. Under Conditions of Mass Society, Technology and Bureaucracy, the Ideas of Mass Volition and Public Opinion are a Myth with no Corresponding Reality
- II. Bureaucratically Organized Political Parties Bring About the “Intellectual Proletarianization of the Masses”
- III. Technical Impossibility of Public Opinion Formation
- IV. The Exclusion of the Masses from Technically Necessary Knowledge for Rational Opinion and the Resulting Contraction of Modern Politics to Sports
- V. Main Function of Modern Democracy is Plebiscitary or Acclamatory
- VI. Resultant Rational Apathy of the Masses:
“The typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interest. He becomes primitive again.” (Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*)

Weber's Alternative: Bureaucratic Parties and Government with Plebiscitary Charismatic Leadership Democracy

- I. The Only Meaningful Choice the People Have is that of their Leader
- II. Leaders Construct the People's Will, Preferences and Interests, not Vice Versa
- III. The Primary Qualification of Modern Democratic Leadership is Charismatic
- IV. The Importance of Parties in Selecting Charismatically Qualified Leaders—those with a Vocation for Politics
- V. Different Organizations of Government and Parties Produce Different Methods of Leadership Selection

Some Concluding Thoughts on the Political and Social Theory of Democracy and Parties

- I. The Odd Convergence of Democratic Idealism and Sociological Realism in Skepticism About Parties as Instruments of Democracy
- II. Is Democracy Primarily Participatory or Representative? Can the People Own a Will they do not Directly Form? Laws they do not Directly Author?
- III. Need to Focus on Mechanisms of Elite Accountability
- IV. Duverger's Rejection of Weber's and Michel's Sociological Determinism and the Need to Focus on Factors besides the Internal (bureaucratic) Structure of Parties
- V. What Does it Mean for a Party to Be For Modern, Representative Democracy?