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Brian P. Janiskee and Ken Masugi: Democracy in California Study Guide

Steven Alan Samson
Liberty University, ssamson@liberty.edu

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BRIAN P. JANISKEE AND KEN MASUGI: DEMOCRACY IN CALIFORNIA STUDY GUIDE (Spring 2004)

Steven Alan Samson

PREFACE

Study Questions

1. Identify some of the chief characteristics of California. What factors account for its independent political character? Identify some of the American character traits as described by Alexis de Tocqueville.

Review

distinguishing characteristics of California

INTRODUCTION

Study Questions

1. Discuss the character traits ascribed to Americans by **Alexis de Tocqueville**
   a. apolitical: indifference to politics because private life is "so filled with desires and work"
   b. obsession with wealth: love of money
   c. craving for novelty
   d. an individualism that becomes more dependent on governmental authority
   e. a jealous passion for equality that "brings the weak to want to draw the strong to their level"
   f. a rich network of voluntary associations
   g. vital role of religion in shaping the American character

Review

Tocqueville on American traits

CHAPTER ONE: FROM TRIBES TO ONE COMMON CITIZENRY: CALIFORNIA'S DIVERSITY

Study Questions

1. In the 1830s when Tocqueville wrote Democracy in America, what was the "West" to which he referred? What were some of its characteristics? What did later reformers seek to root out? Distinguish the different ways each of the following developed: the Central Valley, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. What is distinctive about California's agricultural economy? (1-3)

2. How was the United States unified? In Federalist, no. 10, what did James Madison find as a basis for "prepolitical unity"? What do the authors contend was needed for full political unity? [It converted the United States into a "nation-state"]. What leads human beings to become citizens? According to Aristotle, what does the unity of a nation rest on? (3-5)

3. What does California constitutional history show with regard to a politics based on the satisfaction of passions – in the "mounting tensions between majoritarian impulse [will] and genuine deliberation"? What made the California Gold Rush so significant? What did the Compromise of 1850 accomplish? Compare and contrast the California Constitutions of 1849 and 1879. How did the first reflect the values of the American Constitution? Summarize James Madison's argument in Federalist, no. 10? (5-7)

4. Identify some of the new circumstances following the Civil War that led to the 1879 constitution? What were some of its objectives? How did it reflect the views of such organizations as the Workingmen's Party [which was founded by Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant who later promoted national Chinese exclusion laws]? Who were the Big Four? How are similar questions about ethnic division and Americanization reflected in today's **politics of identity**, as noted by Peter Skerry and others who write about the politics of identify [what Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn called identitarianism]? What view about multiculturalism is taken by Richard Rodriguez? What did Tocqueville mean by **tyranny of the majority**? (7-12)

Review

California's agricultural economy
accomplishments of the Compromise of 1850
natural rights
tyranny of the majority
Peter Skerry on ethnic-focused public policy
what California constitutional history shows
California Gold Rush
Madison's argument in Federalist, no. 10
constitution of 1879
politics of identity as anti-politics

CHAPTER TWO: CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN CALIFORNIA: THE EVOLUTION OF A PROGRESSIVE STATE

Study Questions

1. Discuss what Tocqueville meant by saying: "I think that in the democratic centuries that are going to open up, individual independence and local liberties will always be the product of art. Centralization will be the natural government." (17)

2. How did the Progressive reform movement propose to change fundamental American political practices? Whence did it draw its principles? What does its presuppose about the will of the people? What did the Progressivism of John Dewey stand for (as opposed to the earlier **natural rights** basis of American politics)? Practically, where did Progressive principles lead? Compare and contrast the machine politics of *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* with the politics of the Progressive administrative state. (17-18)

   NOTE: The first approach to city politics, associated with political machines, has been characterized by **Edward Banfield** and **James Q. Wilson** as the **immigrant ethos**, a conception of people who identify with the ward or neighborhood and who seek material benefits from politics. The second approach they style the **Yankee ethos**, also known as the **middle class ethos**, which "favors what the municipal reform movement has always

defined as 'good government' – namely efficiency, impartiality, honesty, planning, strong executives, no favoritism, model legal codes, and strict enforcement of laws against gambling and vice." The first is "private-regarding;" the second is "public-regarding." But this cultural model does not completely square either with Tocqueville's individualism or with the authors' critique of Progressivism. But these views may be reconciled. Sidney Milkis suggests that the federal civil service was effectively converted into a Progressive (now "liberal") "public-regarding" reform machine (or administrative state) during the New Deal. Robert Nisbet, Robert Heineman, and Paul Gottfried, among others, have made similar observations that would support the authors' and Tocqueville's point about the centralization of government. This shift of political initiative to inside the Beltway confirms Tocqueville's diagnosis.

3. How was Progressivism manifested in foreign policy? In California politics? How is contemporary liberalism connected with Progressivism? What was Progressivism's political program in California? Who were the "goo-goos?" Frank Norris's *The Octopus* was a muckraking-style novel about the California railroads. Who was **Hiram Johnson** and what reforms did he help accomplish? Who were the principal accomplishments of **Earl Warren**? What made Herbert Hoover the very model of a Progressive anti-politician? How do the authors connect the Constitution of 1879 with radical movements such as **Upton Sinclair**'s EPIC and the Townsend Plan? (18-21)

4. How is the legacy of Progressivism evident in California's constitution today? What are some of the more radical reforms that have been proposed? What is the effect of weakening the political party system? What are some of the fruits of "the rabid antigovernment fervor of the early nineties?" (21-23)

Review

Tocqueville on liberty vs. centralization	characteristic beliefs of the Progressives	
John Dewey	George Washington Plunkitt	administrative state
Initiative, referendum, recall	Hiram Johnson	cross-filing
nonpartisanship	women's suffrage	Earl Warren
Herbert Hoover	Upton Sinclair	term limits
weakening of the party system		

CHAPTER THREE: PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MEDIA

Study Questions

1. What are the conditions for a healthy republic? Identify the major segments of public opinion. How does the salience (perceived importance) of issues vary? Identify the three stages of the attention cycle. How do conservatives and liberals differ with respect to their basic assumptions? How do these ideologies reflect different views of human nature? Identify the main components of scientific polls and the chief forms they take. What are the most salient issues for Californians? Conservatives? Liberals? (27-33)

2. What role is played by the media regarding public opinion? What took the place of the partisan press [although this began long before radio]? What are the new media? What role is played by Hollywood? Five of the top ten newspapers in terms of circulation are from New York City and Long Island. The Los Angeles *Times* is the fourth-ranked daily; the San Francisco *Chronicle* is the ranked in eleventh place.

Review

salience
modern American conservative
scientific sample
crisis entrepreneur
modern American liberal

CHAPTER FOUR: PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

Study Questions

1. In the context of state politics, what is the relationship between the strength of political parties and interest groups? What requirements must political parties meet in order to nominate candidates for state offices? Why are there only two major parties? How does this relate to the differences between PR and SMD? Which system is more favorable to smaller parties? What factors have contributed to the weakened state of American political parties? (39-44)

2. How are interest groups regulated? What are their major activities? What type of lobbyists are the top spenders? What did James Madison recommend for the survival of the republic? (44-48)

Review

relationship between parties and interest groups
PR
cross-filing
primary elections
nonaffiliated voters
SMD
civil service system
top spending lobbyists

CHAPTER FIVE: CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Study Questions

1. Why were the American founders wary of direct democracy? How did the rescue the reputation of democracy? Why are all elections state elections? What are the basic election issues? What is the idea behind nonpartisan elections? How do partisan and nonpartisan primaries differ? What are the four main types of partisan primary? What type is currently used in California? (51-56)

2. What are the mechanics of the **initiative, referendum** (and the three main types), and **recall**. Identify some of the major California initiatives (propositions) since 1978. How are successful initiatives most likely to be challenged? What are the rationales, pro and con, for regulating campaign finances? What has been the effect of term limits? How is voter turnout measured? (56-61)

Review

historical record of democracy
forms of partisan primary
types of referendum

CHAPTER SIX: THE LEGISLATURE

Study Questions

1. What are some of the characteristics of a “professional legislature?” Such legislatures tend to have higher salaries and larger staffs and support services. Besides California, other states with full-time legislatures include Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. What does “legislature” mean? How did the Supreme Court change the rules for districting in the 1960s? What difficulties does redistricting involve? (63-66)

2. Identify the chief legislative offices in California. Who chairs the senate Rules Committee and what is its purpose? Identify the stages in the legislative process. What are the governor’s options once a bill is passed by both houses? What is an urgency measure? What other types of legislation require a supermajority of two-thirds? (67-71)

Review

legislator	representation in the senate	redistricting
gerrymandering	speaker of the assembly	president pro tempore
Rules Committee	governor’s options with a bill	urgency measures

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE EXECUTIVE

Study Questions

1. What kind of executive system operates in California? What are some of the governor’s powers, formal and informal? The lieutenant governor’s? Identify the other statewide executive officers. (75-82)

2. Identify the three tiers of a bureaucracy. Compare bureaucracies with the form of organization that Max Weber called charismatic. In California, what accounts for the replacement of charismatic state government with a bureaucratic one? (82-84)

Review

governor’s powers	veto override	executive budget
line item veto	lieutenant governor	charismatic organization
bureaucracy		

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE CALIFORNIA COURTS AND THE PROGRESSIVIST LEGACY

Study Questions

1. How did Progressivism lead to the transformation of all branches of government? What is meant by “independent state grounds?” Who was **Stephen J. Field**? How do the Judicial Nominees Evaluation Commission and the Commission on Judicial Appointments operate? This is known as the California Plan (as distinguished from the Missouri Plan). Besides the Supreme Court, what are the other courts? (87-91)

2. How did **Allan Bakke**’s suit against the University of California at Davis Medical School work its work through the California judiciary all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court. How did each level contribute to the development of constitutional doctrine? What was the rationale behind the *Raven* v. *Deukmejian* ruling? (91-95)

Review

constitutional effects of Progressivism
independent state grounds
Supreme Court
Stephen J. Field
superior and municipal courts
court of appeals
Bakke v. *Regents of the University of California*
Raven v. *Deukmejian*

CHAPTER NINE: THE BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Study Questions

1. How is the budget assembled and how does it get through the legislative process? at what points does the governor play a major role? What are the major deadlines? What other funds are not taken into consideration in the general fund budget? Why? Distinguish between progressive and regressive taxes. What are the chief sources of state revenue? Identify the chief ballot initiatives that affect California taxes. Identify the three types of bonds. (97-104)

Review

budget proposal
Legislative Analyst's Office
special funds
federal funds
bond fund
progressive tax
regressive tax
income tax
sales tax
property tax
Propositions 98 and 163
types of bonds

CHAPTER TEN: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Study Questions

1. What did Tocqueville believe would lead to a "soft despotism" in the United States? What is a potential bulwark against it? What is "self-interest rightly understood?" Identify: general law city, charter city, ward system, at-large system, strong-mayor cities, weak-mayor cities, city managers, secession issue. What is the Lakewood Plan? What is the role of counties, regional associations, and special districts? (107-12)

2. What are the arguments for and against **Proposition 13**? What is the core issue? What are the advantages and disadvantages of fragmentation (balkanization)? (112-16)

Review

soft despotism
local autonomy
general law city
charter city
ward system
at-large system
city manager
secession
Lakewood Plan
regional associations
Proposition 39
Proposition 13
Progressive administrative rationality vs. public choice school of economics