

The Four Theories of American Government

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Abstract

What government do we have and what government do we want? In the United States, politics touch every aspect of life. The individual voter, the unregistered immigrant, and the most powerful lobbyist all must face politics as an undeniable reality, no matter how ignorant anyone in this country wishes to keep themselves. How can we understand this ever-present force in our daily lives? Textbooks in classrooms all over the country have fairly straightforward and simplistic answers for these three questions. They say that to understand our government, read the textbook; it will tell you that the government we have in the United States is a democracy, and as for the government we want, we already have it so why should we even ask? This is not enough to truly face the reality of the United States' political and economic systems. By using the four theories of American government (traditional democratic theory, pluralism, hyperpluralism, and elite class theory), examining the institutional and structural divides and approaches to understanding democracy and capitalism, and the 2024 presidential election's relationship to the status quo, this paper aims to achieve a conclusion on these questions.

The Four Theories of American Government

What government do we have? The four theories of American government are traditional democratic theory, pluralism, hyperpluralism, and elite class theory. These theories are a way to understand how the United States government is organized, a set of theories that aim to explain the political reality of this country. Each theory places political “power” in the hands of one or multiple categories.

The traditional narrative of the American government is that it is a democracy. “Theories of majoritarian electoral democracy, as positive or empirical theories, attribute U.S. government policies chiefly to the collective will of average citizens, who are seen as empowered by democratic elections” (Gilens & Page, 2014). Every person has one vote and every vote counts, and the power is placed in the American individual. Representatives listen to their constituents and do their best to make life better for them. This is the theory that is most popular among the minds of the American public, what is taught in schools, and the theory that most Americans would love to align with our current political reality. Does it? Many Americans do not feel adequately represented in government. Many Americans cannot even vote. A government that has a history of voter suppression that continues to this day, by definition, cannot be democratic.

The second theory is pluralism, where power is placed in groups of citizens, such as political parties or other interest groups. This theory states that policy is dictated by different groups of citizens competing for their goals. In pluralism, lobbying is front and center, but the system is still democratic and average citizens still have a say, at least when they are organized into groups. Let’s say you are an average citizen who wants your voice heard. Maybe you care about social justice and climate change. In pluralism, you might want to join the Green Party,

and that way, you can help put your candidate in office to represent your interests. Too bad our two-party system will not let that happen, and the groups that make Pluralism work are too often created to serve wealthy elite and not average people.

The third theory, hyperpluralism, is pluralism on crack. It states that because there are so many interest groups vying for power, they stop the government from functioning, effectively putting the United States political system into gridlock. “It is simply not the case that a host of diverse, broadly-based interest groups take policy stands—and bring about actual policies—that reflect what the general public wants. Interest groups as a whole do not seek the same policies as average citizens do. “Potential groups” do not fill the gap. Relatively few mass-based interest groups are active, they do not (in the aggregate) represent the public very well, and they have less collective impact on policy than do business-oriented groups—whose stands tend to be *negatively* related to the preferences of average citizens. These business groups are far more numerous and active; they spend much more money; and they tend to get their way” (Gilens & Page, 2014). Interestingly, hyperpluralism is the only theory saying that government does not work for anyone, not the average citizens, not the groups, and not the elite. If that was true, why does the United States government continue functioning? Bills are still made into law and policies are continuing to be carried out. Clearly the government is working for someone.

Elite class theory aligns with Marxism. The political reality it expresses might be the grimmest. All people are divided into socioeconomic classes. There are many classes and many definitions of these classes, but the big two are the working class and the elite class. Elite class theory applied to American politics believes that in the United States, it is the elite class that holds the majority of the power despite having the minority of people, while the working class,

while having the vast majority of people, has only the minority of wealth and power. This is the government we have, an odd oligarchy that disguises itself as a democracy.

Is America a Democracy? Institutional vs. Structural Approaches

The United States is a democracy. Drilled into the ears of every kid attending American public school; the Founding Fathers created a democracy where all people have rights and are represented with honesty and transparency. Most classrooms do not challenge or go beyond this idea. Curriculums focus on the inner workings of the branches and positions in government. This approach that classrooms take to teaching government is an institutional approach. An institutional approach does not weigh the benefits or drawbacks of a democratic system in the context of capitalism. Is this truly the best way to understand American society? If these institutional representations of the U.S. government were true to life, the people would run the government and almost everything would be peachy. One look outside the window says otherwise. Citizen participation in government is lower than ever and politicians whiter and older than dirt are propagating policies that benefit them alone, while leaving the rest of society with the short end of the stick. The dilapidated reality of the United States brings up this question: Is the United States really a democracy? Accepting the U.S government as a clear-cut democracy in a vacuum with no context from history or economics paints an unfinished picture of said government. A structural approach to politics includes the study of institutions in government but expands upon and critiques those institutions with ideas from history and economics. It focuses on the interactions between democracy and capitalism and how they operate in conjunction with and opposed to each other. The key to understanding the truth about America's democracy lies in a structural approach to the study of government.

Taking an institutional approach to the U.S. government will tell you that it is a democracy. In that case, let's look at how the institutions represent themselves. "The United States is a representative democracy. This means that our government is elected by citizens. Here, citizens vote for their government officials. These officials represent the citizens' ideas and concerns in government" (Your Government and You, n.d.). This clean, neat definition offered by the United States Center of Immigration services misrepresents even the most surface-level processes of the federal government: The Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Justices are not voted for by citizens casting their ballots: instead, justices are appointed by the reigning president. It could be argued that because the president is voted for by the citizens of the United States, the Supreme Court justices are representative of the people. However, with this argument another ugly fact rears its head: the president is not actually voted for by the people, instead by the electoral college. Even institutional studies show the flaws in America's democratic system, imagine what contradictions a structural analysis will turn up.

It is widely believed that capitalism creates and promotes democracy. "Viewed as a means to the end of political freedom, economic arrangements are important because of their effect on the concentration or dispersion of power. The kind of economic organization that 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, p. 94). This analysis states that economic and political power are separate entities that offset each other, an institutional approach. But the government and the market are not separate at all. The "winners" of capitalism are often the ones that control the government, and vice versa. They work hand in hand to consolidate power in the hands of the

few, seen from the corporate dollars in the back pockets of more than a few government officials and parties (Lund and Strine, 2022); (*Citizens United V. FEC - FEC.gov*, n.d.).

Another widely held position is the belief that the free market aids the government in vesting power in the hands of the citizen/consumer and promoting diversity in a democracy. “The existence of a free market does not of course eliminate the need for government. On the contrary, 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 government needs to participate directly in the game. The characteristic feature of action through political channels is that it tends to require or enforce substantial conformity. The great advantage of the market, on the other hand, is that it permits wide diversity. It is, in political terms, a system of proportional representation. Each man can vote, as it were, for the color of tie he wants and get it; he does not have to see what color the majority wants and then, if he is in the minority, submit.” (Friedman, 2003, p. 96). The idea that a system of “proportional representation” promotes wide diversity through a market is absurd. A teacher making \$43,000 a year and a CEO making \$430,000 clearly have different powers in the market. Average citizens, though the majority in population, are the minority when it comes to spending power (Thériault, 2023). The idea that someone should have more power because they won the lottery of capitalism is inherently undemocratic (European Liberties Platform & Day, 2022).

The institutions of democracy support capitalism and capitalism supports democracy. The freer the market, the freer the people. This is far from reality in the United States. Take it from the father of capitalism himself. “Indeed, Smith’s single most famous idea – that of ‘the invisible hand’ as a metaphor for uncoordinated market allocation – was invoked in precisely the context

of his blistering attack on the merchant elites. It is certainly true that Smith was skeptical of politicians' attempts to interfere with, or bypass, basic market processes, in the vain hope of trying to do a better job of allocating resources than was achievable through allowing the market to do its work. But in the passage of *The Wealth of Nations* where he invoked the idea of the invisible hand, the immediate context was not simply that of state intervention in general, but of state intervention *undertaken at the behest of merchant elites* who were furthering their own interests at the expense of the public. It is an irony of history that Smith's most famous idea is now usually invoked as a defense of unregulated markets in the face of state interference, so as to protect the interests of private capitalists. For this is roughly the opposite of Smith's original intention, which was to advocate for restrictions on what groups of merchants could do. When he argued that markets worked remarkably efficiently – because, although each individual 'intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention' – this was an appeal to *free* individuals from the constraints imposed upon them by the monopolies that the merchants had established, and were using state power to uphold. The invisible hand was originally invoked not to draw attention to the problem of state *intervention*, but of state *capture*. Smith was, however, deeply pessimistic about the stranglehold that the merchants had managed to exert over European politics and despaired of it ever being loosened. Accordingly, he labelled his preferred alternative – of liberal markets generating wealth to be passed on to all members of society – a 'Utopia' that would never come to pass. History has to some extent proved him wrong on this score: we now live in an era of comparative market freedom. But nobody should deny that merchant conspiracy, and the marriage of the state to what we now call corporate power, remain defining features of our present-day political and economic reality." (Sagar, 2020) There is yet to be a perfect free market

structure and perfect democratic institutions in the world, let alone a case of these two forces working well with each other. How could capitalism create democracy if a true democracy has never happened?

Under the structure of capitalism, the institutions of government become a corrupt vehicle for the United States to gain economic power in the name of “democracy” while it actively shuts out the very people it is supposed to listen to. For example, looking at the Iraq War with an eye on capitalism turns up a lot more information than ignoring economic realities and focusing on the institutions of government and “democracy.” “Missing from most liberal accounts is that the US is an empire. Large, powerful, US-based corporations have been put forward to act as the avant-garde of American state power abroad. This geopolitical role is generally portrayed as an event based inside the US. For instance, in order to invade Iraq in 2003, the Pentagon invented the pretext of WMDs (the ‘event’), even though Iraq’s ‘missing’ WMDs had been supplied to it by the US, and no new WMDs were found. Through state-capitalist dependencies, the Federal government needed ‘private’ contractors to arm the military, rebuild Iraq, and to exploit Iraq’s oil and gas bounty. The tally so far is that capital controls political power inside the US, empire represents the reach of US-backed capital internationally, and the American electoral system exists to promote the illusion that politics exists separate and distinct from the power of capital to determine political outcomes inside the US. The American people intuitively understand this, as well as the power of capital to crush ‘democracy,’ as evidenced by the poll results linked above (first paragraph). The primary impediment to democracy is capital.” (Urie, 2023). It can be argued that the invasion of Iraq was justified due to the seemingly high public support. Tensions were high after 9/11, after all. Polls from 2003 and afterwards seem to clearly show that a majority of Americans were in favor of an invasion

(Wikipedia contributors, 2023a). However, these polls were conducted by huge capitalist media organizations like CNN, FOX, and CBS. The truth is that not as many Americans supported the invasion as the media conglomerates represented (Eichenberg, 2015), but making it appear as if the war was widely supported would totally legitimize the media's one-sided and nonstop noise about the invasion. There was quite the incentive to act as if the American public supported the war, the media frenzy started by the TV news and generated huge profits as more and more consumers were eagerly awaiting coverage of the sensational war (Wikipedia contributors, 2023a). A structural analysis of the Iraq War will show that non-democratic capitalist forces like the media worked hand-in-hand with the government to create this war for profit, a truth that institutional analysis will not bring to light.

The Iran-Contra Affair serves as another egregious example of the United States government undermining democracy in order to feed its capitalist hunger for profit (McMurdo, 2013). In this case, there was no media, and absolutely no input from the public. Not a shred of democracy was involved in the decision to deal arms to Iran to support the Nicaraguan Contras (Wikipedia contributors, 2023a).

The Iran/contra investigation will not end the kind of abuse of power that it addressed any more than the Watergate investigation did. The criminality in both affairs did not arise primarily out of ordinary venality or greed, although some of those charged were driven by both. Instead, the crimes committed in Iran/contra were motivated by the desire of persons in high office to pursue controversial policies and goals even when the pursuit of those policies and goals was inhibited or restricted by executive orders, statutes or the constitutional system of checks and balances. The tone in Iran/contra was set by President Reagan. He directed that the contras be supported, despite a ban on contra aid imposed on

him by Congress. And he was willing to trade arms to Iran for the release of Americans held hostage in the Middle East, even if doing so was contrary to the nation's stated policy and possibly in violation of the law. The lesson of Iran/contra is that if our system of government is to function properly, the branches of government must deal with one another honestly and cooperatively. When disputes arise between the Executive and Legislative branches, as they surely will, the laws that emerge from such disputes must be obeyed. When a President, even with good motive and intent, chooses to skirt the laws or to circumvent them, it is incumbent upon his subordinates to resist, not join in. Their oath and fealty are to the Constitution and the rule of law, not to the man temporarily occupying the Oval Office. Congress has the duty and the power under our system of checks and balances to ensure that the President and his Cabinet officers are faithful to their oaths. (E. Walsh, 1993, p. 561).

An institutional analysis would conclude that the Iran-Contra affair should never have happened. It would say that the checks and balances on executive power from Congress should prevent such crimes. Clearly, these institutions did not function properly in the wider context of global capitalism.

Looking at the institutions of government, it would appear that democracy and capitalism coexist to the benefit of the citizens living under them. This is an incorrect and dangerous sentiment that breeds conformity and the stagnation of progress. When looking at the larger structure of capitalism, the truth reveals itself: democracy and capitalism do not coexist, they struggle with each other for the dominance of global society, and if America is a democracy, it is an excruciatingly flawed one. Therefore, the key to understanding America's democracy lies in a

structural, critical analysis of the government, everything that makes it, and everything that surrounds it.

The 2024 Presidential Election: Continuity or Change?

The answer is continuity. Though there might be some differences and changes based on whether Trump or Biden will win, the root system will continue, business as usual. United States elections, the presidential election especially, are represented as two opposite forces clashing, two separate agendas for the country's future. Trump or Biden? Republican or Democrat? Conservative or Liberal? The establishment and the media parrot these ideas and general society accepts this as reality. It's accepted to fit into any of these neat categories, but this makes all other ideologies have trouble surviving in the American political landscape. These clear-cut categories such as Republican or Democrat make up the United States political and economic status quo of liberalism. Third party and independent candidates that don't fit into these categories are pushed into the margins, deemed as "wasted votes."

The status quo in the United States is made up of Republicans and Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals. It is based on liberal democracy and capitalism working together, or the idea that they actually can. The candidates are more alike than they are different. When you look at the basic policies of both candidates and parties, it becomes apparent that the differences are not as stark as they seem. Both candidates have an authoritarian, right-wing approach to politics and economics.

The political compass is a way to situate people, governments, and societies on a two-axis plane that displays their approach to politics and economics. "Our essential point is that Left and Right, although far from obsolete, are essentially a measure of economics. As political establishments adopt either enthusiastically or reluctantly the prevailing economic orthodoxy —

the neo-liberal strain of capitalism — the Left-Right division between mainstream parties becomes increasingly blurred. Instead, party differences tend to be more about identity issues. In the narrowing debate, our social scale is more crucial than ever.” (politicalcompass.org, 2001-2023) In order to figure out whether Biden or Trump are actually as different as identity politics and traditional media claim, it is helpful to look at their positions on the political compass where they are actually quite close. Both fall in the authoritarian right category, Biden slightly closer to the center than Trump, but still close.

These two candidates are the de facto representations of their parties and what they stand for. The Republican Party represents itself as the protectors of freedom (Republican National Committee, 2020), while the Democrats say they fight for equality (Democratic National Committee, 2019). These parties, their leaders, and their history seem to be very different.

The Democrats date from the 1830s and are the lineal descendants of Thomas Jefferson’s Republican-Democratic Party, which was founded in the 1790s. The slightly younger Republicans began their formal existence in 1854, and inherited policies and members— notably Abraham Lincoln—from the Whigs, a party that began in 1833.

The two have survived in part because of American electoral laws, which favor the existence of two and only two parties by making it very difficult for smaller ones to win elective offices. They have managed to persist as well because, down through the decades, each has retained a basic feature. The Democrats have represented the interests of what Barone calls “out-groups,” who have felt themselves marginalized in, and often in some ways excluded from, American society. In the 19th century these groups sought to protect their interests by limiting the reach of the government. In the 20th and 21st centuries they pursued the same goal by expanding the government’s scope. The

Republicans, by contrast, have historically assembled the “in-groups,” who have felt generally satisfied with the country’s social, economic, and political arrangements but have often regarded these as under attack and in need of defending. Finally, and crucially, both parties have proven to be flexible, able to adapt to new challenges and welcome new groups to their coalitions (Mandelbaum, 2020).

The two major parties could not be any more at odds, it seems. But this analysis seems to look at history with the lens of today. The idea of Democrats always having represented the “out-groups” in their fight for equality is wrong. They certainly didn’t care to represent black Americans when they were enslaved or facing racial segregation and abuse; the Democratic Party calling itself the “white man’s party” (Wormser, 2002), while the northern Republicans were more likely to support emancipation and Reconstruction. What if today’s Democratic Party suddenly turns sharply right, and the Republicans go left? They have done it in the past and they could do it again, swapping sides, but still dancing in the confines of the status quo.

Conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats seem to try and manufacture a division by accusing each other of being extremists.

So one of the innumerable insane developments of 2020 is that both of America’s mainstream political parties are using different strategies to attack one another as being far-left extremists, which is absolutely bizarre since by global standards they are both very much right-wing parties. Neither party even has any interest in the basic social safety nets that are the norm in other developed nations, let alone wealth redistribution to end economic inequality, and are both as far as you can possibly get from having actual leftist goals like ending capitalism and worker ownership of the means of production.

Whenever I say that America has two right-wing parties I always get Republican victims of the incredible shrinking Overton window sputtering in confusion and outrage because they believe people like Joe Biden, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer are far far far far far left communists. This is of course a total propaganda construct.

Both parties work to advance the interests of oligarchs, war profiteers and imperialist government agencies in more or less exactly the same way; all they did was shift the spectrum of acceptable debate to issues which powerful capitalists do not care about like gay marriage and unisex public toilets. So now mainstream “conservatives” think leftism means having pink hair and mainstream “liberals” think Trump supporters are useful idiots of the Kremlin, but in terms of actually challenging actual power there’s not a bee’s dick of difference between them. (Johnstone, 2020).

This facade of name-calling and manufactured differences is smoke and mirrors to hide the truth, that in terms of actual policy, as said, there is very little difference.

When it comes to economic policy, Biden and Trump do not differ as much as it seems. “In terms of similarities [between Biden and Trump], even prior to the pandemic, both administrations have in common a focus on ‘buy American’, with policies designed towards US procurement of US goods and services,” she says. “Accordingly, multinational corporations from across the globe have stepped up their FDI to the US and bolstered their current manufacturing and employment bases, both during Trump’s presidency as well as in the initial months of the Biden administration.” (Strachan, 2021). Also, the Biden administration and Democrats as a whole claim to be for the working people (Democratic National Committee, 2019), but the

wealth gap has only grown in the past years and the middle class continues to shrink (Horowitz et al., 2020). Neither Biden nor Trump had improved the economy to benefit the majority of Americans, so what does it matter which candidate inhabits the Oval Office in January 2025?

Foreign policy also stays remarkably similar, as so far in Biden's administration policies inherited from previous administrations have continued.

But in critical areas, the Biden administration has not made substantial breaks, showing how difficult it is in Washington to chart new courses on foreign policy.

That was underscored this month when Mr. Biden traveled to Israel and Saudi Arabia, a trip partly aimed at strengthening the closer ties among those states that Trump officials had promoted under the so-called Abraham Accords.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr. Biden met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman despite his earlier vow to make the nation a "pariah" for human rights violations, notably the murder of a Washington Post writer in 2018. U.S. intelligence agencies concluded that the prince ordered the brutal killing. Behind the scenes, the United States still provides important support for the Saudi military in the Yemen war despite Mr. Biden's earlier pledge to end that aid because of Saudi airstrikes that killed civilians.

"The policies are converging," said Stephen E. Biegun, deputy secretary of state in the Trump administration and a National Security Council official under President George W. Bush. "Continuity is the norm, even between presidents as different as Trump and Biden." (Wong, 2021).

If Biden gets a second term, can the American people really expect things to change? His first four years of foreign policy and recent actions amidst the Israel-Palestine conflict aren't exactly

convincing voters of his integrity. And if the Trump administration takes the reins, they will not create significant change, rather they will continue the foreign policy carried out by their own Republican administration and Biden's Democrats.

Even proponents of the status quo acknowledge that the differences between Biden and Trump are not so intense. Many democrats/liberals acknowledge that Biden is only marginally better than Trump. "One comes home from work, gets blind drunk, beats you, rapes you, and then molests your two-year-old child. The other comes home from work, gets blind drunk, beats you, rapes you, and then falls asleep. Naturally, you would not want either. But if you had to choose – as you have to choose between Trump and Biden because to abstain is tantamount to voting for one or the other – surely you would choose the one who didn't molest your two-year-old child." (Brown, 2020). Crazy analogy aside, this claim acknowledges that Trump and Biden are very similar, but still makes the case that Biden is still better. Is he, though? When this was written in 2020 Biden was on the campaign trail making progressive-seeming promises to voters such as comprehensive gun control, safeguarding abortion rights, and expanding healthcare, but many of these promises have fallen flat on their faces. Biden has not fulfilled these promises he made to get elected and there is very little faith that he will in the next four years. Trump also made many promises before getting elected in 2016, the biggest one to "Make America Great Again," but clearly the America his administration made was not too great considering as the incumbent he did not get elected again. If we give him or Biden a second chance, they will most likely not fulfill the promises they made to the American people and instead focus on the promises made to their wealthy friends, like they have done in the recent past and present.

There is another heavy debate surrounding this election about third parties and whether a vote for a candidate that is not Biden or Trump is a vote thrown away. "Any other choice would

be stupid – as stupid as abstaining in the upcoming Presidential election. Because not voting (or voting for the Green Party candidate) is the same as voting for Trump. People who signal their virtue and moral incorruptibility by refusing to vote for the (admittedly only slightly) less bad choice in the upcoming Presidential election make me crazy. They talk as if voting for Biden will forever prohibit them – once the election is over – from continuing to organize against Biden and his coterie of war-mongering Wall Street puppet-masters just as fiercely as they organized against Trump and *his* coterie of war-mongering Wall Street puppet masters.” (Brown, 2020). A lot of citizens, especially liberal democrats, think this way. Third party voters have other ideas.

One of the most insidious, and extremely anti-democratic and nearly authoritarian arguments that Chomsky, et. al. make is the one that how a person votes should be based on who owns those votes. It matters little if a person votes for their interests, values, or their conscience. Party trumps the individual. The ‘founding fathers’ opposed the idea of political parties, but that’s where we are today. Yet it has taken on such a controlling factor over the citizenry that these powerful institutions have supplanted the role of the individual. Together, the two parties represent less than half the registered voters and even fewer of all eligible voters yet have near-absolute control of the electoral process. It is these two parties that control who vote and in particular, which party, which particular point of view for Wall Street, can be represented in an election” (Hoenig, 2020).

Maybe this is the manifestation of the “moral incorruptibility” that Brown does not like being signaled. Or maybe it is the form of a protest in a vote. Either way, the debate on third parties will continue throughout the 2024 election, but the actual effect of changing attitudes towards third parties is yet to be seen.

If Biden only gets one term in the office and will not serve a second term, the political and economic status quo will not change like Republicans believe. Americans cannot expect the United States to be “great again” after a Trump victory, not any more than it was “great” the last time. It could be noted that though politics and economics will largely stay the same, the social fabric of America might change. It is just speculation, but depending on whether the Democrats or Republicans have executive power, life might become harder for marginalized people, such as immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ people, women, etc. Even so, in both outcomes of the election, the base politics and economics of the United States will continue, business as usual. Deep change to the United States status quo will not occur as the result of an election, it will require a grassroots effort and possibly complete overhaul of the system at large. We can only dream.

Conclusion

What government do we want? The United States government that is run by members of the elite class who wish to keep the status quo and their wealth above all else; where a corporate media ignores dissent and differing opinions; where the education system omits important details in the textbooks students read; where a military operates without input from the citizens it says it protects; is certainly not it. A democratic government should serve its citizens, not the other way around.

The government we want would have to be truly democratic. That means no corporate donations to representatives, no voter suppression, no electoral college, no two-party system, and many more restrictions. It would also mean letting citizens vote for Supreme Court Justices, letting third parties make their way into the mainstream candidacies and debates, respecting

privacy, applying the rule of law equitably, and listening to American citizens that aren't part of an elite class.

Would a government like this, a more democratic one, fix everything? Maybe not. It might not completely fix the huge wealth disparities and evil that capitalism supports. This hypothetical government would need to place strict restrictions on capitalism, such as imposing more taxes on the wealthy, but even then, that does not account for so many issues with the system at large. There are so many factors that go into the current reality of the United States like the media, the education system, even the ways cities are built, that the entire American system would need a complete overhaul. That's a lot. Maybe for now, hope for the future and the willingness to go out in the world and fight for the system and the government we want is enough.

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