

Political Science 221  
Seminar in Political Power  
in  
The Modern World

The Constituency and Representative Government

This seminar series is dedicated to an analysis of the process by which the community is transformed into a representative government. It will proceed by a discussion of propositions concerning nine major aspects of the process. In every case, we aim at exposing the main problems and proposing methods of handling them. Each participant, in addition to preparing himself adequately for the discussion with attention to the listed and verbally provided references, will prepare a paper testing a special aspect of one of the propositions. The preliminary drafts of such papers are due two weeks before the end of the quarter so that the authors may benefit from criticism before finishing their work.

I. The relationships among community, opinion and communications.

Definitions:

A communication is an interaction between people

Community is the sum and patterns of communications, formal and informal, and the political community is the communications patterns observable in the making of decisions in matters of state.

Public opinion is the pattern of communications among the constituents of the community pertaining most closely to specific matters at issue.

Consensus is evaluative aspects of accord in communications among the constituent elements and the formal decision-making officers.

Representation is a condition existing when the acts and characteristics of an official accord with the expressed and unexpressed desires of the constituent.

1. Technological and social change, when not associated with formal communications changes in politics, are associated with informal (less-legally accounted for) change in politics.
2. Such informal changes are associated with the cutting of new channels of communications among members of the constituency (hence new modes of forming public opinion) and between constituents and representatives.
3. The first cuttings of new channels over time periods are characterized by imputations of private motives to the participants in the new processes, whereas the older and now less-used channels tend to be regarded as monopolies of the public interest.
4. These two value patterns characterizing rising against falling channels are not related to the actual, observable behavior of the individuals concerned in either case.
5. Legal formalization of the new channels presents the critical point of social tension connected with the discrepancies between new and old channels.
6. The critical point may be more or less tense as the new and old channels demand recognition and respect in terms of the same means of demanding recognition and respect (propaganda, violence, organization, wealth).

7. The confluence of means among discrepant demands in turn is associated with ideological differences in the society which in their turn are associated with the ways of viewing life that come from life situations of individuals which again in turn are associated with social and technological change.

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## II. Delimiting the total capacity of the constituency.

1. Total capacity, defined as the sum of potential decisions on current and conceivable issues, is independent of variations in the capacity of the constituency for making decisions—considering capacity here as legal, moral or realizable.
2. Ideological estimates of the realizable capacity of the constituency are independent of observable capacities.
3. Total capacity may be divided theoretically (as e.g. the principle of the separation of powers, checks and balances) with or without destroying the total capacity of the constituency.
4. Struggles for representation occur over defining the total capacity of the constituency as well as over the capacity of the constituency within selected areas of formally devised representation.

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