

How to Think About Civic Education in Our Modern America [Divided]

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Background Information:

- My original idea for this project was to focus on why it is so difficult to articulate what civic virtue is and it was inspired by a course I took on the American Politia. Our course gave me the foundation to initially discuss with fellow students about the current state of America through historical texts and speeches, amongst other readings.
- This project was meant to focus on how to define civic virtue with the product being a definition that would serve as a starting point for how to frame the issue of civic education in a classroom setting. I had planned on creating curriculum, but my project deviated into something that is now more focused on why creating a curriculum for civic education is so difficult and almost impossible in today's America.

Beginning Questions:

- The question that I had posed for my summer research was: how has the lack of a well-defined conception of civic virtue affected the progression/regression/transformation of American civic education, and how does it impact the character of America's Republic? Upon presenting this proposal/question several times to various people, the first question/reaction that I would receive was "what is civic virtue," which would cause me to stumble because the purpose of my project was to look for a definition and see how that could be incorporated into a classroom setting.

Definition of Civic Virtue:

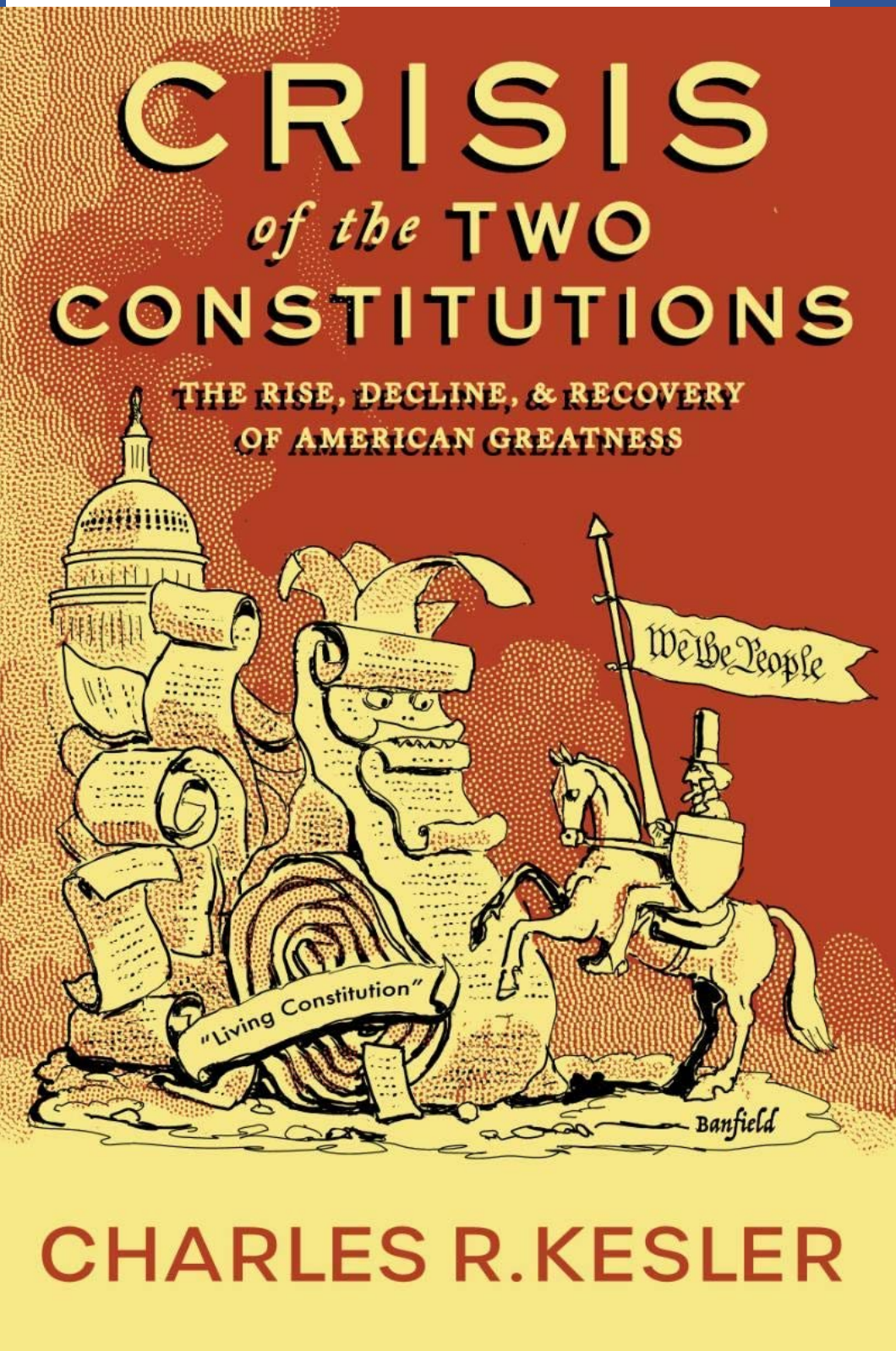
"the quality or qualities that a person can have that positively or constructively impact their interactions and contributions to a community, and the civil society (or state)."

Conclusions:

- There is an underlying question about the balance between the individual, their community, as well as the nation, that consists of trying to figure where, what, and how there can be a balance between these characteristics.
- The intentions and meanings of words hold a high importance in the ways that they are formed and shaped, alongside to what extent that are being interpreted. For there are too many meanings that can be attached to a single word, and it skews the understanding and conception, which in turn leads to mass/widespread confusion; this is the issue of civic virtue, patriotism, civic education, and civic engagement.
- Another major issue is with unity within the United States as a whole. We as people are stuck wondering if the solution is a new form of unity to takeover the previous form, like Lincoln suggested with a "political religion" but there needs to be some form of reclaiming of the goal from the time of the founding and from the spirits of our founding documents.
- These points all add up to yet another question: what are America's breaking points and how will we know when we've reached them?

Looking Forward:

- In hopes of thinking about civic education curriculum development, I am hoping to work on creating a framework on "foundational" texts that can help teach civic virtue amongst other topics such a civic engagement and volunteering.
- Similarly, to curriculum development, I want to create guidelines that help simplify and explain the differences in civic education for children versus adults; this includes how to teach oneself civic virtue outside of a formal classroom setting.
- Furthermore, I plan to continue looking into the topic of how to create quantitative measures for things such as civic education and civic engagement is possible.



References:

- <https://www.amazon.com/Crisis-Two-Constitutions-Recovery-Greatness/dp/164177102X>
- <https://jackmillercenter.org/restoring-civic-virtue-in-america/>
- <https://csaedu.com/equity-and-inclusion-in-civics-instruction/>

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