

Jordan Scandlyn

Political Science

Midterm

### **Part I, Question II: Public Goods**

Public goods tend to be simple to come up with, but a far more complex problem to solve. Achieving a successful and sound collective action for a public good is tough both on the consumer and government level. Having the government to regulate what constitutes as a public good can take an extensive amount of time. Here I will discuss multiple issues that arise when balancing what public goods there are locally and nationally. Collective action although important to instituting new public goods, can sometimes devolve into a free-rider problem or are headed by those without the common peoples interests at heart.

Collective action means that a group is working to develop some public good and organize a movement toward a public good. It is believed within the group that everyone will benefit from whatever the service is to pass through the government. But intentions can be skewed without knowing it and having the government to check on these public good proposals are important. To give an example, employed workers in the United States are subject to federal and state taxes. On top of these taxes, per region of each state there are different sales taxes. These sales taxes are also weighed differently based on income, minimum wage and the public goods at the local level. For instance, San Francisco has a significantly higher population than Palo Alto. That means there must be a larger presence of public upkeep, such as street cleaning. There are more

sewers and San Francisco must have lighthouses to dock boats. These public goods are a "gift" in a way from the government in which everyone benefits regardless of the use of one or more people. No ones public use will detract due to another. There is a significant amount of detail that must play into different public goods at these different grades. At some point, if a piece of land such as a famous lake is made national or a park becomes national, it can be included on our federal taxes taken from our work paychecks. The upkeep of these parks and national monuments is paid for by the government and considered to be open to the public.

A park in Palo Alto can be included on taxes of different business and property taxes in order to pay for the upkeep and presence of these public goods. A problem can arise in which a park in Palo Alto is so popular it becomes overcrowded and costs more to take care of than originally planned, if enough of these scenarios arose where Menlo Park residents, Stanford residents, Redwood Cities families all started using Palo Alto public parks, Palo Alto residents are now covering the cost for others benefits and could mean an increase in taxes locally. A free rider problem occurs when some realize they can benefit without helping the collective action. If Palo Alto tried to team up with another city to build a better park and add new features to the public park, Menlo Park citizens may not agree with a park being rebuilt in Palo Alto and will withhold resources to better improve their parks while Palo Alto still needs money to meet the demand of the resources needed to upkeep their public parks since Menlo Park residents can still use the parks that receive a smaller amount of people attending them per day.

Another problem with collective action groups that are small is that people who are leading the small group have their own desires at heart. Regardless of what they

might propose to benefit all residents. Putting a park next to their home is beneficial for them, but maybe not for someone across town still in the same area. If the park is placed in the center of town more residents may be on board, but the benefit decreases for those living on the outskirts of town who originally wanted the park built next to them. Putting it in the center makes it further away from them but more accessible to the whole population (assuming an even population distribution across a town). But if more people have easier access, the park will be more crowded and may be less desirable than a secluded park.

Having the government at the local, state and federal level keeps peace and checks the intentions and logic behind public goods. The government can help mitigate differing opinions. The government can also push to form collective action groups. Leaders can be elected to help push certain incentives within local populations along with state and federal.

## **Part II: Madisonian Democracy**

James Madison pioneered the United States to develop a better balance of government between state and federal powers. To understand the development of Madisonian democracy there is a rich history for how it developed overtime. Since states were sovereign under the Articles of Confederation, the government had no ability to protect minority groups. Since on a state by state basis different laws, procedures and treatments could be enforced. It also meant states would not need to pay their part in national debts. Madison had an alternative to help protect those of minority groups by creating a system which balanced the federal government into three

different branches. These branches, known as the executive, judicial and legislative all provide the proper checks and balances on one another. Through the development of a strong federal government, the Civil Rights movement could spawn, leading to a landmark case for America's strong Madisonian Democracy.

By eliminating the problem of factions, the minority could challenge a majority rule to take power and become a majority, fairly. It wasn't until after the Civil war that America started to make baby steps in changing treatment towards African Americans. Even after slavery had been abolished, African Americans had to face even more unjust laws to prevent them from experiencing true freedom in America. These laws are known as the Jim Crow Laws. Since African Americans at the time of Jim Crow Laws were the minority, it was nearly impossible to break free of unfair regulations in the South. Eventually, the Civil Rights Movement took a path of non-violence to demand change in the laws. By following a proper code of conduct of not causing harm in their political venture, it challenged caucasians to understand African Americans should be provided equal rights.

Madison's understanding of democracy shifted the trajectory for how America's government could have gone and without his wisdom could have held back the Civil Rights Movement for many more years. Madison found that if you allow citizens to vote on specific laws and cases, personal interests will outweigh the common good for people. This is in part due to the ignorance and low level of education for common Americans. Instead, electing multiple officials to help make and break laws and movements would be ideal since those in power are considered to be the smartest of our society politically. Instead of voting for their own personal interests, these officials

are capable of understanding greater problems and building a society towards a better life all together. If individuals get to vote on every small detail of government, in the case of Civil Rights, nothing would get accomplished. If caucasians had a choice to not let African American's vote, that would be the case as we have seen with the Jim Crow Laws that were enforced by the Southern States rather than the Federal government.

Two key federal court cases helped overturn the unfair treatment of African Americans. The first is the Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954. This case broke down racial segregation in schools. This case was headed by the supreme court, which challenged state or a more individual interpretation of how African Americans ought to be treated in America. The second case was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that ultimately banished racial bias in the job market, education and the public. These two cases define how the Madisonian Democracy operated.

Democracy developed by Madison is the backbone to our nations freedom. It upholds our true passion to foster a safe nation that encourages the development of minority populations. By allowing a place to be so willingly open to minority groups, America can continue to thrive on its uniqueness. Having minorities feel their opinions can be heard and that a federal government can help protect their values is important to the growth of America. Madisonian Democracy can be best represented through the process of Civil Rights in America. It defines how the Federal government can be a means for justice in an unjust world. Without having a Federal committee to counterbalance the state powers, Americans can lose out on the right to seek liberty.

Madison's Federalist No. 10 paper outlines the proper way in which to handle the effects of factions. Having a Madisonian Democracy allows for a nation that does not

have its rule in place like that of a dictatorship or totalitarian government but instead allows states to have power with a parent, the Federal government, to challenge state or more individualistic decisions that are made. Since different states are subject to different kinds of challenges and concepts, the Federal government allows them to operate autonomously from other states but is still governed by another power. It defines the importance of voting at each level both state and federal since these policy makers are in place to help progress the United States to make leaps like the Civil Rights Movement.

### Works Cited

"Majority Rule/Minority Rights: Essential Principles." *Majority Rule/Minority Rights: Essential Principles*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Jan. 2016.