

美国的政治参与：公民社会

公民社会问题解析

局部利益对公共利益的侵蚀——游说集团

"The great threat to our republic today comes not from the hidden bribery of the Gilded Age, when cash was secreted among members of Congress to buy privilege and secure wealth. The great threat today is instead in plain sight. It is the economy of influence now transparent to all, which has normalized a process that...distorts our democracy from ends sought by both the Left and the Right.....We have created an engine of influence that seeks not some particular strand of political or economic ideology, whether Marx or Hayek. We have created instead an engine of influence that seeks simply to make those most connected rich." — 《Republic, Lost》 (Lawrence Lessig)

"A much more virulent, if much less crude, corruption does indeed wreck our democracy. Not a corruption caused by a gaggle of evil souls. On the contrary, a corruption practiced by decent people, people we should respect, people working extremely hard to do what they believe is right, yet decent people working with a system that has evolved the most elaborate and costly bending of democratic government in our history." — 《Republic, Lost》 (Lawrence Lessig)

对游说的严格规范

“利益集团”是代表的一种形式

"Every citizen is a special interest...Blacks, consumers, teachers, pro-choicers, gun control advocates, handicapped people, aliens, exporters, and salesmen — are all special interests... There is not an American today who is not represented (whether he or she knows it or not) by at least a dozen special interest groups....One person's special interest is another person's despotism..." — 《The Citizen's Guide to Lobbying Congress》 (Donald E. deKieffer)

问题没有那么严重？

宪法第一修正案： " Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

人民的“请愿权”

游说集团的信息功能

"In a free Government, the security for civil rights must be the same as that for religious rights. It consists in the one case in the multiplicity of interests, and in the other in the multiplicity of sects. The degree of security in both cases, will depend on the number of interests and sects." — Madison on "pluralist balance" in Federalist Papers, No.51

多元利益的平衡

媒体“偏见”

"The mainstream press is liberal....Since the civil rights and women 's movements, the culture wars and Watergate, the press is composed in large part of 'new' or 'creative' class members of the liberal elite-well-educated men and women who tend to favor abortion rights, women's rights, civil rights, and gay rights.....If reporters were the only ones allowed to vote, Walter Mondale, Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, and John Kerry would have won the White House by landslide margins." —Longtime Washington Post political reporter Thomas Edsall in an October 8,2009

三K党 (Ku Klux Klan, 缩写为K.K.K) , 是美国历史上和现在的一个奉行白人至上主义运动和基督教恐怖主义的民间仇恨团体, 也是美国种族主义的代表性组织

Civil Society → Uncivil Society

"Of all the dimensions along which forms of social capital vary, perhaps the most important is the distinction between bridging (or inclusive) and bonding(or exclusive). Some forms of social capital are inward looking and tend reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups..Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages...Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. ... Bridging networks ,by contrast, are better fo linkage to external assets and for information diffusion" — 《Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community》

小结

更多的人指出, 美国的公民社会其实并没有衰落, 而是处于一种转型的过程当中。转型后的公民社会在美国来说依然是非常生机勃勃的, 这不但是美国民主政治的根基, 而且是政治不断演化的动力。这是因为, 媒体在不断地曝光并且去检视政府的所作所为, 使人民获得知情权, 使人民不断地自发组织起来解决他们的问题。所以, 美国的政治才能够良性运转。从这个意义上来说, 民主政治要求的不仅仅是政治家的责任心, 而且要求民众的责任心, 要求民众能够摆脱所谓的“搭便车”心态, 能够从对私人生活的沉迷中站出来, 不断地去发现问题, 发出警报并且改善政治