

**The True American Government**

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### **Abstract**

Since the United States founding in 1776, the Founding Fathers created the beginnings of a democracy or at least it is what was promised. Although creating a government in which its citizens were treated equally was important, they were also concerned with the role they would be playing in this new government. The Founding Fathers were concerned that if everyone was truly given the same rights, their wealth would disappear. This worry was reflected in the government that they created and how the government of the United States functions today. If the Founding Fathers had this secondary concern, is America a true democracy? In order to answer this question this paper will explore the four theories of the American government. In order to identify which theory reflects our government, it is necessary to look at the contrast between institutional and structural views of the American government. Another important place to look is the upcoming 2024 presidential election, where the status quo could possibly be challenged. Viewing the American government in this way will help to recognize which of the four theories represents our government best. It's also important to differentiate between the government we have and the form of governance that will best serve American citizens in the future.

## **The True American Government**

The United States is considered, by the majority of Americans, to be a democracy. On the surface, the nation's system of government is labeled as a democracy, but there are four competing theories that can be used to better describe the true form of America's government. These four theories help to explain why Americans live vastly different lives from one another, despite living in a democracy. A small percentage of Americans actually benefit from a democracy that is supposed to be 'for the people,' but has instead come to be extremely individualistic.

The first theory is the traditional democratic theory. This theory describes what is being taught in schools all over the nation. Policymakers are supposed to be influenced by the nation's citizens, but instead are influenced by money. The United States is empirically democratic, meaning that the nation holds elections and has some semblance of a participatory democracy. On the other hand, taking a normative approach shows how the United States is not a true democracy. This theory is what politicians hope that Americans believe is the status quo, but realistically it is not.

The second theory that attempts to describe the American government is pluralism. In this theory, many centers of influence compete for power and control over public policy. These centers of influence compete for power via bargaining, compromise, and trade. The most popular means for centers of influence to gain power is through money. In the theory of pluralism, corporations and businesses in the private sector represent the centers of influence. These entities attempt to sway politicians to pass legislation that supports them, a minority, while hurting the majority of the majority of the American people.

The next theory is hyperpluralism, which is a more drastic form of pluralism. These two theories share the same basis, except that hyperpluralism describes a reality in which there are too many centers of influence. When there are too many centers of influence, the government becomes negatively affected. The government becomes fragmented under the different needs of the various centers of influence. This fragmentation creates gridlock in the government, so that it cannot function any longer. This theory has not directly affected the United States, but it is a possibility in the future. Currently most, if not all, of the centers of influence have the same intentions, to increase their profit, so the US government has not had any conflict passing legislation that all helps corporations in the same way.

The final theory is the elite class theory. This theory argues that society is divided into various socio-economic classes. When the rich and elite classes hold power, then not much democracy can exist. Along with pluralism, this theory is occurring in the United States. The elite 1%, typically those who belong to the private sector or who own large businesses and corporations are a part of this class. They use their money to influence the government so that it becomes easier and easier for them to make even more profit.

Although pluralism can be considered a democracy, the elite class theory is not. With the combination of these two theories the government of the United States should not be considered to be a democracy. Examining how the American economy, capitalism, and its government, a supposed democracy, interact can give further insight to why the United States does not hold a true democracy. Furthermore, the status quo of the United States shows how even with an upcoming presidential election in 2024, Americans will not experience change economically or politically. Americans will continue to live in a system that is created for the 1% and not for the people.

## **When Democracy Meets Capitalism**

*“The Constitution, on this hypothesis, is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the judiciary which they may twist and shape in to any form they please.”*

-Thomas Jefferson, 1819

The United States has always been known as a democracy, but with a capitalist economy. Throughout America’s history, schools have always taught the country’s government and economy as two separate entities. This became known as the institutional approach. The institutional approach is important in that it describes how the government is supposed to function in an ideal world; where the political atmosphere is at its calmest. On the other hand, the structural approach views the U.S. government and its economy as one. This approach is much more realistic because America’s democracy is constantly interacting with the capitalist economy, to the benefit of the wealthy elite and to the detriment of the majority of Americans. As the values of capitalism and democracy do not align, the status quo does not address the needs of the majority of Americans and because money in politics can interrupt the democratic process and typical functions of the government, it is becoming clearer and clearer that a democracy cannot coexist with a capitalist economy.

Both democracy and capitalism have their base values. As Abraham Lincoln said in his famous Gettysburg Address, a democracy is a, “. . . government of the people, by the people, for the people” (Lincoln, 1863). In contrast, capitalism is more individualistic in which private owners control property in ways that align with their own interests. Capitalism creates a motive for people to make a profit, which often causes harm or disadvantages to others. This pattern can especially be seen throughout history with the institution of slavery and the United States acting as an imperial power during the late 1800s and onwards. This dramatic clash of principles can be

seen in today's political atmosphere as well. In an interview on *The Agenda*, Chris Hedges, an American journalist, said that “. . . reality is denied by the power elites . . . the media platforms [then] disseminate the opinions of the power elites” (The Agenda, 2018). Its implications of this process are that people in power, such as the president, can use misinformation to their advantage; oftentimes to reap the most money or fame; which is a capitalistic ideal. An example of this phenomenon was during when Donald Trump was president, from 2017 to early 2021. A report by ABC News identified fifty-four criminal cases, in which Trump was invoked in direct connection with violent acts, threats of violence or allegations of assault against minority populations in the United States. ABC News found that the perpetrators were mostly white men and the victims came from a wide array of minority groups; African Americans, Latinos, Muslims, and gay men (Levine, 2020). Donald Trump used his own biases to create division among the American people. From all these criminal cases he received much media attention and contributed to the spread of misinformation via the process of scapegoating. Similar to scapegoating, David Harvey, a British Marxist economic geographer, explains that it is human nature to resort to more capitalistic ideals that causes people to take advantage of others. Harvey describes it as, “. . . the predatory instincts, instincts for mastery, delusions of investors, and greed” (RSA, 2010). If it is human nature to put oneself before others then it makes sense that numerous presidents have passed legislation that sides with the wealthy 1% of the nation and not the majority of Americans. Under President Obama the Dodd-Frank Act was passed, which attempted to protect consumers and put more regulation on the economy. Under the Trump administration, there was a rollback of Dodd-Frank. Paul D. Ryan, a former Speaker in the House of Representatives, claimed that the bill's passage was a step towards “freeing our economy from overregulation” and going on to say, “Our smaller banks are engines of growth.

By lending to small businesses and offering banking services for consumers, these institutions are and will remain vital for millions of Americans who participate in our economy.” Although he makes this claim, the partial rollback still benefited mostly the rich because it only exempted banks under \$250 billion from the Dodd-Frank Act’s banking regulations. A bank worth \$249 billion should not be considered a small bank. The decision for the partial rollback of the Dodd-Frank Act was not only backed by conservatives. In fact, 33 Democrats voted for the rollback (Rappeport & Flitter, 2018). It can be concluded that when a piece of legislation involves money, a politician, no matter what party, will vote in a way where it will benefit themselves and not the majority of Americans. According to David Harvey, it is just their human nature to do so.

When politicians are only concerned about the top 1%, the rest of America suffers. An example of this suffering is high levels of unemployment. In the same interview on *The Agenda*, Chris Hedges describes how the statistics today regarding unemployment are false. Hedges states that the unemployment rates are completely fixed. If someone works one hour a week, they are counted as employed and, according to Hedges, if someone stopped looking for work after four weeks, they are magically erased from unemployment rolls. For example, an average worker at Walmart works about 28 hours a week, which puts these workers below the poverty line (The Agenda, 2018). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate is currently 3.8% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Hedges argues that the unemployment rate is closer to 17%, which he says that this inequality between the rich and poor is now greater than it was during the Gilded Age (The Agenda, 2018). Although many Americans are suffering, because powerful government officials are receiving their large sums of money, politicians simply do not care. In a democracy, where people are supposed to receive equal opportunity, those who benefit from capitalism chose not to give Americans this opportunity. Instead, they

take the wealth for themselves and let the public know that the country's problems, such as unemployment, are not as big of an issue as they are. This is when American democracy becomes a plutocracy. One of the major steps that the United States took towards this point was when outsourcing began during the 1970s, creating a shift from production to consumption (The Agenda, 2018). Many Americans in the middle to low economic class lost their jobs to people outside the United States. The government made this choice because it was cheaper, and it aided the large corporations that only cared about the profit that they were receiving. Not only did the government make a decision that was not for the people, it also negatively took advantage of people outside the United States because working conditions were terrible, and wages were low; making outsourcing the cheaper option.

When Americans look to their government, because it is supposed to act in their interest as a democracy, but do not find answers, many turn to the alt-right. Hedges calls this an 'ideological vacuum' (The Agenda, 2018). This vacuum is filled with hate groups that have gained members in the past few years. And with America having a very violent history, with the forced removal and genocide of indigenous peoples and with the history of slavery in the U.S, it makes sense that these alt-right groups are often responding with violence. In fact, from 2012 through 2021, almost three out of four murders that were classified as domestic terrorism were committed by right-wing extremists, who were mostly white nationalists (Ray, 2022). This data shows that this behavior is unfortunately becoming more of a norm, due to no government intervention. These alt-right groups are not receiving a solution to their problems from the supposed democracy, so instead they turn on others who maybe look different from them or have different views, thinking that they are the problem. This phenomenon coupled with social media, which facilitates the spread of information perpetuates the existence of these hate groups. In



America's democracy today, the government that is supposed to be for the people, it only for the few; the rich 1%. The rich see these divisions, but because it doesn't affect the money that is coming in, politicians do not take enough action to combat the rise of these hate groups. Another byproduct to not finding answers in a government that is supposed to be for the people is the increased suicide rate. Provisional data from the CDC state that suicide deaths in 2022 were the highest ever recorded, rising by 16% from 2011 to 2022 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). This data can partially be a reflection upon how the government functions today because life has become much more difficult for many Americans. An article by *The New York Times* stated that a survey by the Federal Reserve shows that the recent strong job market has not been enough to combat the rising cost of living for countless families in the United States (Casselmann, 2023).

As a democracy that is supposed to be for the people, politicians always make some attempt to address financial problems that many Americans face due to inflation, but oftentimes politicians side with the elite 1% because they belong to this group. Donald Trump went as far to pass tax cuts that would remove \$1.5 trillion from the United States' government over a 10-year period. Instead of the money being put towards creating jobs for Americans or to boost manufacturing, it was hoarded by wealthy elites or to buy back stock, which has the effect of inflating the stock market. Furthermore, the CEOs of large corporations benefited from the inflation because their compensation packages were tied to the value of stock (The Agenda, 2018). The outcome of Trump's tax cuts shows that even when there was an opportunity to help the American public, money was the priority over the American people. This capitalistic motive to extract a profit always comes before the values of a democracy.

Despite how much politics and economics interact on a day-to-day basis, many prominent economists support the institutional approach to viewing the American government. Milton Friedman, an American economist and statistician believes that democracy can coexist with competitive capitalism because it, “. . . provides economic freedom directly, namely, competitive capitalism, also promotes political freedom because it separates economic power from political power and in this way enables the one to offset the other” (Friedman, 2003). In reality, economic power does not offset political power, it does just the opposite. Economic power has enabled politicians to gain both wealth and power. In exchange politicians have supported large corporations due to their wealth and offer of support. With this trade-off, large corporations and politicians both benefit, but the American people do not. This is ironic because a democracy is expected to be for the people, but in reality, it is only for the rich 1%. Milton goes on to say:

. . . government is essential both as a forum for determining the "rules of the game" and as an umpire to interpret and enforce the rules decided on. What the market does is to reduce greatly the range of issues that must be decided through political means, and thereby to minimize the extent to which the government needs to participate directly in the game (Friedman, 2003).

Although this statement is somewhat true, the government likes to participate and intervene in the capitalist government, whether it is necessary or not. The government likes to intervene because oftentimes it makes them and the top 1% benefit, such as Trump tax cuts that helped large corporations. At the same time, government intervention can interrupt the democratic process. Even when the government needs to intervene, it can often be a lengthy process, interrupting the democratic process and the daily lives of countless Americans. An example of

the government almost shutting down can be seen recently in October 2023 due to Congress not being able to settle an amount on the yearly appropriations bill. Although the government did not shut down, Congress was only able to pass a short-term funding measure. This means that Congress will have to revisit this major issue again soon. When the government does shut down it primarily affects the American people and not the politicians who are making the decision. Many federal employees have to come to work anyways and not receive pay or they are told not to come into work at all. When the government shut down in 2019 for 35 days, National Parks lost \$11 million in revenue, wildfire disaster response was delayed, and immigration hearings became backlogged. In addition, government shutdown economically affects the entire country because only 15% of federal employees live in Washington DC. In fact, the economy permanently lost \$3 billion during the 2019 government shutdown. Congress has become more and more unproductive, passing less and less bills, because the political parties have become more and more polarized (Vox, 2021). This overlap between the government and the capitalist economy shows that although it can be necessary, in recent years it has had more destructive effects on the American people.

Recent history and America today show that democracy cannot coexist in a capitalistic economy. The structural approach, viewing the relationship between democracy and capitalism, makes it clear that these two institutions cannot continue to coexist. The values of these two systems at their base do not align; democracy is for all, while capitalism is for few. It is important for American citizens to learn about government and economics through the structural approach because it will be the way America can change for the better. Learning about only the government's institutions is important, but the approach will never give a good enough explanation for the growing wealth gap and the inequalities America is seeing today. Viewing

the United States through a structural approach will enable America's problems to be seen in a clearer light. This will allow American citizens to create better solutions and make the country a better place for today and future generations to come.

### **The Status Quo Will Remain**

*“They ought to be so constituted as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority. The senate, therefore, ought to be this body; and to answer these purposes, they ought to have permanency and stability. Various have been the propositions; but my opinion is, the longer they continue in office, . . .”*

-James Madison, 1787

The political and economic status quo of the United States has kept the nation a top global power since the twentieth century. Despite this constant, quality of life has decreased for the mass majority of Americans in recent years. The status quo today does not satisfy the needs of the majority of Americans, instead it serves the wealthy 1%. Governmental positions only bounce between Democrats and Republicans, when there are many more established political parties. These two mainstream parties are influenced by the wealthy, which is contrasted by the definition of a democracy. In a true democracy, public opinion would influence public policy, but it does not. On the surface it seems that the difference between Democrats and Republicans are vastly different, but in reality, they both share a top concern: money. For most Americans, they feel that they have to identify with one political party, and they vote for their party, despite not liking the candidate. This theme will likely occur in the upcoming 2024 presidential election. In theory the status quo could change with a potential new president and change of political party, but because the Democratic and Republican party concerns are the same, the status quo will not change.

For most members of a specific political party, the other side is always the enemy. These tensions increase particularly in the months leading up to a presidential election. For many the most important part of an election is beating the other side, “To beat Joe Biden and the Democrats in 2024, we must ensure that Republicans bank as many votes as possible before Election Day” (Republican National Committee, n.d.). Instead of appealing to the purpose of a government and stating their party’s agenda, the Republican National Committee only describes the need to beat the opposing party. Both politicians and Americans go as far as to be concerned over the influence of third parties on mainstream elections, “Whatever flaws you may see in Joe Biden, he is the only actual alternative to Trump’s reign . . . If you vote for supposed “progressives” Jill Stein or Cornel West, you’re reducing the votes needed to stop Trump” (Zimmerman, 2023). The Democratic Party is so concerned that voting for a third-party candidate will ruin the chances of Biden getting a second term in office. They believe that it is worse to vote for a candidate that reflects one’s beliefs when their chances of winning are slim, than to vote for a mainstream candidate in an attempt to lessen the chances of another winning an election. A third-party perspective states the opposite and shows the importance of voting for those who adequately represent their views and values, “. . . people should not treat West’s candidacy as helpful to Donald Trump. In the first place, we need to realize that Trump will probably not be on the ballot in 2024 because he is facing almost 100 criminal charges in federal courts . . .” (Griffin, 2023). This serves as reasoning for why votes to a third-party does not increase chances for Trump to win in 2024, despite the status quo only supporting the Democratic and Republican party.

Another side to the endless amounts of concern over the potential winner is predictions. When there are governmental elections in the foreseeable future, there will be endless amounts

of predictions. In the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, many believe that Trump will win hands down and others believe the exact opposite. “The fact is, Biden has no serious primary competitor and is likely to begin 2024 with an enormous war chest” (Cohen, 2023). Others disregard the one factor for another, like turning to Biden’s approval ratings. “Biden’s weak approval ratings and poor showing in polls vis a vis Donald Trump, have them running scared. They don’t know if Trump’s indictments will prevent him from running or if republican voters will choose him regardless of his legal complications” (Kimberley, 2023). Confidence that Biden will win the 2024 election when people on other various sides are by far from agreement. Overall, this concern by politicians over who will win perpetuates the status quo. By paying so close attention to the victor, other more pressing problems are pushed off to the side. These issues, like climate change and wealth inequality, directly affect all Americans. In contrast, life under one president to the next does not have much of an impact on American citizens’ life economically and politically.

Since the founding of the United States, the economy has always functioned through capitalism. It has since become the status quo. No matter who is president, there are always sources that contain data that support one party and others that report opposite statistics. With the spread of misinformation and conflicting data, most Americans turn to the party that they identify with for information. With a Democrat serving as president today, there are many sources that support Biden and his policies, “Inflation-adjusted income is up 3.5% since the President took office, and low-wage workers have seen the largest wage gains over the last year” (The White House, n.d.). While on the political right, there are sources that report the opposite trends, “Since Mr. Biden took office, real earnings have plummeted as prices outpace wages: Inflation-adjusted weekly earnings are down about 5% since he took office . . . typical American

family the equivalent of almost \$7,400 in lost annual income” (Antoni & St Onge, 2023). The reporting of conflicting data creates divisions between Americans who belong to different parties, helping to perpetuate the status quo. In reality, economic policy typically benefits the rich, while the majority Americans are unable to influence change in economic policy.

According to *Requiem for the American Dream*, a film featuring Noam Chomsky, 70% of the American population has no way of influencing policy (Hutchison et al., 2016). Unfortunately, this means that many attempts of public activism often come with no positive result. Although the United States is a supposed democracy, the majority of its people are unable to participate in its government. Unhappiness with the status quo can be seen through unfocused anger against different groups or political parties as well as minorities. The use of scapegoating and conflict between various political factions also helps to keep the status quo. Politicians try to keep the attention on individual issues, rather than the flawed system itself. The top 1% are very individualistic and are trying to get the American people to also behave in this way. As Adam Smith said, “. . . vile maxim of the masters of mankind: all for ourselves and nothing for other people” (Chomsky, 1995).

Even when it came time to address the issues regarding America’s democracy, court cases always side with corporations. This process is slowly stripping away the rights of the general public. In the 1976 court case *Buckley v. Valeo*, the ruling essentially established money as a form of speech. Furthermore, in *Citizens United v. The Federal Elections Committee*, the 5-4 decision helped to give corporations the freedom of speech under the 14th Amendment (Hutchison et al., 2016). The passing of this legislation shows how businesses are gradually functioning as people under the law. With this process being accepted and encouraged under

both the political right and left, the status quo will not suddenly change with a possible new president in 2024.

An additional way the status quo is kept is through the American education system. Textbooks that are used in American government and economics classes have to be approved by the state that they are used in. With this system, students are being taught the status quo. Furthermore, they are learning that it is an acceptable form and should not be changed. Most importantly, the textbook does not include the flaws of the status quo, instead it describes the status quo when everything functions correctly. In other words, textbooks all over the United States omit important information that continues to let the status quo function on a daily basis. With politicians and corporations having a tight control over the American education system, the status quo will not suddenly change with the upcoming 2024 presidential election. Although the political right and left are portrayed as hating one another and can never agree with a policy on any issue, they both share the same goal of keeping the public ignorant, so that they can maintain their wealth and power. Politicians act in their own interest, while promising to act in the public's. For conservatives there was the Powell Memorandum (1971), which warned businesses that they were losing control of society. On the liberal side the Trilateral Commission (1973) said that there was a crisis of democracy, meaning that there was too much of it. This Commission even blamed the country's education system for their 'failure of indoctrination.' The country's public education system was partially created for the benefit of Americans, but there is another motive as well, keeping the status quo in place.

Students in America's public school systems are taught from a young age that the next step after receiving a K-12 education is college. During the 20th century, it was a great idea because higher education was much cheaper. In more recent years the price of higher education



has skyrocketed. In fact, more than half of state funding for colleges comes from tuition, not from the state (Hutchison et al., 2016). This change has created a huge burden on students, who become trapped with massive amounts of debt. With countless students graduating with debt, they are trapped within the status quo that is wired against them until their debt is paid back, further perpetuating the status quo because these new graduates have little ability to change it.

With the indoctrination of the status quo beginning at an early age for most Americans, the two-party system has remained, despite how many of the issues the United States faces changes over time. As explained by Michael Mandelbaum, a professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, “. . . about 2070: fifty years hence the Republican and Democratic parties will still dominate American politics, but in their membership and their positions on the issues of the day, they won’t look the way they do now” (Mandelbaum, 2020). This can mean that the two parties can completely change their views and policies on issues slowly over time, but the two-party system will still be in place. Third parties will not become mainstream, and neither will other valuable critical interpretations of today’s status quo.

Despite third parties not having a huge impact on economic and political policies because they do not fit into the status quo, they provide an important perspective to both the status quo itself and the two respective parties that belong to it. Author Kimberley, writing in *Prejudential: Black America and the Presidents*, provides valuable insight on the status quo:

Corporate is the operative word. Media consolidation has killed off any semblance of journalistic independence. The Washington Post is owned by Amazon’s Jeff Bezos and MSNBC is a subsidiary of Comcast. When Biden promised in 2020 that, “Nothing will

fundamentally change,” he was also speaking to the media moguls who employ Brazile and Sanders-Townsend and the rest of the media misleaders (Kimberley, 2023).

Kimberley’s commentary on corporations and their influence on the media shows how the status quo will not change in the upcoming 2024 election. Controlling the media is in a sense controlling how Americans perceive what is going on and can direct attention to unnecessary topics; as Noam Chomsky said in *Requiem for the American Dream*: the top 1% are manufacturing consent (Hutchison et al., 2016). Walter Lippmann, who was an American writer and reporter, went as far as to say, “The public must be put in its place, so that it may exercise its own powers, but no less and perhaps even more, so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd” (Jensen, 2002). The commentary by Kimberley shows that in some ways America is a democracy, in that the country allows freedom of the press. American citizens do have access to this beneficial information, but there are few, if any ways that citizens can take this knowledge and put it into action, to try and change the status quo. A poll by the McCourtney Institute for Democracy found that 75% of Americans feel that democracy is the best system of government, but only 16% say that they feel comfortable talking about politics with everyone (Helmstetter, 2023). The practice of self-censorship helps the status quo stay the same because citizens are not coming together to realize that the status quo does not serve the needs for the majority of Americans.

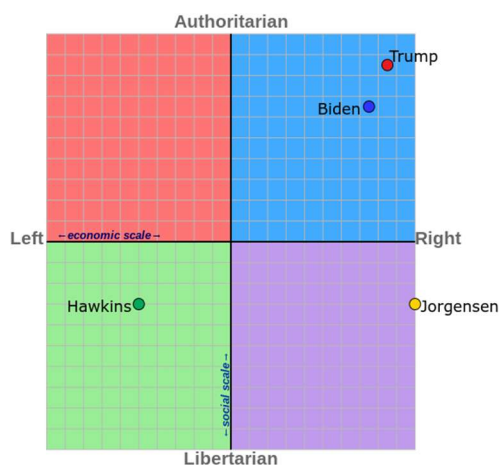
There are steps that can be taken, so that the Americans can actually participate in our so-called democracy. One such solution is to change the voting process. In more recent elections, citizens are stuck between two dislikeable candidates. Most vote with the party that they identify with, but they are far from happy with their vote. Ranked-choice voting is one such way that

citizens can feel better with their choices. Rob Ritchie, the CEO of FairVote, explains the importance of this style of voting:

It's very simple where the virtues come from. If you're limited to a single choice, your overt engagement with a field of candidates is limited to that single choice. If you become aligned with that single choice you stop thinking. But when you're given the opportunity to consider multiple candidates, you're expanding the number of reasons for engagement to happen, for conversations to happen (Edelman, 2023).

In fact, lawmakers in 14 states have already introduced 27 bills that propose ranked choice voting models (Edelman, 2023). This shift can help to shift the status quo, so that it actually serves the majority of the American people.

As of today, the status quo does not serve the majority of Americans. Billionaires and private corporations continue to control America's so-called democracy. The Center for Responsive Politics reported that by 2014 the share of political donations by the wealthiest .01% of Americans increased to 29% from 21% four years previous (Wittner, 2019). The current status quo also does not align with the beliefs of many Americans. The political compass, which places an applicant on a coordinate plane based on their views of how both a society and economy should be run, shows how many Americans' views do not align with the politicians who dictate



economic policy (The Political Compass, n.d.). News articles portray Biden and Trump having extremely different views, when in reality they belong in the same quadrant: authoritarian right. After a group of students took the Political Compass test that placed them in the coordinate place, the majority ended up in the green

quadrant: libertarian left. A younger generation ending up on an entirely different quadrant on the political compass shows how the status quo does not match where many Americans' views are economically and socially.

The status quo will not change, regardless of who wins the 2024 presidential election. No matter who wins, the country will function how it always has. Corporations and private sectors will still benefit from the status quo, while the majority of Americans are forced to live in a system that is wired against them. The status quo is already heavily ingrained in American society, so that it will not suddenly change with a possible new president. In the media the Democratic and Republican party are illustrated as enemies and it seems that they can never agree on anything. In reality that is far from the truth because above all politics, money always comes first in the politicians' minds, even before their beliefs and what they stand for. With this commonality between the two mainstream political parties, the status quo will not change with an upcoming presidential election.

### **Conclusion**

Through viewing democracy and capitalism interact and taking a close view at America's status quo, it becomes clear that the United States does not have a functioning democracy. Instead, the United States is functioning under an indirect plutocracy. The super-wealthy are not directly governing the nation, instead they are using their money to influence what goes on in the government. There is hope that things could change with another election in 2024, such as America becoming 'great again,' but the status quo will remain because all politicians, no matter what party they belong to, place money as their first priority; no matter how much they promise otherwise. Capitalism, an individualistic way to run the economy, cannot exist alongside democracy, which is meant to be ruled by many, not the ones who only have the money.

At its base, democracy is a great system of governance. The problem with the world that we live in today is that money comes before anything else. Placing money first has caused millions of people to die and now it is costing us our planet. Creating an economic system that coincides with the values of a democracy will help create a government that is actually for the people. Having both a system of economics and governance that supports working together will help improve quality of life for everyone.

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