Comparing And Contrasting Essay, Research Paper

In this essay I will be discussing Montesquieu, Dewey, Wright, and Lippmann. These authors have been writing about todays government for many years. These governments have many things in common as well as different.

Montesquieu says that virtue is the most important principle of democracy in American government. That all members of society must put the public good ahead of their own interests. The English have been unable to establish a democracy this century because those who were involved in public affairs had some virtue. Their ambition was exited by the success of the bold and daring. The spirit of one faction is repressed by the spirit of another. When virtue ceases, ambition enters those hearts that can admit it, and greed enters them all. One was free under the laws, and now wants to be free against them. The laws are not what are best of the public. Each citizen is like an escaped slave. Instead of the people fighting tyranny, the people are fighting each other.

The principle of aristocracy is moderation. The rich and upper class govern aristocracy, and it is ruled by the best people based on their interests and represses those of the people. Moderation in virtue has to lye within the aristocracy. Keeping the interests of aristocracy in mind rather than personal interests. Now such a body can repress itself in two ways. Either by great virtue, which makes noble equal to the people, which would form a great republic. Or by lesser virtue, a moderation that leaves the nobles equal amongst themselves, which brings about their preservation. The moderation founded on virtue is the heart and soul of this government.

In monarchies the government uses as little virtue as possible to accomplish things. The laws replace all these virtue in a monarchy. One man is the supreme ruler over all. Honor replaces virtue in a monarch. Honor joined with the forces of laws eventually leads to the goal of government. People put their reputation first n trying to get distinction for themselves. In a monarchy most people are good citizens, but it is hard to find good citizens. For in order to be a good citizen, one must have the intention of being one. Love the state less for oneself than for itself. ?ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country.? Ambition is fatal to the leader of a republic, but has good effect in a monarchy.

Honor is not the principle of despotic states, these must be fear in a despotic government. Fear must destroy courage and ambition in order to stop any chances of a revolution. When fear fails to exist, the people no longer have a protector.

Montesquieu shows how education will be different in each kind of government. In monarchies education is not found institutions. It is found in everyday life were people can be taught from experience. Education starts at birth and nothing in the republic government to stop it. Minority has no options if the majority is a faction. Stop a majority from forming and you stop majority factions from carrying out their ?evil? schemes. Madison feels this makes republics unstable and dangerous.

A pure democracy can only work in a small society. Democracy will not work in trying to govern a large area or a large population because a common passion or interests will be felt by the majority. In democracy there is nothing to stop majority from taking advantage of the minority. Politicians claim that if there were perfect quality in their political rights, they would also have the same possessions, opinions, and passions. This is not true, for we need something to protect us.

Madison feels that a republic is the ideal cure for faction. You must first get rid of this by refining and enlarging the public views. It is ideal to have the best representatives possible to make the decision for society. In a big district voting is good because it will keep out one view. It will concentrate on everyone?s views and give these elected officials a more broad view from hearing everyone?s ideas. That wisdom will enable him to give a better decision than someone other than Madison. There are more good people in large district than a small one. The smaller the society, the fewer interests there are involved within it. Therefore it will be easier for a majority to form a concert and execute their plans of oppression. Once the sphere is extended, people with the same interests don?t understand they?re the majority and don?t act on it. In a big unit, a group that may be in power in a small area means nothing to the big picture (republic). The poor, according to Madison, are uneducated and self- interested. The poor will be unable to organize and communicate in a large area. By extended the sphere you can control any faction.

Lippmann looks at the public opinion as lacking a goal. Their lack of agreement creates the problem with public opinion. Public opinion has power in public affairs even though they are unable to agree on what are good and bad. Public opinion attempts to govern it will only works to elevate the heart. Education in a despotic government mainly comes from living with others, in which they instill fear in the heart and teach basic religion. Education in a republic government is the love of the laws and one?s homeland. One must put the public interests over his interests. Education in democracy is entrusted to each citizen, on order to preserve government one must love it.

Madison feels government worst enemy is the factious spirits. By a faction, he means a group of people united by a common passion or interest and at the same time to oppress other citizens in the state. According to Madison there are only two ways to cure a faction; one, by removing its causes; the other by controlling its effects. There are two methods in removing the causes of faction: by destroying liberty and by giving every citizen the same interests. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire. Madison feels if you destroy liberty then at the same time you will destroy political life. The second reason man continues to make mistakes, and has the freedom to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as there is a connection between his reason and his self-love, they will have an influence on each other. There are different kinds of mental abilities among men, which are where the rights of property come from, and property is the product of our faculties. It is the job of government to protect these facilities. Different kinds and degrees of properties results from unequal abilities among men, which also lead to the division of a society into different interests and parties.

If the causes of faction can?t be removed, you must control the effects of faction. If a faction forms in the minority, the majority can out vote the minority and leave them unable to use the constitution for their own good. When a faction forms in the majority fail because it can?t master the problem intellectually. Acts of government are not a translation of the public opinion. The government?s job is to make the laws and enforce them. Government?s officials are just as lost as the public because they?re not in touch with the real problem. The government should work out adjustments rather than intervening, making their points of view indirect. The government gives indirect assistance to those responsible for the problem. When the public officials fail, they turn to the public opinion. An opinion based on reading newspapers, report, and lectures which is an insufficient way to gain facts. The place where the problem arises is where the settlement should take place. By those whom have particular interests involved. You can?t ask an outsider to have the knowledge to make a decision for an insider. Lippmann attacks civic education for not teaching voters how to look at public affairs is an intelligent form. The result is a bewildered, not because he?s a man but because he?s in a place to understand and act on the problem. The outsider is ignorant, usually irrelevant and meddlesome because he is trying to navigate the ship from dry land. Education for citizenship should be separated from the education of public office.

Montiesquieu feels one must put the government above his self-interests. That virtue is the most important part of a successful government. Madison would be in agreement with Montesquieu. Madison claims that faction is the threat to government. Faction can only form from a majority is trying to further their own personal interests. Lippmann would be in agreement that education is important in a democracy. I feel that in ways all of them are right in some aspects. That a great danger to society is faction and we must prevent it from forming. I agree that education is a vital aspect to democracy which is the best form of government.