



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Courses submitted to the GSC between 2/1 and 4/30 if approved, will be effective the following Spring.

Courses submitted between 5/1 and 1/31 if approved, will be effective the following Fall.

(SUBMISSION VIA ADOBE.PDF FILES IS PREFERRED)

DATE 11/2/09

1. ACADEMIC UNIT: School of Community Resources and Development

2. COURSE PROPOSED: NLM 160 Voluntary Action & Community Service 3
(prefix) (number) (title) (semester hours)

3. CONTACT PERSON: Name: Kathleen Andereck Phone: 6-1056
Mail Code: 4020 E-Mail: kandereck@asu.edu

4. ELIGIBILITY: New courses must be approved by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Subcommittee and must have a regular course number. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at 965-0739.

5. AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE. A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. (Please submit one designation per proposal)

Core Areas

Awareness Areas

- Literacy and Critical Inquiry-L
Mathematical Studies-MA
Humanities, Fine Arts and Design-HU
Social and Behavioral Sciences-SB
Natural Sciences-SQ SG

- Global Awareness-G
Historical Awareness-H
Cultural Diversity in the United States-C

6. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.
(1) Course Description
(2) Course Syllabus
(3) Criteria Checklist for the area
(4) Table of Contents from the textbook used, if available

7. In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

CROSS-LISTED COURSES: [X] No [ ] Yes; Please identify courses:

Is this amultisection course?: [X] No [ ] Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus?

Kathleen Andereck
Chair/Director (Print or Type)

[Handwritten Signature]
Chair/Director (Signature)

Date: 11/2/09

[Handwritten mark]

Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for

**SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES [SB]**

**Rationale and Objectives**

The importance of the social and behavioral sciences is evident in both the increasing number of scientific inquiries into human behavior and the amount of attention paid to those inquiries. In both private and public sectors people rely on social scientific findings to assess the social consequences of large-scale economic, technological, scientific, and cultural changes.

Social scientists' observations about human behavior and their unique perspectives on human events make an important contribution to civic dialogue. Today, those insights are particularly crucial due to the growing economic and political interdependence among nations.

Courses proposed for General Studies designation in the Social and Behavioral Sciences area must demonstrate emphases on: (1) social scientific theories and principles, (2) the methods used to acquire knowledge about cultural or social events and processes, and (3) the impact of social scientific understanding on the world.

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

<b>ASU--[SB] CRITERIA</b>			
<b>A SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE [SB] course should meet all of the following criteria. If not, a rationale for exclusion should be provided.</b>			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Course is designed to advance basic understanding and knowledge about human interaction.	See course syllabus, exams, reading examples, book table of contents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Course content emphasizes the study of social behavior such as that found in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANTHROPOLOGY</li> <li>• ECONOMICS</li> <li>• CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY</li> <li>• HISTORY</li> </ul> <div style="margin-left: 100px;">Political Science, Sociology</div>	See course syllabus, exams, reading examples, book table of contents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Course emphasizes: a. the distinct knowledge base of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., sociological anthropological). <div style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></div> b. the distinct methods of inquiry of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., ethnography, historical analysis).	See course syllabus, book contents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Course illustrates use of social and behavioral science perspectives and data.	See course syllabus, book contents
		<b>THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE [SB] AREA EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT GIVE SOME CONSIDERATION TO SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE CONCERNS:</b>	
		• Courses with primarily fine arts, humanities, literary, or philosophical content.	
		• Courses with primarily natural or physical science content.	
		• Courses with predominantly applied orientation for professional skills or training purposes.	
		• Courses emphasizing primarily oral, quantitative, or written skills.	

The School of Community Resources and Development is requesting Social Behavioral designation for NLM 160.

Course Prefix	Number	Title	Designation
NLM	160	Voluntary Action & Community Service	SB

(Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria.)

Criteria (from Checksheet)	How course meets spirit	Detailed evidence and examples
SB – Criteria 1: Advance basic understanding and knowledge about human interaction	As the course description and objectives indicate, NLM 160 provides students with a critical and analytical introduction to voluntary action in the United States society, within the context of community development and leadership in democratic societies. It includes extensive reading and in-depth discussion of the roles of social structures and human agency in sustaining society through the creation of social capital as well as engendering social change.	See course description on page 1 of the attached syllabus. Students read and analyze numerous case studies on the endeavors of voluntary associations; and they write course papers and essay exams related to these topics.
SB – Criteria 2: Emphasize the study of social behavior such as that found in psychology, political science, and sociology	Nonprofit Studies and the School of Community Resources & Development incorporate multiple social science disciplines, including sociology, public policy, public affairs, and political science. The faculty members who have provided leadership for the course’s development are from the fields of public policy and sociology.	Typical social and behavioral science constructs used in the course include those such as Max Weber’s analysis of the limits of modernity; critical theory’s analysis of the transformative potential of art; Robert Putnam’s analysis of the resurgence of social capital generated in the voluntary sector; and (“forerunner of social science”) Toqueville’s inquiry into American exceptionalism and voluntary association.

<p>SB – Criteria 3a: Emphasize distinct knowledge based on social and behavioral sciences</p>	<p>Characteristic course topics include: analyzing voluntary associations and community service from individual, institutional and macrostructural perspectives; reviewing related historical developments in U.S. democracy; examining the impact of economic structure, technology, and the meaning of citizenship within contemporary society; and critiquing the role of U.S. culture in globalization.</p>	<p>Students engage issues such as multiple levels of social analysis; structural and human agency elements of social reproduction and change; the transformative potential of art; and impact of factors such as economic recession and bureaucracy on the potential for agencies and institutions to respond to citizens' multifaceted needs. See contents of Adams and Goldbard 2002</p>
<p>3b: Emphasize the distinct methods or inquiry of social and behavioral sciences</p>	<p>The course's methods of inquiry include historical, statistical, and interpretive. Case studies are prominent in nonprofit studies, as is an emphasis on the need for multiple methods.</p>	<p>For example, when examining the history and contemporary challenges of leadership, students deal with research based on interviews with well-known leaders, statistical profiles of community leaders; and policy analyses of philanthropic patterns. See contents of Denhardt and Denhardt 2006; Putman, Feldstein and Cohen 2003.</p>
<p>SB – Criteria 4: Illustrate use of social and behavioral science perspective and data</p>	<p>Theoretical underpinnings of the course include critical of analysis of "American exceptionalism"; "social capital"; crisis of legitimacy and the diminish of trust; and structural concepts of power, ideology and social change.</p>	<p>Students are required to analyze their experiences, case studies, and future possibilities from diverse social scientific perspectives. See project and writing assignments on page 2 of course syllabus.</p>

**See the course catalog description on the syllabus.**



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

## **Voluntary Action & Community Service**

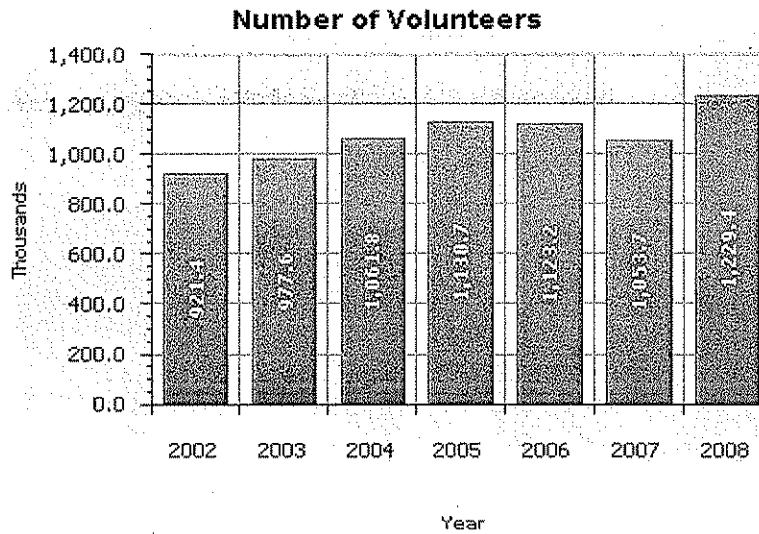
### **NLM 160**

**Introduction** – This course employs a critical social science approach to provide an in-depth introduction to voluntary action and community service. It explores the preeminent role of voluntary associations in democratic society, analyzes individual and structural factors that generate collective action, profiles patterns of volunteering and community service, and examines the potential for effective, dynamic leadership to enhance individual and collective contributions to society.

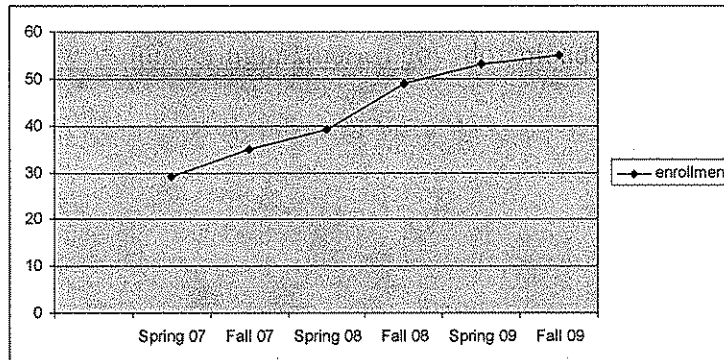
The course also encourages students to engage major social science constructs such as the efficacy of theories of voluntary association related to the design and implementation of nonprofit organizations; the relationship of the nonprofit sector to business and government; the question of how nonprofit organizations can maximize social capital in a society characterized by diminished civic trust and involvement; the controversial role of advanced technology in the creation of community; and the potential role of voluntary associations in addressing major challenges of our era – health care, energy, transportation, and social innovation.

Voluntary action and nonprofits have achieved increased attention in recent years, and especially in recent months, as our nation and state have become more aware of philanthropic actions and these actions have become more highly regarded and appreciated (see Figure 1). Increasing demand for the course parallels the topic's enhanced visibility, as students throughout the university enroll (see Figure 2). The audience for the course continues to be diverse: from 2007 to 2009, over 36% of the students in the course have been from other colleges within the university (see Figure 3).

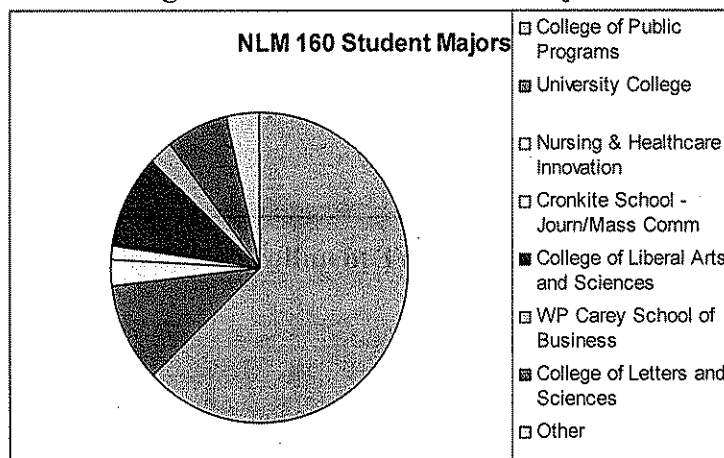
**Figure 1. Volunteer Rates in the State of Arizona 1989 – 2008**  
 (Graph and statistics cited from Volunteering in Arizona, as published on [www.VolunteeringinAmerica.gov](http://www.VolunteeringinAmerica.gov), downloaded 7/28/09)



**Figure 2. NLM 160 Enrollment Trends, Spring 2007 – Fall 2009**



**Figure 3. NLM 160 Student Majors**



## **NLM 160 Voluntary Action & Community Service: Community, Leadership, Volunteerism, and Democracy**

School of Community Resources & Development – Spring 2009  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, Noon – 1:15pm, CRONKITE 125

Professor Bortner  
602.496.0159  
[Bortner@asu.edu](mailto:Bortner@asu.edu)

Office: UCENT580H  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30 – 2:30 pm  
Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:30 pm  
Other times by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course provides a critical introduction to voluntary action in U.S. society, within the context of community development and leadership in democratic societies. It is intended for all students interested in volunteerism, community service, and social activism. It will encompass individual, institutional, and macrostructural levels of analysis, including in-depth discussion of human agency and social change.

### **Textbooks.**

#### **Required Readings**

Adams, Don, and Arlene Goldbard  
2002 *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation.

Denhardt, Robert B. and Janet V. Denhardt  
2006 *The Dance of Leadership: The Art of Leading in Business, Government, and Society*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Putnam, Robert D., Lewis Feldstein, and Donald J. Cohen  
2003 *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

\*\* Pp. 513-528 and 9-20 in *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Toqueville

\*\* "What Is Democracy?" in *On Democracy* by Robert A. Dahl

\*\* Posted on Blackboard. Additional required readings will be posted in the Course Documents section of *Blackboard*.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**NLM 160 Voluntary Action & Community Service**  
School of Community Resources & Development – Spring 2009  
Examination #1 - Tuesday, February 17

Please answer the essay questions in the blue book and answer the concept matching questions on this exam form.

**Part 1. Regular Essay.** Answer **one** of the following (20 points). Be thorough and specific, and write in complete sentences and essay format.

1. Thoroughly explain Robert Putnam's concept of social capital and its importance, the distinction between bonding and bridging forms of social capital, two potentially positive aspects of social capital, and two potentially negative aspects
2. Thoroughly discuss the following aspects of either the "Do Something" or "Harvard Union of Clerical & Technical Workers" *Better Together* case study: the group's explicit goals; two major strengths; two limitations; type of leadership; and two replicable dimensions.

**Part 2. Short Essays.** Answer **two** of the following (10 points each, 20 points total). Be specific and write in complete sentences and essay format.

3. According to Robert Dahl ("What is Democracy?"), what is the democratic assumption and what are four major criteria for democratic community?
4. Based on *The Dance of Leadership*, discuss three major parallels between the world of art and leadership, and list four major characteristics of good leadership.
5. Based on *Better Together*, explain four common dilemmas in building social capital and community.
6. Based on *The Dance of Leadership*, explain four major distinctions between management and leadership.

-continued-

**Part 3. Concept Matching.** For each of the numbered questions on the left identify the lettered description on the right that is most closely related.  
( 1 point each, 10 points total)

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 7. ____ inclusive                   | A. enabling structural condition                    |
| 8. ____ second sector               | B. negative social capital potential                |
| 9. ____ mutual support              | C. dilemma in community building                    |
| 10. ____ redundancy & inefficiency  | D. support face-to-face interactions                |
| 11. ____ communication technologies | E. bridging   |
| 12. ____ creating common space      | F. learn alternatives & outcomes                    |
| 13. ____ role of foundations        | G. reciprocity                                      |
| 14. ____ enlightened understanding  | H. essential to create connections & social capital |
| 15. ____ order & regulation         | I. replicability                                    |
| 16. ____ sectarianism               | J. business & commerce                              |
|                                     | K. management                                       |

## **Student Requirements and Grading System**

Students will be graded based on three examinations, two writing projects, and class attendance/participation. There will be a **total of 285 points**.

### **Examinations**      200 total points

The examinations will cover required readings and class discussions. There will be a full in-class discussion of the examination format (essays, short answer and concept matching). The final examination will be comprehensive.

Sample questions and preparation sessions will also be available. There will be no make-up examinations, except in extreme, documented emergencies. Graded examinations will be returned within one week; there will be one week after exams are returned for discussion and grading appeals.

Examination #1	February 17	50 points
Examination #2	April 14	50 points
Final examination	May 7, 9:50 – 11:40 am	100 points

Please submit three (3) blank 11 x 8" examination bluebooks by February 10.

### **Course Projects and Writing Assignments**    60 total points

Students are required to complete two writing projects that include 3-4-page writing assignments (numbered double-spaced pages; 1" margins; 10- or 12-point font). Each is worth 30 points. Submit a paper copy of your assignment, as well as an electronic copy via *Blackboard*.

#### **Course Project #1      Due 5pm, February 26**

##### **Option A**

Using course discussions and readings, analyze your sustained community service or social activism activities. Submit a 3-4-page paper that: (1) briefly describes your activities; (2) uses at least three course readings to analyze the potential impact of your activities on the individual, institutional, and macrostructural levels; and (3) considers changes to enhance the activity.

##### **Option B**

Thoroughly explore three community service opportunities that relate directly to your interests and concerns. Submit a 3-4-page paper that: (1) details the methods employed to explore each opportunity; (2) uses at least three course readings to analyze each opportunity at the individual, institutional, and macrostructural levels of analysis; and (3) presents a conclusion regarding which opportunity would best advance your community service or social activism goals.

#### **Course Project #2      Due 5pm, April 30**

Imagine you are organizing a panel discussion on the topic, "Enriching Our Lives through Community Service and Leadership." Your panelists are Don Cohen,

Arlene Goldbard, and Janet Denhardt. Submit a 3-4-page paper that analyzes the following:

- Based on at least four course readings, what five questions would you ask the panelists to address?
- Based on course readings, how would they each respond?

Be specific regarding panelists' potential agreements and differences of opinion.

### **Project Grading**

*All projects will be graded based on completion of assignment, clarity of issues, integration and presentation of information, thoroughness and specificity of analysis, and intellectual originality and creativity.*

Ten points will be deducted for each 24-hour period a paper is late. There will be no exceptions.

*Reminder: Individualized assistance is available through the Student Success Center (UCENT 1<sup>st</sup> floor) and individual or group conferences with Professor Bortner.*

### **Class Attendance and Participation 25 points**

Regular class attendance is expected and required. Class members are responsible for regular class contributions, especially being prepared to discuss assigned readings in an informed and critical manner. One point will be earned per class, up to 25 total points. (Examination dates are excluded.) This allows for two absences without penalty.

### **Extra Credit**

Each student may complete extra credit activities, up to a maximum of 10 extra credit points. Numerous options, with deadlines, will be announced throughout the semester. Students may also suggest group contributions.

### **Final Grading Scale**

98-100%	A+	279-285 points
90-97%	A	257-278 points
89%	A-	254-256 points
88%	B+	251-253 points
80-87%	B	228-250 points
79%	B-	225-227 points
78%	C+	222-224 points
70-77%	C	200-221 points
60-69%	D	171-199 points
Less than 60%	E	170 points or less

## Readings for Examination #1

Week of	Reading Assignment
<b>January 20 &amp; 22</b>	<p>** Excerpts from <i>Democracy in America</i>, Toqueville</p> <p><i>The Dance of Leadership</i>, pp.3-21</p> <p><i>Better Together</i>, pp. 1-10 and 269-294</p>
<b>January 27 &amp; 29</b>	<p>** "What is Democracy?" Robert A. Dahl</p> <p><i>Better Together</i></p> <p>Case Study #1: Valley Interfaith, pp.11–33</p> <p>Case Study #2: Do Something: Letting Young People Lead, pp. 142- 165</p>
<b>February 3 &amp; 5</b>	<p><i>Better Together</i></p> <p>Case Study #3: The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, pp. 166-185</p> <p><i>The Dance of Leadership</i>, pp. 22-44</p>
<b>February 10 &amp; 12</b>	<p>** <i>Bettertogether report 2000</i>.</p> <p>The Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America</p> <p>You may also order a free copy of the report by going to <a href="http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro">www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro</a></p>
<b>Examination #1 Tuesday, February 17</b>	

\*\* Posted on *Blackboard* Course Documents section.

Important: Each student is responsible for reviewing and observing the "SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES."

## SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Students must meet all course prerequisites listed in the ASU general catalog. Students not possessing these prerequisites will be withdrawn from the course.
2. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course with a mark of "W" or a grade of "E" only in cases of disruptive classroom behavior (ASU General Catalog).
3. During the first four weeks of a semester, a student may withdraw from a course with a mark of "W." From the fifth week to the end of the 10th week of a semester, students may withdraw with a mark of "W" from courses only in which the instructor certifies that they are passing at the time of withdrawal.
4. The faculty in the School of Community Resources & Development assume that academic honesty will serve as the cornerstone of the academic experience. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or deception on an exam, paper, or class assignment. Plagiarism is defined as "intentionally or knowingly representing the words and/or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise" (Board of Regents Code of Conduct and Academic Dishonesty). Cheating and plagiarism may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the class, or suspension/expulsion from the university. Please note the following links to ASU policies. Students are responsible for reviewing and complying with all ASU policies:

Academic Integrity Policy

[http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic\\_integrity.htm](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm)

Student Code of Conduct

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/sta/sta104-01.html>

Computer, Internet and Electronic Communications Policy

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>

5. The instructor of a course has full authority to decide whether or not class attendance is required. During the second week of classes (Fall or Spring), the instructor can drop a student for non-attendance. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor before the end of the first week of classes if absences during that period cannot be avoided.
6. Class Attendance and Participation - Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in all class discussion. Excessive absences will result in lower course grades. If absences are excessive, but medically excused, a student will receive an "I" or "W," depending on the circumstances. Tardiness constitutes an absence.
7. Students are asked to show common courtesy to others in order to encourage a positive learning environment for all. Cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are to be turned off throughout the duration of the course. There is to be no eating or drinking in the classroom.

**Please refer to the ASU General Catalog for additional information and the schedule of classes for withdrawal date deadlines.**

**To be attached to all syllabi. D:\DATA\DEPTDOC:\baz REVISED: 08.21.06**

## **NLM 160 Voluntary Action & Community Service**

Examination #2: Take-home worth 50 points

Due by 4:30pm, Thursday, April 16

### **Readings covered:**

*Better Together*, Robert D. Putnam, Lewis M. Feldstein, and Don Cohen

"*The Shipyard Project: Building Bridges with Dance*"

"Craiglist.org: Is Virtual Community Real?"

"Portland: A Positive Epidemic of Civic Engagement"

Chapters 1-4 in *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*, Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard

Chapters 3-5 in *The Dance of Leadership*, Robert Denhardt and Janet Denhardt

**Essays.** 20 points each; no more than 2 double-spaced pages each  
Thoroughly discuss two of the following:

1. Examine Adams and Goldbard's key principles of community cultural development in light of one of the three case studies in *Better Together*. Which four principles would be most relevant or meaningful and why?
2. Explain five major arguments regarding leadership advanced in Denhardt and Denhardt's chapters 3-5, and explain why their argument regarding the interplay between creativity and structure is crucial to nonprofit organizations.
3. Assess the relevance of Adams and Goldbard's contribution to nonprofit studies by discussing four major strengths and/or limitations of their work.

**Concepts.** 10 points; no more than 1 double-spaced page

4. Explain five major concepts from the readings and briefly state why you find each to be helpful or valuable.

*Posted and distributed in class April 7, 2009*

Adams + Goldberg 2002

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1969 (1835) *Democracy in America*. J.P. Mayer, editor. Translated by George Lawrence. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc.

## Chapter 5

### ON THE USE WHICH THE AMERICANS MAKE OF ASSOCIATIONS IN CIVIL LIFE

1835 →

I DO NOT PROPOSE TO SPEAK OF THOSE political associations by means of which men seek to defend themselves against the despotic action of the majority or the encroachments of royal power. I have treated that subject elsewhere. It is clear that unless each citizen learned to combine with his fellows to preserve his freedom at a time when he individually is becoming weaker and so less able in isolation to defend it, tyranny would be bound to increase with equality. But here I am only concerned with those associations in civil life which have no political object.

In the United States, political associations are only one small part of the immense number of different types of associations found there.

Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. Americans combine to give fêtes, found seminaries, build churches, distribute books, and send missionaries to the antipodes. Hospitals, prisons, and schools take shape in that way. Finally, if they want to proclaim a truth or propagate some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form an association. In every case, at the head of any new undertaking, where in France you would find the government or in England some territorial magnate, in the United States you are sure to find an association.

I have come across several types of association in America of which, I confess, I had not previously the slightest conception, and I have often admired the extreme skill they show in proposing a common object for the exertions of very many and in inducing them voluntarily to pursue it.

Since that time I have traveled in England, a country from which the Americans took some of their laws and many of their customs, but it seemed to me that the principle of association was not used nearly so constantly or so adroitly there.<sup>1</sup>

A single Englishman will often carry through some great undertaking, whereas Americans form associations for no matter how small a matter. Clearly the former regard association as a powerful means of action, but the latter seem to think of it as the only one.

Thus the most democratic country in the world now is that in which men have in our time carried to the highest perfection the art of pursuing in common the objects of common desires and have applied this new technique to the greatest number of purposes. Is that just an accident, or is there really some necessary connection between associations and equality?

In aristocratic societies, while there is a multitude of individuals who can do nothing on their own, there is also a small number of very rich and powerful men, each of whom can carry out great undertakings on his own.

In aristocratic societies men have no need to unite for action, since they are held firmly together.

Every rich and powerful citizen is in practice the head of a permanent and enforced association composed of all those whom he makes help in the execution of his designs.

But among democratic peoples all the citizens are independent and weak. They can do hardly anything for themselves, and none of them is in a position to force his fellows to help him. They would all therefore find themselves helpless if they did not learn to help each other voluntarily.

If the inhabitants of democratic countries had neither the right nor the taste for uniting for political objects, their independence would run great risks, but they could keep both their wealth and their knowledge for a long time. But if they did not learn some habits of acting together in the affairs of daily life, civilization itself would be in peril. A people in which individuals had lost the power of carrying through great enterprises by themselves, without acquir-

<sup>1</sup>[Cf. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journeys to England and Ireland*, edited by J. P. Mayer, New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1958.]

ing the faculty of doing them together, would soon fall back into barbarism.

Unhappily, the same social conditions that render associations so necessary to democratic nations also make their formation more difficult there than elsewhere.

When several aristocrats want to form an association, they can easily do so. As each of them carries great weight in society, a very small number of associates may be enough. So, being few, it is easy to get to know and understand one another and agree on rules.

But that is not so easy in democratic nations, where, if the association is to have any power, the associates must be very numerous.

I know that many of my contemporaries are not the least embarrassed by this difficulty. They claim that as the citizens become weaker and more helpless, the government must become proportionately more skillful and active, so that society should do what is no longer possible for individuals. They think that answers the whole problem, but I think they are mistaken.

A government could take the place of some of the largest associations in America, and some particular states of the Union have already attempted that. But what political power could ever carry on the vast multitude of lesser undertakings which associations daily enable American citizens to control?

It is easy to see the time coming in which men will be less and less able to produce, by each alone, the commonest bare necessities of life. The tasks of government must therefore perpetually increase, and its efforts to cope with them must spread its net ever wider. The more government takes the place of associations, the more will individuals lose the idea of forming associations and need the government to come to their help. That is a vicious circle of cause and effect. Must the public administration cope with every industrial undertaking beyond the competence of one individual citizen? And if ultimately, as a result of the minute subdivision of landed property, the land itself is so infinitely parceled out that it can only be cultivated by associations of laborers, must the head of the government leave the helm of state to guide the plow?

The morals and intelligence of a democratic people would be in as much danger as its commerce and industry if ever a government wholly usurped the place of private associations.

Feelings and ideas are renewed, the heart enlarged, and the understanding developed only by the reciprocal action of men one upon another.

I have shown how these influences are reduced almost to nothing



in democratic countries; they must therefore be artificially created, and only associations can do that.

When aristocrats adopt a new idea or conceive a new sentiment, they lend it something of the conspicuous station they themselves occupy, and so the mass is bound to take notice of them, and they easily influence the minds and hearts of all around.

In democratic countries only the governing power is naturally in a position so to act, but it is easy to see that its action is always inadequate and often dangerous.

A government, by itself, is equally incapable of refreshing the circulation of feelings and ideas among a great people, as it is of controlling every industrial undertaking. Once it leaves the sphere of politics to launch out on this new track, it will, even without intending this, exercise an intolerable tyranny. For a government can only dictate precise rules. It imposes the sentiments and ideas which it favors, and it is never easy to tell the difference between its advice and its commands.

Things will be even worse if the government supposes that its real interest is to prevent the circulation of ideas. It will then stand motionless and let the weight of its deliberate somnolence lie heavy on all.

It is therefore necessary that it should not act alone.

Among democratic peoples associations must take the place of the powerful private persons whom equality of conditions has eliminated.

As soon as several Americans have conceived a sentiment or an idea that they want to produce before the world, they seek each other out, and when found, they unite. Thenceforth they are no longer isolated individuals, but a power conspicuous from the distance whose actions serve as an example; when it speaks, men listen.

The first time that I heard in America that one hundred thousand men had publicly promised never to drink alcoholic liquor, I thought it more of a joke than a serious matter and for the moment did not see why these very abstemious citizens could not content themselves with drinking water by their own firesides.

In the end I came to understand that these hundred thousand Americans, frightened by the progress of drunkenness around them, wanted to support sobriety by their patronage. They were acting in just the same way as some great territorial magnate who dresses very plainly to encourage a contempt of luxury among simple citizens. One may fancy that if they had lived in France each of these hundred thousand would have made individual representations to the government asking it to supervise all the public houses throughout the realm.

Nothing, in my view, more deserves attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America. American political and industrial associations easily catch our eyes, but the others tend not to be noticed. And even if we do notice them we tend to misunderstand them, hardly ever having seen anything similar before. However, we should recognize that the latter are as necessary as the former to the American people; perhaps more so.

In democratic countries knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all the others.

Among laws controlling human societies there is one more precise and clearer, it seems to me, than all the others. If men are to remain civilized or to become civilized, the art of association must develop and improve among them at the same speed as equality of conditions spreads.

## Chapter 6

### ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ASSOCIATIONS AND NEWSPAPERS

WHEN NO FIRM AND LASTING TIES any longer unite men, it is impossible to obtain the cooperation of any great number of them unless you can persuade every man whose help is required that he serves his private interests by voluntarily uniting his efforts to those of all the others.

That cannot be done habitually and conveniently without the help of a newspaper. Only a newspaper can put the same thought at the same time before a thousand readers.

A newspaper is an adviser that need not be sought out, but comes of its own accord and talks to you briefly every day about the commonweal without distracting you from your private affairs.

So the more equal men become and more individualism becomes a menace, the more necessary are newspapers. We should underrate their importance if we thought they just guaranteed liberty; they maintain civilization.

I am far from denying that newspapers in democratic countries lead citizens to do very ill-considered things in common; but without

newspapers there would be hardly any common action at all. So they mend many more ills than they cause.

A newspaper is not only able to suggest a common plan to many men; it provides them with the means of carrying out in common the plans that they have thought of for themselves.

The leading citizens living in an aristocratic country can see each other from afar, and if they want to unite their forces they go to meet one another, bringing a crowd in their train.

But in democratic countries it often happens that a great many men who both want and need to get together cannot do so, for all being very small and lost in the crowd, they do not see one another at all and do not know where to find one another. Then a newspaper gives publicity to the feeling or idea that had occurred to them all simultaneously but separately. They all at once aim toward that light, and these wandering spirits, long seeking each other in the dark, at last meet and unite.

The newspaper brought them together and continues to be necessary to hold them together.

In a democracy an association cannot be powerful unless it is numerous. Those composing it must therefore be spread over a wide area, and each of them is anchored to the place in which he lives by the modesty of his fortune and a crowd of small necessary cares. They need some means of talking every day without seeing one another and of acting together without meeting. So hardly any democratic association can carry on without a newspaper.

There is therefore a necessary connection between associations and newspapers. Newspapers make associations, and associations make newspapers; and if it were true to say that associations must multiply as quickly as conditions become equal, it is equally certain that the number of papers increases in proportion as associations multiply.

Thus, of all countries on earth, it is in America that one finds both the most associations and the most newspapers.

This connection between the multiplicity of newspapers and associations leads on to the discovery of another relation between the state of the ephemeral press and the form of administration of the country. We find that the number of newspapers among a democratic people must diminish or increase according to the greater or lesser centralization of the administration. For in democracies it is not possible to entrust the exercise of local powers to the leading citizens as is done in aristocracies. Either such powers must be abolished or be placed in the hands of a very large number of men. The latter form a true association permanently established by law to administer a part of the country, and they feel the need for a

newspaper which will reach them daily in the midst of their petty business and keep them informed about the state of public affairs. The more numerous these local authorities are, the greater the number of people legally required to exercise these powers, and so, the need for them being felt continually, the more profusely do newspapers abound.

The extraordinary subdivision of administrative power has much more to do with the enormous number of American newspapers than has the great political freedom of the country and the absolute independence of the press. If all the inhabitants of the Union were electors, but the suffrage only involved the choice of members of Congress, they would only need a few newspapers, for the occasions on which they had to act together, though important, would be very rare. But within the great association which is the nation, the law has established in each province, each city, and, one may almost say, each village little associations responsible for local administration. The legislature has thus compelled each American to cooperate every day of his life with some of his fellow citizens for a common purpose, and each one of them needs a newspaper to tell him what the others are doing.

I think that a democratic people<sup>1</sup> without any national representative assembly but with a great number of small local powers would in the end have more newspapers than would another people governed by a centralized administration and an elected legislature. I find the best explanation for the prodigious growth of the daily press in the United States in the fact that there the greatest national freedom is combined with all manner of local liberties.

It is generally believed in France and in England that to abolish the taxes weighing down the press would be enough to increase the number of newspapers indefinitely. That greatly exaggerates the effect of such a reform. Newspapers do not multiply simply because they are cheap, but according to the more or less frequent need felt by a great number of people to communicate with one another and to act together.

I should also attribute the increasing influence of the daily press to causes more general than those by which it is commonly explained.

A newspaper can only survive if it gives publicity to feelings or principles common to a large number of men. A newspaper therefore

<sup>1</sup> I say a "democratic people". The administration might be very much decentralized in an aristocracy without the need for newspapers being felt, since in that case the local powers are in the hands of a very small number of men who either act on their own or know one another and can easily meet and come to an understanding.

always represents an association whose members are its regular readers.

This association may be more or less strictly defined, more or less closed, more or less numerous, but there must at least be the seed of it in men's minds, for otherwise the paper would not survive.

That leads me to the final reflection with which I will end this chapter.

As equality spreads and men individually become less strong, they ever increasingly let themselves glide with the stream of the crowd and find it hard to maintain alone an opinion abandoned by the rest.

The newspaper represents the association; one might say that it speaks to each of its readers in the name of all the rest, and the feebler they are individually, the easier it is to sweep them along.

The power of newspapers must therefore grow as equality spreads.

## Chapter 7

### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CIVIL AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

THERE IS ONE COUNTRY in the world which, day in, day out, makes use of an unlimited freedom of political association. And the citizens of this same nation, alone in the world, have thought of using the right of association continually in civil life, and by this means have come to enjoy all the advantages which civilization can offer.

In all countries where political associations are forbidden, civil associations are rare.

It is hardly likely that this is due to accident, and it is wiser to conclude that there must be some natural, perhaps inevitable connection between the two types of association.

Men chance to have a common interest in a certain matter. It may be a trading enterprise to direct or an industrial undertaking to bring to fruition; those concerned meet and combine; little by little in this way they get used to the idea of association.

The more there are of these little business concerns in common, the more do men, without conscious effort, acquire a capacity to pursue great aims in common.

Thus civil associations pave the way for political ones, but on the other hand, the art of political association singularly develops and improves this technique for civil purpose.

In civil life each man can, at a stretch, imagine that he is in a position to look after himself. In politics he could never fancy that. So when a people has a political life, the idea of associations and eagerness to form them are part of everybody's everyday life. Whatever natural distaste men may have for working in common, they are always ready to do so for the sake of a party.

In this way politics spread a general habit and taste for association. A whole crowd of people who might otherwise have lived on their own are taught both to want to combine and how to do so.

Politics not only brings many associations into being, it also creates extensive ones.

The common interests of civil life seldom naturally induce great numbers to act together. A great deal of artifice is required to produce such a result.

But in politics opportunities for this are continually offering themselves of their own accord. Moreover, it is only large associations which make the general value of this method plain. Individually weak citizens form no clear conception in advance of the power they might gain by combining; to understand that, they must be shown it. Hence it is often easier to get a multitude to work together than just a few people; where one thousand do not see the advantage in combining, ten thousand do see it. In politics men combine for great ends, and the advantages gained in important matters give them a practical lesson in the value of helping one another even in lesser affairs.

A political association draws a lot of people at the same time out of their own circle; however much differences in age, intelligence, or wealth may naturally keep them apart, it brings them together and puts them in contact. Once they have met, they always know how to meet again.

One cannot take part in most civil associations without risking some of one's property; this is the case with all manufacturing and trading companies. Men who have as yet little skill in the technique of association and do not understand the main rules thereof are afraid, the first time they combine in this way, that they may pay dearly for their experience. They may therefore prefer not to use a powerful means toward success because of the risks involved. But they have less hesitation in joining political associations, which do not strike them as dangerous because they do not risk losing their money. But they cannot belong to such associations for long without discovering

how to maintain order among large numbers and what procedures enable men to advance in methodical agreement toward a common aim. They thus learn to submit their own will to that of all the rest and to make their own exertions subordinate to the common action, all things which are as necessary to know, whether the association be political or civil.

So one may think of political associations as great free schools to which all citizens come to be taught the general theory of association.

But even if political association did not directly contribute to the progress of civil association, to destroy the former would harm the latter.

When citizens can only combine for certain purposes, they regard association as a strange and unusual procedure and hardly consider the possibility thereof.

When they are allowed to combine freely for all purposes, they come in the end to think of association as the universal, one might almost say the only, means by which men can attain their various aims. Every new want at once revives that idea. Thus, as I have said before, the technique of association becomes the mother of every other technique; everyone studies and applies it.

When some types of association are forbidden and others allowed, it is hard to tell in advance the difference between the former and the latter. Being in doubt, people steer clear of them altogether, and in some vague way public opinion tends to consider any association whatsoever as a rash and almost illicit enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore a delusion to suppose that the spirit of association, if suppressed in one place, will nevertheless display the same vigor in all other directions, and that if only men are allowed to prosecute

<sup>1</sup>This is more especially true when the executive power has the responsibility for allowing or forbidding associations by its arbitrary prerogative.

When the law forbids certain associations and leaves the courts to punish those who disobey, the ill is much less; in that case every citizen knows beforehand more or less how things stand; in a sense he can judge the matter for himself before it gets to the courts, and keeping clear of those forbidden, joins those permitted. All free peoples have always understood that limits may thus be set to the right of association. But if the legislature should entrust a man with the power of deciding beforehand which associations are dangerous and which are useful, and left him free either to destroy any and every association in the bud or to let it grow, because no one would be able to see beforehand in what cases associations would be permitted and in what other cases it was best to avoid them, the movement toward association would be completely paralyzed. Laws of the former type are directed only against certain associations; those of the latter type are directed against society itself and inflict damage on it. I can conceive that a just government might have recourse to the former, but I do not admit the right of any government to introduce the latter.

certain undertakings in common, that is enough to ensure that they will eagerly do so. When citizens have the faculty and habit of associating for everything, they will freely associate for little purposes as well as great. But if they are only allowed to associate for trivial purposes, they will have neither the will nor the power to do so. To leave them entire liberty to combine in matters of trade will be in vain; they will hardly feel the slightest interest in using the rights granted; and having exhausted your strength in keeping them from forbidden associations, you will be surprised to find that you cannot persuade them to form those that are allowed.

I do not assert that there can be no civil associations in a country in which political associations are forbidden, for men cannot live in society without undertaking some things in common. But I maintain that in such a country civil associations will always be few, feebly conceived, and unskillfully managed and either will never form any vast designs or will fail in the execution of them.

This naturally leads me to think that freedom of political association is not nearly as dangerous to public peace as is supposed and that it could happen that it might give stability to a state which for some time it had shaken.

In democratic countries political associations are, if one may put it so, the only powerful people who aspire to rule the state. Hence the governments of today look upon associations of this type much as medieval kings regarded the great vassals of the Crown; they feel a sort of instinctive abhorrence toward them and combat them whenever they meet.

But they bear a natural goodwill toward civil associations because they easily see that they, far from directing public attention to public affairs, serve to turn men's minds away therefrom, and getting them more and more occupied with projects for which public tranquillity is essential, discourage thoughts of revolution. But they do not take the point that the multiplication of political associations is an immense help for civil associations and that in avoiding one dangerous ill they deprive themselves of an efficacious remedy. When you see the Americans every day freely combining to make some political opinion triumph, to get some politician into the government, or to snatch power from another, it is hard to conceive that men of such independence will not often fall into the abuse of license.

But if, on the other hand, you come to think of the infinite number of industrial undertakings which are run in partnership in the United States, if you notice how on every side the Americans are working without relaxation on important and difficult designs which would be thrown into confusion by the slightest revolution, you will easily



understand why these people who are so well occupied have no temptation to disturb the state or to upset the public calm by which they profit.

It is enough to see things separately, or should we discover the hidden link connecting them? It is through political associations that Americans of every station, outlook, and age day by day acquire a general taste for association and get familiar with the way to use the same. Through them large numbers see, speak, listen, and stimulate each other to carry out all sorts of undertakings in common. Then they carry these conceptions with them into the affairs of civil life and put them to a thousand uses.

In this way, by the enjoyment of a dangerous liberty, the Americans learn the art of rendering the dangers of freedom less formidable.

By picking on one moment in the history of a nation it is easy to prove that political associations disturb the state and paralyze industry. But if you take the life of a people as one complete whole it may prove easy to show that freedom of political association favors the welfare and even the tranquillity of the citizens.

I said in the first part of this book: "Unlimited freedom of association should not be confused with freedom to write; the one is both less necessary and more dangerous than the other. A country can set limits there without ceasing to be its own master; it must sometimes do so in order to continue to control its fate." And later on I added: "One must understand that unlimited political freedom of association is of all forms of liberty the last which a people can sustain. If it does not topple them over into anarchy, it brings them continually to the brink thereof."

For these reasons I certainly do not think that a nation is always in a position to allow its citizens an absolute right of political association, and I even doubt whether there has ever been at any time a nation in which it was wise not to put any limits to the freedom of association.

One hears it said that such and such a nation could not maintain internal peace, inspire respect for its laws, or establish a stable government if it did not set strict limits to the right of association. These are undoubtedly great benefits, and one can understand why, to gain or keep them, a nation may agree for a time to impose galling restrictions on itself; but still a nation should know what price it pays for these blessings.

To save a man's life, I can understand cutting off his arm. But I don't want anyone to tell me that he will be as dexterous without it.

Chapter 8

HOW THE AMERICANS COMBAT  
INDIVIDUALISM BY THE DOCTRINE OF  
SELF-INTEREST PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD

WHEN THE WORLD WAS UNDER the control of a few rich and powerful men, they liked to entertain a sublime conception of the duties of man. It gratified them to make out that it is a glorious thing to forget oneself and that one should do good without self-interest, as God himself does. That was the official doctrine of morality at that time.

I doubt whether men were better in times of aristocracy than at other times, but certainly they talked continually about the beauties of virtue. Only in secret did they study its utility. But since imagination has been taking less lofty flights, and every man's thoughts are centered on himself, moralists take fright at this idea of sacrifice and no longer venture to suggest it for consideration. So they are reduced to inquiring whether it is not to the individual advantage of each to work for the good of all, and when they have found one of those points where private advantage does meet and coincide with the general interest, they eagerly call attention thereto. Thus what was an isolated observation becomes a general doctrine, and in the end one comes to believe that one sees that by serving his fellows man serves himself and that doing good is to his private advantage.

I have already shown elsewhere in several places in this book how the inhabitants of the United States almost always know how to combine their own advantage with that of their fellow citizens. What I want to point out now is the general theory which helps them to this result.

In the United States there is hardly any talk of the beauty of virtue. But they maintain that virtue is useful and prove it every day. American moralists do not pretend that one must sacrifice himself for his fellows because it is a fine thing to do so. But they boldly assert that such sacrifice is as necessary for the man who makes it as for the beneficiaries.

They have seen that in their time and place the forces driving

man in on himself are irresistible, and despairing of holding such forces back, they only consider how to control them.

They therefore do not raise objections to men pursuing their interests, but they do all they can to prove that it is in each man's interest to be good.

I do not want to follow their arguments in detail here, as that would lead too far from my subject. It is enough for my purpose to note that they have convinced their fellow citizens.

Montaigne said long ago: "If I did not follow the straight road for the sake of its straightness, I should follow it having found by experience that, all things considered, it is the happiest and the most convenient."<sup>1</sup>

So the doctrine of self-interest properly understood is not new, but it is among the Americans of our time that it has come to be universally accepted. It has become popular. One finds it at the root of all actions. It is interwoven in all they say. You hear it as much from the poor as from the rich.

The version of this doctrine current in Europe is much grosser but at the same time less widespread and, especially, less advertised. Every day men profess a zeal they no longer feel.

The Americans, on the other hand, enjoy explaining almost every act of their lives on the principle of self-interest properly understood. It gives them pleasure to point out how an enlightened self-love continually leads them to help one another and disposes them freely to give part of their time and wealth for the good of the state. I think that in this they often do themselves less than justice, for sometimes in the United States, as elsewhere, one sees people carried away by the disinterested, spontaneous impulses natural to man. But the Americans are hardly prepared to admit that they do give way to emotions of this sort. They prefer to give the credit to their philosophy rather than to themselves.

I might drop the argument at this point without attempting to pass judgment on what I have described. The extreme difficulty of the subject would be my excuse. But I do not want to plead that. I would rather that my readers, seeing clearly what I mean, refuse to agree with me than that I should leave them in suspense.

Self-interest properly understood is not at all a sublime doctrine, but it is clear and definite. It does not attempt to reach great aims, but it does, without too much trouble, achieve all it sets out to do. Being within the scope of everybody's understanding, everyone grasps it and has no trouble in bearing it in mind. It is wonderfully

<sup>1</sup>[Cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, Pléiade edition, p. 268; Tocqueville appears to paraphrase the first sentence of Chapter XLIV.]

agreeable to human weaknesses, and so easily wins great sway. It has no difficulty in keeping its power, for it turns private interest against itself and uses the same goad which excites them to direct passions.

The doctrine of self-interest properly understood does not inspire great sacrifices, but every day it prompts some small ones; by itself it cannot make a man virtuous, but its discipline shapes a lot of orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled citizens. If it does not lead the will directly to virtue, it establishes habits which unconsciously turn it that way.

If the doctrine of self-interest properly understood ever came to dominate all thought about morality, no doubt extraordinary virtues would be rarer. But I think that gross depravity would also be less common. Such teaching may stop some men from rising far above the common level of humanity, but many of those who fall below this standard grasp it and are restrained by it. Some individuals it lowers, but mankind it raises.

I am not afraid to say that the doctrine of self-interest properly understood appears to me the best suited of all philosophical theories to the wants of men in our time and that I see it as their strongest remaining guarantee against themselves. Contemporary moralists, therefore should give most of their attention to it. Though they may well think it incomplete, they must nonetheless adopt it as necessary.

I do not think, by and large, that there is more egoism among us than in America; the only difference is that there it is enlightened, while here it is not. Every American has the sense to sacrifice some of his private interests to save the rest. We want to keep, and often lose, the lot.

I see around nothing but people bent publicly on proving, by word and deed, that what is useful is never wrong. Is there no chance of finding some who will make the public understand that what is right may be useful?

No power on earth can prevent increasing equality from turning men's minds to look for the useful or disposing each citizen to get wrapped up in himself.

One must therefore expect that private interest will more than ever become the chief if not the only driving force behind all behavior. But we have yet to see how each man will interpret his private interest.

If citizens, attaining equality, were to remain ignorant and coarse, it would be difficult to foresee any limit to the stupid excesses into which their selfishness might lead them, and no one could

foretell into what shameful troubles they might plunge themselves for fear of sacrificing some of their own well-being for the prosperity of their fellow men.

I do not think that the doctrine of self-interest as preached in America is in all respects self-evident. But it does contain many truths so clear that for men to see them it is enough to educate them. Hence it is all-important for them to be educated, for the age of blind sacrifice and instinctive virtues is already long past, and I see a time approaching in which freedom, public peace, and social stability will not be able to last without education.



AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

No NOVELTY in the United States struck me more vividly during my stay there than the equality of conditions. It was easy to see the immense influence of this basic fact on the whole course of society. It gives a particular turn to public opinion and a particular twist to the laws, new maxims to those who govern and particular habits to the governed.

I soon realized that the influence of this fact extends far beyond political mores and laws, exercising dominion over civil society as much as over the government; it creates opinions, gives birth to feelings, suggests customs, and modifies whatever it does not create.

So the more I studied American society, the more clearly I saw equality of conditions as the creative element from which each particular fact derived, and all my observations constantly returned to this nodal point.

Later, when I came to consider our own side of the Atlantic, I thought I could detect something analogous to what I had noticed in the New World. I saw an equality of conditions which, though it had not reached the extreme limits found in the United States, was daily drawing closer thereto; and that same democracy which prevailed over the societies of America seemed to me to be advancing rapidly toward power in Europe.

It was at that moment that I conceived the idea of this book.

A great democratic revolution is taking place in our midst; everybody sees it, but by no means everybody judges it in the same way. Some think it a new thing and, supposing it an accident, hope that they can still check it; others think it irresistible, because it seems to them the most continuous, ancient, and permanent tendency known to history.

I should like for a moment to consider the state of France seven hundred years ago; at that time it was divided up between a few families who owned the land and ruled the inhabitants. At that time the right to give orders descended, like real property, from generation to generation; the only means by which men controlled each other was force; there was only one source of power, namely, landed property.

But then the political power of the clergy began to take shape and soon to extend. The ranks of the clergy were open to all, poor or rich, commoner or noble; through the church, equality began to insinuate itself into the heart of government, and a man who would have vegetated as a serf in eternal servitude could, as a priest, take his place among the nobles and often take precedence over kings.

As society became more stable and civilized, men's relations with one another became more numerous and complicated. Hence the need for civil laws was vividly felt, and the lawyers soon left their obscure tribunals and dusty chambers to appear at the king's court side by side with feudal barons dressed in chain mail and ermine.

While kings were ruining themselves in great enterprises and nobles wearing each other out in private wars, the commoners were growing rich by trade. The power of money began to be felt in affairs of state. Trade became a new way of gaining power and financiers became a political force, despised but flattered.

Gradually enlightenment spread, and a taste for literature and the arts awoke. The mind became an element in success; knowledge became a tool of government and intellect a social force; educated men played a part in affairs of state.

In proportion as new roads to power were found, the value of birth decreased. In the eleventh century, nobility was something of inestimable worth; in the thirteenth it could be bought; the first ennoblement took place in 1270, and equality was finally introduced into the government through the aristocracy itself.

During the last seven hundred years it has sometimes happened that, to combat the royal authority or dislodge rivals from power, nobles have given the people some political weight.

Even more often we find kings giving the lower classes in the state a share in government in order to humble the aristocracy.

In France the kings proved the most active and consistent of levelers. When they were strong and ambitious they tried to raise the people to the level of the nobles, and when they were weak and diffident they allowed the people to push past them. The former monarchs helped democracy by their talents, the latter by their vices. Louis XI and Louis XIV were at pains to level everyone below the throne, and finally Louis XV with all his court descended into the dust.

As soon as citizens began to hold land otherwise than by feudal tenure, and the newly discovered possibilities of personal property could also lead to influence and power, every invention in the arts and every improvement in trade and industry created fresh elements tending toward equality among men. Henceforward every new in-

vention, every new need occasioned thereby, and every new desire craving satisfaction were steps towards a general leveling. The taste for luxury, the love of war, the dominion of fashion, all the most superficial and profound passions of the human heart, seemed to work together to impoverish the rich and enrich the poor.

Once the work of the mind had become a source of power and wealth, every addition to knowledge, every fresh discovery, and every new idea became a germ of power within reach of the people. Poetry, eloquence, memory, the graces of the mind, the fires of the imagination and profundity of thought, all things scattered broadcast by heaven, were a profit to democracy, and even when it was the adversaries of democracy who possessed these things, they still served its cause by throwing into relief the natural greatness of man. Thus its conquests spread along with those of civilization and enlightenment, and literature was an arsenal from which all, including the weak and poor, daily chose their weapons.

Running through the pages of our history, there is hardly an important event in the last seven hundred years which has not turned out to be advantageous for equality.

The Crusades and the English wars decimated the nobles and divided up their lands. Municipal institutions introduced democratic liberty into the heart of the feudal monarchy; the invention of firearms made vassal and noble equal on the field of battle; printing offered equal resources to their minds; the post brought enlightenment to hovel and palace alike; Protestantism maintained that all men are equally able to find the path to heaven. America, once discovered, opened a thousand new roads to fortune and gave any obscure adventurer the chance of wealth and power.

If, beginning at the eleventh century, one takes stock of what was happening in France at fifty-year intervals, one finds each time that a double revolution has taken place in the state of society. The noble has gone down in the social scale, and the commoner gone up; as the one falls, the other rises. Each half century brings them closer, and soon they will touch.

And that is not something peculiar to France. Wherever one looks one finds the same revolution taking place throughout the Christian world.

Everywhere the diverse happenings in the lives of peoples have turned to democracy's profit; all men's efforts have aided it, both those who intended this and those who had no such intention, those who fought for democracy and those who were the declared enemies thereof; all have been driven pell-mell along the same road, and all



have worked together, some against their will and some unconsciously, blind instruments in the hands of God.

Therefore the gradual progress of equality is something fated. The main features of this progress are the following: it is universal and permanent, it is daily passing beyond human control, and every event and every man helps it along. Is it wise to suppose that a movement which has been so long in train could be halted by one generation? Does anyone imagine that democracy, which has destroyed the feudal system and vanquished kings, will fall back before the middle classes and the rich? Will it stop now, when it has grown so strong and its adversaries so weak?

Whither, then, are we going? No one can tell, for already terms of comparison are lacking; in Christian lands now conditions are nearer equality than they have ever been before at any time or in any place; hence the magnitude of present achievement makes it impossible to forecast what may still be done.

This whole book has been written under the impulse of a kind of religious dread inspired by contemplation of this irresistible revolution advancing century by century over every obstacle and even now going forward amid the ruins it has itself created.

God does not Himself need to speak for us to find sure signs of His will; it is enough to observe the customary progress of nature and the continuous tendency of events; I know, without special revelation, that the stars follow orbits in space traced by His finger.

If patient observation and sincere meditation have led men of the present day to recognize that both the past and the future of their history consist in the gradual and measured advance of equality, that discovery in itself gives this progress the sacred character of the will of the Sovereign Master. In that case effort to halt democracy appears as a fight against God Himself, and nations have no alternative but to acquiesce in the social state imposed by Providence.

To me the Christian nations of our day present an alarming spectacle; the movement which carries them along is already too strong to be halted, but it is not yet so swift that we must despair of directing it; our fate is in our hands, but soon it may pass beyond control.

The first duty imposed on those who now direct society is to educate democracy; to put, if possible, new life into its beliefs; to purify its mores; to control its actions; gradually to substitute understanding of statecraft for present inexperience and knowledge of its true interests for blind instincts; to adapt government to the needs of time and place; and to modify it as men and circumstances require.

A new political science is needed for a world itself quite new.

But it is just that to which we give least attention. Carried away by a rapid current, we obstinately keep our eyes fixed on the ruins still in sight on the bank, while the stream whirls us backward—facing toward the abyss.

This great social revolution has made more rapid progress with us than with any other nation of Europe, but the progress has always been haphazard.

The leaders of the state have never thought of making any preparation by anticipation for it. The progress has been against their will or without their knowledge. The most powerful, intelligent, and moral classes of the nation have never sought to gain control of it in order to direct it. Hence democracy has been left to its wild instincts; it has grown up like those children deprived of parental care who school themselves in our town streets and know nothing of society but its vices and wretchedness. Men would seem still unaware of its existence, when suddenly it has seized power. Then all submit like slaves to its least desires; it is worshiped as the idol of strength; thereafter, when it has been weakened by its own excesses, the lawgivers conceive the imprudent project of abolishing it instead of trying to educate and correct it, and without any wish to teach it how to rule, they only strive to drive it out of the government.

As a result the democratic revolution has taken place in the body of society without those changes in laws, ideas, customs, and mores which were needed to make that revolution profitable. Hence we have our democracy without those elements which might have mitigated its vices and brought out its natural good points. While we can already see the ills it entails, we are as yet unaware of the benefits it might bring.

When royal power supported by aristocracies governed the nations of Europe in peace, society, despite all its wretchedness, enjoyed several types of happiness which are difficult to appreciate or conceive today.

The power of some subjects raised insuperable obstacles to the tyranny of the prince. The kings, feeling that in the eyes of the crowd they were clothed in almost divine majesty, derived, from the very extent of the respect they inspired, a motive for not abusing their power.

The nobles, placed so high above the people, could take the calm and benevolent interest in their welfare which a shepherd takes in his flock. Without regarding the poor as equals, they took thought for their fate as a trust confided to them by Providence.

Having never conceived the possibility of a social state other than the one they knew, and never expecting to become equal to their

leaders, the people accepted benefits from their hands and did not question their rights. They loved them when they were just and merciful and felt neither repugnance nor degradation in submitting to their severities, which seemed inevitable ills sent by God. Furthermore, custom and mores had set some limits to tyranny and established a sort of law in the very midst of force.

Because it never entered the noble's head that anyone wanted to snatch away privileges which he regarded as legitimate, and since the serf considered his inferiority as an effect of the immutable order of nature, one can see that a sort of goodwill could be established between these two classes so differently favored by fortune. At that time one found inequality and wretchedness in society, but men's souls were not degraded thereby.

It is not exercise of power or habits of obedience which deprave men, but the exercise of a power which they think usurped and oppressive.

On the one side were wealth, strength, and leisure combined with farfetched luxuries, refinements of taste, the pleasures of the mind, and the cultivation of the arts; on the other, work, coarseness, and ignorance.

But among this coarse and ignorant crowd lively passions, generous feelings, deep beliefs, and untamed virtues were found.

The body social thus ordered could lay claim to stability, strength, and above all, glory.

But distinctions of rank began to get confused, and the barriers separating men to get lower. Great estates were broken up, power shared, education spread, and intellectual capacities became more equal. The social state became democratic, and the sway of democracy was finally peacefully established in institutions and in mores.

At that stage one can imagine a society in which all men, regarding the law as their common work, would love it and submit to it without difficulty; the authority of the government would be respected as necessary, not as sacred; the love felt toward the head of the state would be not a passion but a calm and rational feeling. Each man having some rights and being sure of the enjoyment of those rights, there would be established between all classes a manly confidence and a sort of reciprocal courtesy, as far removed from pride as from servility.

Understanding its own interests, the people would appreciate that in order to enjoy the benefits of society one must shoulder its obligations. Free association of the citizens could then take the place of the individual authority of the nobles, and the state would be protected both from tyranny and from license.

I appreciate that in a democracy so constituted society would not be at all immobile; but the movements inside the body social could be orderly and progressive; one might find less glory there than in an aristocracy, but there would be less wretchedness; pleasures would be less extreme, but well-being more general; the heights of knowledge might not be scaled, but ignorance would be less common; feelings would be less passionate, and manners gentler; there would be more vices and fewer crimes.

Without enthusiasm or the zeal of belief, education and experience would sometimes induce the citizens to make great sacrifices; each man being equally weak would feel a like need for the help of his companions, and knowing that he would not get their support without supplying his, he would easily appreciate that for him private interest was mixed up with public interest.

The nation as a body would be less brilliant, less glorious, and perhaps less strong, but the majority of the citizens would enjoy a more prosperous lot, and the people would be pacific not from despair of anything better but from knowing itself to be well-off.

Though all would not be good and useful in such a system of things, society would at least have appropriated all that it could of the good and useful; and men, by giving up forever the social advantages offered by aristocracy, would have taken from democracy all the good things that it can provide.

But in abandoning our ancestors' social state and throwing their institutions, ideas, and mores pell-mell behind us, what have we put in their place?

The prestige of the royal power has vanished but has not been replaced by the majesty of the law; nowadays the people despise authority but fear it, and more is dragged from them by fear than was formerly granted through respect and love.

I notice that we have destroyed those individual powers which were able singlehanded to cope with tyranny, but I see that it is the government alone which has inherited all the prerogatives snatched from families, corporations, and individuals; so the sometimes oppressive but often conservative strength of a small number of citizens has been succeeded by the weakness of all.

The breakup of fortunes has diminished the distance between rich and poor, but while bringing them closer, it seems to have provided them with new reasons for hating each other, so that with mutual fear and envy they rebuff each other's claims to power. Neither has any conception of rights, and for both force is the only argument in the present or guarantee for the future.

The poor have kept most of the prejudices of their fathers without

their beliefs, their ignorance without their virtues; they accept the doctrine of self-interest as motive for action without understanding that doctrine; and their egotism is now as unenlightened as their devotion was formerly.

Society is tranquil, but the reason for that is not that it knows its strength and its good fortune, but rather that it thinks itself weak and feeble; it fears that a single effort may cost its life; each man feels what is wrong, but none has the courage or energy needed to seek something better; men have desires, regrets, sorrows, and joys which produce no visible or durable result, like old men's passions ending in impotence.

Thus we have abandoned whatever good things the old order of society could provide but have not profited from what our present state can offer; we have destroyed an aristocratic society, and settling down complacently among the ruins of the old building, we seem to want to stay there like that forever.

What is now taking place in the world of the mind is just as deplorable.

French democracy, sometimes hindered in its progress and at others left uncontrolled to its disorderly passions, has overthrown everything it found in its path, shaking all that it did not destroy. It has not slowly gained control of society in order peacefully to establish its sway; on the contrary, its progress has ever been amid the disorders and agitations of conflict. In the heat of the struggle each partisan is driven beyond the natural limits of his own views by the views and the excesses of his adversaries, loses sight of the very aim he was pursuing, and uses language which ill corresponds to his real feelings and to his secret instincts.

Hence arises that strange confusion which we are forced to witness.

I search my memory in vain, and find nothing sadder or more pitiable than that which happens before our eyes; it would seem that we have nowadays broken the natural link between opinions and tastes, acts and beliefs; that harmony which has been observed throughout history between the feelings and the ideas of men seems to have been destroyed, and one might suppose that all the laws of moral analogy had been abolished.

There are still zealous Christians among us who draw spiritual nourishment from the truths of the other life and who no doubt will readily espouse the cause of human liberty as the source of all moral greatness. Christianity, which has declared all men equal in the sight of God, cannot hesitate to acknowledge all citizens equal before the law. But by a strange concatenation of events, religion for the moment has become entangled with those institutions which

democracy overthrows, and so it is often brought to rebuff the equality which it loves and to abuse freedom as its adversary, whereas by taking it by the hand it could sanctify its striving.

Alongside these religious men I find others whose eyes are turned more to the earth than to heaven; partisans of freedom, not only because they see in it the origin of the most noble virtues, but even more because they think it the source of the greatest benefits, they sincerely wish to assure its sway and allow men to taste its blessings. I think these latter should hasten to call religion to their aid, for they must know that one cannot establish the reign of liberty without that of mores, and mores cannot be firmly founded without beliefs. But they have seen religion in the ranks of their adversaries, and that is enough for them; some of them openly attack it, and the others do not dare to defend it.

In past ages we have seen low, venal minds advocating slavery, while independent, generous hearts struggled hopelessly to defend human freedom. But now one often meets naturally proud and noble men whose opinions are in direct opposition to their tastes and who vaunt that servility and baseness which they themselves have never known. Others, on the contrary, speak of freedom as if they could feel its great and sacred quality and noisily claim for humanity rights which they themselves have always scorned.

I also see gentle and virtuous men whose pure mores, quiet habits, opulence, and talents fit them to be leaders of those who dwell around them. Full of sincere patriotism, they would make great sacrifices for their country; nonetheless they are often adversaries of civilization; they confound its abuses with its benefits; and in their minds the idea of evil is indissolubly linked with that of novelty.

Besides these, there are others whose object is to make men materialists, to find out what is useful without concern for justice, to have science quite without belief and prosperity without virtue. Such men are called champions of modern civilization, and they insolently put themselves at its head, usurping a place which has been abandoned to them, though they are utterly unworthy of it.

Where are we, then?

Men of religion fight against freedom, and lovers of liberty attack religions; noble and generous spirits praise slavery, while low, servile minds preach independence; honest and enlightened citizens are the enemies of all progress, while men without patriotism or morals make themselves the apostles of civilization and enlightenment!

Have all ages been like ours? And have men always dwelt in a world in which nothing is connected? Where virtue is without genius, and genius without honor? Where love of order is confused with a

tyrant's tastes, and the sacred cult of freedom is taken as scorn of law? Where conscience sheds but doubtful light on human actions? Where nothing any longer seems either forbidden or permitted, honest or dishonorable, true or false?

Am I to believe that the Creator made man in order to let him struggle endlessly through the intellectual squalor now surrounding us? I cannot believe that; God intends a calmer and more stable future for the peoples of Europe; I do not know His designs but shall not give up believing therein because I cannot fathom them, and should prefer to doubt my own understanding rather than His justice.

There is one country in the world in which this great social revolution seems almost to have reached its natural limits; it took place in a simple, easy fashion, or rather one might say that that country sees the results of the democratic revolution taking place among us, without experiencing the revolution itself.

The emigrants who colonized America at the beginning of the seventeenth century in some way separated the principle of democracy from all those other principles against which they contended when living in the heart of the old European societies, and transplanted that principle only on the shores of the New World. It could there grow in freedom and, progressing in conformity with mores, develop peacefully within the law.

It seems to me beyond doubt that sooner or later we, like the Americans, will attain almost complete equality of conditions. But I certainly do not draw from that the conclusion that we are necessarily destined one day to derive the same political consequences as the Americans from the similar social state. I am very far from believing that they have found the only form possible for democratic government; it is enough that the creative source of laws and mores is the same in the two countries, for each of us to have a profound interest in knowing what the other is doing.

So I did not study America just to satisfy curiosity, however legitimate; I sought there lessons from which we might profit. Any one who supposes that I intend to write a panegyric is strangely mistaken; any who read this book will see that that was not my intention at all; nor have I aimed to advocate such a form of government in general, for I am one of those who think that there is hardly ever absolute right in any laws; I have not even claimed to judge whether the progress of the social revolution, which I consider irresistible, is profitable or prejudicial for mankind. I accept that revolution as an accomplished fact, or a fact that soon will be accomplished, and I selected of all the peoples experiencing it that nation in which it has come to the fullest and most peaceful completion, in

order to see its natural consequences clearly, and if possible, to turn it to the profit of mankind. I admit that I saw in America more than America; it was the shape of democracy itself which I sought, its inclinations, character, prejudices, and passions; I wanted to understand it so as at least to know what we have to fear or hope therefrom.

Therefore, in the first part of this book I have endeavored to show the natural turn given to the laws by democracy when left in America to its own inclinations with hardly any restraint on its instincts, and to show its stamp on the government and its influence on affairs in general. I wanted to know what blessings and what ills it brings forth. I have inquired into the precautions taken by the Americans to direct it, and noticed those others which they have neglected, and I have aimed to point out the factors which enable it to govern society.

I had intended in a second part to describe the influence in America of equality of conditions and government by democracy upon civil society, customs, ideas, and mores, but my urge to carry out this plan has cooled off. Before I could finish this self-imposed task, it would have become almost useless. Another author is soon to portray the main characteristics of the American people and, casting a thin veil over the seriousness of his purpose, give to truth charms I could not rival.<sup>1</sup>

I do not know if I have succeeded in making what I saw in America intelligible, but I am sure that I sincerely wished to do so and that I never, unless unconsciously, fitted the facts to opinions instead of subjecting opinions to the facts.

Wherever there were documents to establish facts, I have been at pains to refer to the original texts or the most authentic and reputable works.<sup>2</sup> I have cited my authorities in the notes, so those

<sup>1</sup> At the time when the first edition of this work was being published, M. Gustave de Beaumont, my traveling companion in America, was still working on his book *Marie, or Slavery in the United States*, which has since been published. M. de Beaumont's main object was to draw emphatic attention to the condition of the Negroes in Anglo-American society. His book threw new and vivid light on the question of slavery, a vital question for the united republics. I may be mistaken, but I think M. de Beaumont's book, after arousing the vivid interest of those who sought emotions and descriptions therein, should have a more solid and permanent success with those readers who seek, above all, true appreciations and profound truths. [Cf. now Gustave de Beaumont, *Marie, or Slavery in the United States*, with an Introduction by A. L. Tinnin, Stanford, 1958.]

<sup>2</sup> I shall always remember with gratitude the kindness with which I was furnished with legislative and administrative documents. Among the American officials who aided my researches I would especially mention Mr. Edward Livingston, at that time Secretary of State and subsequently Minister Pleni-



who wish can check them. Where opinions, political customs, and mores were concerned, I have tried to consult the best-informed people. In important or doubtful cases I was not content with the testimony of one witness, but based my opinions on that of several.

The reader must necessarily take my word for that. I could often have supported my views with the authority of names he knows, or which at least are worth knowing, but I have abstained from doing so. A stranger often hears important truths at his host's fireside, truths which he might not divulge to his friends; it is a relief to break a constrained silence with a stranger whose short stay guarantees his discretion. I noted down all such confidences as soon as I heard them, but they will never leave my notebooks; I would rather let my comments suffer than add my name to the list of those travelers who repay generous hospitality with worries and embarrassments.

I realize that despite the trouble taken, nothing will be easier than to criticize this book, if anyone thinks of doing so.

Those who look closely into the whole work will, I think, find one pregnant thought which binds all its parts together. But the diversity of subjects treated is very great, and whoever chooses can easily cite an isolated fact to contradict the facts I have assembled, or an isolated opinion against my opinions. I would therefore ask for my book to be read in the spirit in which it was written and would wish it to be judged by the general impression it leaves, just as I have formed my own judgments not for any one particular reason but in conformity with a mass of evidence.

It must not be forgotten that an author who wishes to be understood is bound to derive all the theoretical consequences from each of his ideas and must go to the verge of the false and impracticable, for while it is sometimes necessary to brush rules of logic aside in action, one cannot do so in the same way in conversation, and a man finds it almost as difficult to be inconsequent in speech as he generally finds it to be consistent in action.

To conclude, I will myself point out what many readers will consider the worst defect of this work. This book is not precisely suited to anybody's taste; in writing it I did not intend to serve or to combat any party; I have tried to see not differently but further than any party; while they are busy with tomorrow, I have wished to consider the whole future.

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potentiary in Paris. During my stay in Washington he kindly provided me with most of the documents I possess concerning the federal government. Mr. Livingston is one of those rare men whose writings inspire affection, so that we admire and respect them even before we know them, and we are glad to owe them a debt of gratitude.

PART I

CHAPTER 4

*What Is Democracy?*

Dahl, R. A. (1998). On Democracy  
Yale University Press

All of us have goals that we cannot attain by ourselves. Yet we might attain some of these by cooperating with others who share similar aims.

Let us suppose, then, that in order to achieve certain common ends, you and several hundred other persons agree to form an association. What the specific goals of the association are, we can put aside so as to focus strictly on the question that forms the title of this chapter: What is democracy?

At the first meeting, let us further assume, several members suggest that your association will need a constitution. Their view is favorably received. Because you are thought to possess some skills on matters like these, a member proposes that you be invited to draft a constitution, which you would then bring to a later meeting for consideration by the members. This proposal is adopted by acclamation.

In accepting this task you say something like the following:

"I believe I understand the goals we share, but I'm not sure how we should go about making our decisions. For example, do we want a constitution that entrusts to several of the ablest and best informed among us the authority to make all our important decisions? That arrangement might not only insure wiser decisions but spare the rest of us a lot of time and effort."

The members overwhelmingly reject a solution along these lines. One member, whom I am going to call the Main Speaker, argues:

"On the most important matters that this association will deal with, no one among us is so much wiser than the rest that his or her views should automatically prevail. Even if some members may know more about an issue at any given moment, we're all capable of learning what we need to know. Of course, we'll need to discuss matters and deliberate among ourselves before reaching our decisions. To deliberate and discuss and then decide on policies is one reason why we're forming this association. But we're all equally qualified to participate in discussing the issues and then deciding on the policies our association should follow. Consequently, our constitution should be based on that assumption. It should guarantee all of us the right to participate in the decisions of the association. To put it plainly, because we are all equally qualified we should govern ourselves democratically."

Further discussion reveals that the views set forth by the Main Speaker accord with the prevailing view. You then agree to draft a constitution in conformity with these assumptions.

As you begin your task you quickly discover, however, that various associations and organizations calling themselves "democratic" have adopted many different constitutions. Even among "democratic" countries, you find, constitutions differ in important ways. As one example, the Constitution of the United States provides for a powerful chief executive in the presidency and at the same time for a powerful legislature in the Congress; and each of these is rather independent of the other. By contrast, most European countries have preferred a parliamentary system in which the chief executive, a prime minister, is chosen by the parliament. One could easily point to many other important differences. There is, it appears, no single "democratic" constitution (a matter I shall return to in Chapter 10).

You now begin to wonder whether these different constitutions have something in common that justifies their claim to being "dem-

ocratic." And are some perhaps *more* "democratic" than others? What does *democracy* mean? Alas, you soon learn that the term is used in a staggering number of ways. Wisely, you decide to ignore this hopeless variety of definitions, for your task is more specific: to design a set of rules and principles, a constitution, that will determine how the association's decisions are to be made. And your constitution must be in conformity with one elementary principle: that all the members are to be treated (under the constitution) as if they were equally qualified to participate in the process of making decisions about the policies the association will pursue. Whatever may be the case on other matters, then, in governing this association all members are to be considered as *politically equal*.

#### CRITERIA FOR A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Within the enormous and often impenetrable thicket of ideas about democracy, is it possible to identify some criteria that a process for governing an association would have to meet in order to satisfy the requirement that all the members are equally entitled to participate in the association's decisions about its policies? There are, I believe, at least five such standards (fig. 4).

*Effective participation.* Before a policy is adopted by the association, all the members must have equal and effective opportunities for making their views known to the other members as to what the policy should be.

*Voting equality.* When the moment arrives at which the decision about policy will finally be made, every member must have an equal and effective opportunity to vote, and all votes must be counted as equal.

*Enlightened understanding.* Within reasonable limits as to time, each member must have equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternative policies and their likely consequences.

*Control of the agenda.* The members must have the exclusive opportunity to decide how and, if they choose, what matters are to be placed on the agenda. Thus the democratic process required by the three preceding criteria is never closed. The policies of the association are always open to change by the members, if they so choose.

*Inclusion of adults.* All, or at any rate most, adult permanent residents should have the full rights of citizens that are implied by the first four criteria. Before the twentieth century this criterion was unacceptable to most advocates of democracy. To justify it will require us to examine why we should treat others as our political equals. After we've explored that question in Chapters 6 and 7, I'll return to the criterion of inclusion.

FIGURE 4. *What is democracy?*

Democracy provides opportunities for:

1. Effective participation
2. Equality in voting
3. Gaining enlightened understanding
4. Exercising final control over the agenda
5. Inclusion of adults

Meanwhile, you might begin to wonder whether the first four criteria are just rather arbitrary selections from many possibilities. Do we have good reasons for adopting these particular standards for a democratic process?

WHY THESE CRITERIA?

The short answer is simply this: each is necessary if the members (however limited their numbers may be) are to be politically equal in determining the policies of the association. To put it in another way, to the extent that any of the requirements is violated, the members will not be politically equal.

For example, if some members are given greater opportunities than others for expressing their views, their policies are more likely to prevail. In the extreme case, by curtailing opportunities for discussing the proposals on the agenda, a tiny minority of members might, in effect, determine the policies of the association. The criterion of effective participation is meant to insure against this result.

Or suppose that the votes of different members are counted unequally. For example, let's assume that votes are assigned a weight in proportion to the amount of property a member owns, and members possess greatly differing amounts of property. If we believe that all the members are equally well qualified to participate in the association's decisions, why should the votes of some be counted for more than the votes of others?

Although the first two criteria seem nearly self-evident, you might question whether the criterion of enlightened understanding is necessary or appropriate. If the members are equally qualified, why is this criterion necessary? And if the members are not equally qualified, then why design a constitution on the assumption that they are?

However, as the Main Speaker said, the principle of political equality assumes that the members are all equally well qualified to participate in decisions *provided* they have adequate opportunities to learn about the matters before the association by inquiry, discussion, and deliberation. The third criterion is meant to insure that these opportunities exist for every member. Its essence was set forth in 431 B.C.E. by the Athenian leader Pericles in a famous oration commemorating the city's war dead. "Our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; . . . and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all."<sup>1</sup>

Taken together the first three criteria might seem sufficient. But

suppose a few members are secretly opposed to the idea that all should be treated as political equals in governing the affairs of the association. The interests of the largest property owners, they say to you, are really more important than the interests of the others. Although it would be best, they contend, if the votes of the largest property owners were given such extra weight that they could always win, this seems to be out of the question. Consequently, what is needed is a provision that would allow them to prevail no matter what a majority of members might adopt in a free and fair vote.

Coming up with an ingenious solution, they propose a constitution that would nicely meet the first three criteria and to that extent would appear to be fully democratic. But to nullify those criteria they propose to require that at the general meetings the members can only discuss and vote on matters that have already been placed on the agenda by an executive committee; and membership on the executive committee will be open only to the largest property holders. By controlling the agenda, this tiny cabal can be fairly confident that the association will never act contrary to its interests, because it will never allow any proposal to be brought forward that would do so.

On reflection, you reject their proposal because it violates the principle of political equality that you have been charged to uphold. You are led instead to a search for constitutional arrangements that will satisfy the fourth criterion and thus insure that final control rests with the members as a whole.

In order for the members to be political equals in governing the affairs of the association, then, it would have to meet all four criteria. We have, it seems, discovered the criteria that must be met by an association if it is to be governed by a democratic process.

#### SOME CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

Have we now answered the question "What is democracy?"? Would that the question were so easy to answer! Although the an-



swer I have just offered is a good place to start, it suggests a good many more questions.

To begin with, even if the criteria might be usefully applied to the government of a very small, voluntary association, are they really applicable to the government of a *state*?

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*Words About Words*

Because the term *state* is often used loosely and ambiguously, let me say briefly what I mean by it. By *state* I mean a very special type of association that is distinguishable by the extent to which it can secure compliance with its rules, among all those over whom it claims jurisdiction, by its superior means of coercion. When people talk about "the government," ordinarily they mean the government of the state under whose jurisdiction they live. Throughout history, with rare exceptions, states have exercised their jurisdiction over people occupying a certain (or in some cases, uncertain or contested) territory. Thus we can think of a state as a territorial entity. Although in some times and places the territory of a state has been no larger than a city, in recent centuries states have generally claimed jurisdiction over entire countries.

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One could find much to quibble with in my brief attempt to convey the meaning of the word *state*. Writings about the state by political and legal philosophers would probably require enough paper to use up a small forest. But what I have said will, I believe, serve our purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Back, then, to our question. Can we apply the criteria to the government of a state? Of course we can! Indeed, the primary focus of democratic ideas has long been the state. Though other kinds of associations, particularly some religious organizations, played a

part in the later history of democratic ideas and practices, from the beginnings of democracy in ancient Greece and Rome the political institutions we usually think of as characteristic of democracy were developed primarily as means for democratizing the government of states.

Perhaps it bears repeating that as with other associations no state has ever possessed a government that fully measured up to the criteria of a democratic process. None is likely to. Yet as I hope to show, the criteria provide highly serviceable standards for measuring the achievements and possibilities of democratic government.

A second question: Is it realistic to think that an association could ever fully meet these criteria? To put the question in another way, can any actual association ever be fully democratic? In the real world is it likely that every member of an association will truly have equal opportunities to participate, to gain an informed understanding of the issues, and to influence the agenda?

Probably not. But if so, are these criteria useful? Or are they just pie-in-the-sky, utopian hopes for the impossible? The answer, simply stated, is that they are as useful as ideal standards can ever be, and they are more relevant and useful than many. They do provide standards against which to measure the performance of actual associations that claim to be democratic. They can serve as guides for shaping and reshaping concrete arrangements, constitutions, practices, and political institutions. For all those who aspire to democracy, they can also generate relevant questions and help in the search for answers.

Because the proof of the pudding is in the eating, in the remaining chapters I hope to show how the criteria can help guide us toward solutions for some of the central problems of democratic theory and practice.

A third question: Granting that the criteria may serve as useful guides, are they all we would need for designing democratic politi-

cal institutions? If, as I imagined above, you were charged with the task of designing a democratic constitution and proposing the actual institutions of a democratic government, could you move straightforwardly from the criteria to the design? Obviously not. An architect armed only with the criteria provided by the client—as to location, size, general style, number and types of rooms, cost, timing, and so on—could then draw up plans only after taking into account a great many specific factors. So, too, with political institutions.

How we may best interpret our democratic standards, apply them to a specific association, and create the political practices and institutions they require is, of course, no simple task. To do so we must plunge headlong into political realities, where our choices will require innumerable theoretical and practical judgments. Among other difficulties, when we try to apply several criteria—in this case at least four—we are likely to discover that they sometimes conflict with one another and we'll have to make judgments about trade-offs among conflicting values, as we shall discover in our examination of democratic constitutions in Chapter 10.

Finally, an even more fundamental question: the views of the Main Speaker were accepted, it seems, without challenge. But why should they be? Why should we believe that democracy is desirable, particularly in governing an association as important as the state? And if the desirability of democracy presupposes the desirability of political equality, why should we believe in something that, on the face of it, looks rather preposterous? Yet if we don't believe in political equality, how can we support democracy? If, however, we do believe in political equality among the citizens of a state, won't that require us to adopt something like the fifth criterion—inclusive citizenship?

To these challenging questions we now turn.