

We the Few - The Makeup of a Modern Government

Martin Todd

Department of Social Studies, College Park High School

US Government

Teacher - John Kropf

May 23, 2025

Abstract

An examination of the government necessitates a framework around which the inspection can be made. A brief summary of popular theories on American government is given, before concluding that an elite class, enabled by a hyper pluralistic state is the most accurate depiction of the current American government. This paper then debates methods of analyzing this theory, providing examples of both an institutional, an investigation solely of governmental branches, and structural, an examination of both government and the societal influences that affect its policy, like the economy. Attention is then turned to the political pawns which make up the government, their selection, and the forces which have an undue influence upon their decisions. Emphasis is placed upon the effects of the individual citizens' efforts compared with the corporation's efforts in the creation of legislation, and an analysis is given of the choice or lack thereof given to the voter. Finally, this paper presents ideas on the improvement of our government in the continuing effort to create a more perfect union.

We the Few - The Makeup of a Modern Government

The great American experiment has been lauded for two and a half centuries as a bastion of liberty, freedom and democracy. An analysis of this same government can yield different results. There are four main schools of thought about American government.

The first theory is one of pure democracy. Proponents argue that because each citizen has a single vote, each person is equally involved in the government, regardless of other extenuating factors. Although this is the theory that we project to the world, its true practice remains muddled. Another theory is pluralism, the idea that citizen representation comes not from a single voice, but from a variety of groups and special interests that represent a single issue or belief in the government. This theory has some merits, and groups of citizens have, in the past, had success in affecting government policy. However, pluralism is essentially an evolution of pure democracy and remains a theory which does not take into account outside factors which give advantage to certain groups. A more pessimistic angle on pluralism is hyperpluralism, the idea that the promulgation of special interest groups creates a deadlock in government. Every group has an opposite and their opposition on key issues results in a total lack of action.

The final theory is that of an elite class, an oligarchy which holds the reins of the government through their absurd amounts of capital. The government then prioritizes the interests of these elite few and disregards the voice of the many. This paper holds that the most effective description of the U.S. government is the theory of hyperpluralism, and through hyperpluralism, the creation of an elite class. Beginning with an overview of hyper pluralist and elite class states throughout history, we examine our current government by inspecting the forces that influence government, and the political sphere that surrounds it.

The original democracy, in the vision of *the Republic*, saw democracy as a functioning oligarchy, an agrarian society ruled over by a few city elites with the time and education necessary to form a government. And the genesis of the United States matched this vision, as only a small genteel class was able to participate in the government at its founding. But as the vote expanded, first to white men, then to black men, and finally to women, the former governing class turned to new methods to ensure their domination of politics. These elites encouraged hyperpluralism, because hyperpluralism creates division, and is an effective block for worker unity. The people then become deadlocked, and the same government is kept in power, protecting only their terms, and those that pay for their campaigns. Society, it must be acknowledged, has an elite class of owners which effectively control the direction of our national policy. But hyperpluralism is the enabling force behind the elite's power, and they claim we live in a democracy, because without that pacifying claim, the people will not be kept in check. We can see this with a historical example. The French revolution was ultimately the result of a severe discontent amongst the people of France, the so called third estate, because of the actions of the king and his court of nobility. This upper class had up until this point succeeded at quelling the discontent of the masses, but eventually, the stresses on society overcame the disunion between the various factions of the people, and they revolted. The people overcame the fractures that divided them in their common goal of overthrowing the elite class. But with the demise of the king, the people immediately split again into factions which succeeded each other in turn in attempting to become a new governing elite. Revolutions, including our own, all exhibit similar characteristics. We will never be able to escape this cycle, because those in power always want to remain in power, and because harmony amongst various competing interest groups for an extended period is almost impossible.

Truth or Ignorance: Choices in the Examination of American Government

According to the Magruder's American Government textbook, the United States of America has a government that is completely separated from its societal processes. Whether from "civil society" or the "free enterprise system", the textbook claims that although the guiding principles of government, society, and economy are the same, those of individual freedom and liberty, these institutions do not have any undue influence on each other (Shea & Magruder, 2023). According to the textbook, a study of government needs only extend to the institutions of the state. Thus, the Magruder's American Government textbook gives a thorough explanation of the functions of the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive branch. It explains the Articles of the Constitution and attempts to cover the scope of a federalist power structure. It even provides an analysis of the effect of the actual practice of these various branches of government. The textbook also tells us that "democracy and the free enterprise system are not the same thing. One is a political system, and the other is an economic system" (Shea & Magruder, 2023). Such an opinion seems oddly shallow, yet these authors are not alone in their belief that government exists in a vacuum separate from society. Or more specifically, that the tenets of the economic, social, and the political structure of what we call civilization rarely, if ever, predicate the form and function of government in a way that would be necessary for a full and complete interpretation and analysis of the leadership of America.

Publications are rife with subtle allusions to the separation of money and state. While discussing a protectionist act in New York mandating the purchase of salt from a specific area, the author of the *Post Journal* found that "[the government] fought the free market, and the free market won" (We Fought...2025). Now a fight, by necessity, requires two opponents to engage

with each other, to grapple for a moment, and then uncouple, and disengage. At no point in such a fight, do the opponents find that they are tethered together; the author says that neither are government and economy. In fact, according to this author, the economy and the government can be at odds with each other. This is a hard assertion to swallow, especially considering the fact that even a rudimentary analysis of the economy gleans the simple fact that “ [the free market] would simply not exist as we know it without the presence of an active government that creates and maintains the rules and conditions that allow it to operate efficiently.” This principle is evident in many integral parts of the ‘free market’ system - patents and copyrights, the rights of corporations, government backed currency, even basic law enforcement - expected governmental functions that directly enable the current economic system (Amy, n.d.).

Conservatives would like us to think that there can be a strict boundary between public and private in modern economies. But this is impossible. As the points above make clear, markets and capitalism are quasi-public entities – made possible by a myriad of government rules and laws that establish many of their basic inner workings. We may think of the “private market” as existing separately from the public sphere, but it does not. (Amy, n.d.)

A more nuanced argument may ascribe to the economy the basis for many of the individual freedoms which the proletariat has been ingrained with as American, and therefore governmental. Separating the source of these rights from the state and crediting their basis to the market greatly simplifies an institutional approach to the analysis of government; if the economy provides the morals and liberties of a nation, the government need only perform a set task of functions within clearly defined boundaries, and without any sorties into the gloomy world of ethics and personal liberties and equality. In fact, these authors go so far as to claim that

“economic freedom at the heart of free markets is also a precondition for political freedom,” that the independent free market enables governmental structure (Zupan, 2011).

This line of reasoning begs the question, which came first, economic or governmental structure, and while it can be argued that trade is natural, government is completely man made. This is clearly evident in the structure of the United States. Take Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution for example. The powers it enumerates are fairly mundane, yet they strike at the heart of the type of government the founders were attempting to build. The government was given the ability to coin money, to take loans, and to regulate commerce, among others. “What is remarkable about most of these topics is that they have little to do with promoting freedom, justice, equality, or the other lofty political values for which the American Revolution was fought. What they are promoting is economic prosperity” (Amy, n.d.). Why would the founders do that? Well because to them, the government, if it had to exist at all, should exist to protect the money-making capabilities of the educated wealthy class. The unique case study of the reinvention of politics in the United States gives a particularly clear example of the fact that “politics is the way society adjudicates among conflicting interests,” that political structure grew by necessity, to form a body to regulate conflicting economic interests between states (Frieden, 2020).

Despite a growing mountain of evidence, there are still those that insist on the separation of institutions. This time, they take the position that economic powers are more suited in delivering on social programs than the government. Because of the wealth of our country, “the prosperity created by free markets fosters a larger bounty from which to finance philanthropy. No country gives more than the United States. Charitable gifts totaled \$304 billion in 2009” (Zupan, 2011). Let us laud the Good Samaritan spirit of our country. Let us also note that

charitable donations in the United States lets the taxpayer deduct a significant portion of that donation from their adjusted gross income. In other words, governmental tax policy encourages donations the economy claims as their own.

An analysis of taxation begs for the inclusion of the most recent round of government tax cuts for the wealthy. In 2017, President Trump signed an order which gave “households with incomes in the top 1 percent an average tax cut of more than \$60,000 by 2025, compared to an average tax cut of less than \$500 for households in the bottom 60 percent” (Marr et al., 2024). Coincidentally, over the same period,

billionaire wealth has nearly doubled—up \$2.9 trillion—since enactment in late 2017 of the Trump-GOP tax law. Under current rules, none of that nearly \$3 trillion in wealth gain—the main form of income for the ultra-wealthy—may ever be taxed. (*Americans for Tax Fairness*, 2024)

Surely there must be a reason that the government would willingly give up nearly three trillion dollars’ worth of taxable income, when budgets are already so tight, and funds are always needed. Surely there must be a reason that the government would give the wealthiest one percent a larger tax break than the poorest people in the nation. There is. The government, more specifically, the President would give up this revenue because come election day, this is the class upon which he is dependent in order to secure his campaign funds. Because over \$1.36 billion, 72 percent of the funds poured into the 2024 election, were donated to the Republican party in name, and to the Trump campaign, in practice (Americans for Tax Fairness, 2024b).

The undue influence, and clear payment and reward process of the governmental structure makes it clear that we have a “government of the rich that acts in the interest of the rich”. To ignore the influence of money on government is to choose naivety over clarity.

“Political power is, and will always be, the handmaid of economic power,” and wealth will always have an influence over governmental policy. To say otherwise is to ignore clearly evident facts. In 2004, over 20 years ago, “4 billion dollars was spent by lobbyists,” and that number has only grown since. Even this fact alone should be enough to correlate between economic power and governmental influence. There is no mention of it in the textbook. It was established then that the economy directly affects the government. Attention can now be turned towards social structure, beginning with an examination of class. Although “class power is less acknowledged today, its central importance remains evident,” in the unequal distribution of wealth, and the influence that wealth gives different classes over the government (Tabb, 2006).

Historically, in periods of vast economic growth, inequality grows more marked; and this economic growth continues to fuel inequality. Supported through the dissemination of intellectual schools of thought like social Darwinism, the wealthy class was extolled for its riches, and the lower class was encouraged to work harder in pursuit of some mythic better future. This philosophy, of a successful rich and a soon to be successful poor enabled the relaxing of regulation, the rampant corruption in government, and corporate friendly fiscal and trade policy that marked the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. The lower class was, and still is, fed more than just the American Dream in the efforts of the upper class to placate their sense of personal liberty as a citizen.

Just as white plantation owners told poor whites in the South that race was what counted, not wealth, the Republican Party has also skillfully mobilized the anger of the petit bourgeoisie faced with harsh competition and resentful of the large corporations and the rich elite. (Tabb, 2006)

It is a fine line the rich walk, but it is one they know well. We see how the lower class is enabled with a feeling of privilege by demeaning a smaller minority that has little public protection. Race, always the contentious topic, continues to be used by the rich, and through them, the government, as a face to lay the blame for the many hardships the lower class faces. We also see how the speaker, in this case the Republican Party, cleverly removes themselves from blame. It is a nameless ‘corporate rich elite’ that, combined with a racial element, really serves as the American scapegoat. Politicians know of this animal, and they visit its stockades often. By “intentionally exacerbating a sense of racial division in the public in the name of political expediency” they expose “the dominant actor influencing who benefits, who is harmed, and which inequalities result from government action - or inaction” (Johnson, 2022). That person being, of course, the elected official or candidate basing their campaign on the principles of systematic racism and stigmatization of people based upon arbitrary social constructs. We can see that this influence is still feeding at the governmental trough today. Voting laws, recently enacted that “permit only those types of photo ID disproportionately held by whites and excluded those disproportionately held by African Americans” to be used for voter registration (Solomon et al., 2019). The

disenfranchisement and the denial of suffrage to Washington, D.C., residents and Americans in the U.S. territories, altogether affecting 9.5 million Americans in 2016 - more than the total number of eligible voters in Wyoming, Vermont, Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, Rhode Island, Montana, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, and Idaho combined. Collectively, these 12 states—most of which are predominantly white—have 17 voting members in the House of Representatives, 24 senators, and 41 electoral college votes. (Solomon et al., 2019)

The three-fifths compromise in the Constitution of the United States allowed slave owning states a decisive advantage in representation in Congress and a decision which directly affected the nation until the Civil War, and even afterwards. Each of these mandates can be directly traced to racial differences affecting policy decision, and these directives are all from the single topic of enfranchisement. The scope, the breadth of racial, and class politicking is not simply overwhelming, it is absolute. Confidence can be had when saying that every governmental policy was in some way affected by class, or by race.

The last major player in this grab of power is the position of the people themselves. Or, more accurately, their marked lack of position. For right now “most voters are unorganized, often minimally informed, hostile to the political process, and so prone to emotional appeals on issues of only glancing interest to the upper class” (Tabb, 2006). Evident in the political slogans and commercials and bumper stickers and baseball caps that invade the public sphere at all times, we the people have shown ourselves to be highly susceptible to basic propaganda and charged messaging. ‘Make America Great Again’, becomes the perfect slogan. A lack of policy, directive, or even a measuring stick for what ‘Great’ really is means that everyone can assign their own meaning. Everyone feels validated in their concerns about what is not so ‘Great’ and the speaker receives plenty of votes. Those that oppose the speaker must then oppose this vague catchphrase and the individual concerns that the general public has attached to it themselves. A broad solution facing specific problems is doomed to failure, and so this slogan only increases ostracization between the speaker and their opponents.

The University of Chicago conducted research into this problem, the effect that polarization has on the actual function of government. They found that “the more polarized the public is, the more willing a part of the public will be to turn a blind eye to presidents and prime

ministers attacking the press, the courts, and other institutions,” and so as the masses sway under the influence of the whispering words of politicians, they in turn sanction even more abuses of their rights to solve a problem that was created by the politicians themselves (Steimer, 2025). A vicious cycle, to be sure.

This is not a new phenomenon, and it is not a phenomenon which the public are totally unaware of. When Alexis de Tocqueville was traveling the United States during the antebellum period, he made an observation that for the public

the ruling power in the U.S. is not to be made game of. The smallest reproach irritates its sensibility, and the slightest joke that has any foundation in truth renders it indignant. No writer can escape paying this tribute of adulation to his fellow citizens. (De Tocqueville, 1945, pp. 273–277)

de Tocqueville holds that because we in the United States subject ourselves to our own domination, we ensure our own happiness through blissful ignorance. Citizenry purposefully ignores abuses of power, and breaches of liberty, for if we did not, we would be forced to reconcile with the fact that for the entire history of our country, the vast majority of our population has been willingly scammed by our leaders, leaders which we have chosen. And so, the public maintains the facade.

But sometimes the true image is beheld, and the public finally has a real, marked, and immediate effect on government. Taking for example the Great Depression, twenty years of free trade and loose regulation of a completely capitalistic state which even Thomas Jefferson would have approved of, reversed in almost an instant into an overbearing federal socialist state. Helmed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, American government was shaped by his policies of deficit spending, expansion of federal, and specifically executive power, and wartime privileges,

all empowered by a shift in public perception of the government. The unique combination of the times, the person in office, and public perception greatly shifted the strength of presidential power (Peterson, 2019).

Expanding to “administrative agencies, from the Federal Communications Commission to the Environmental Protection Agency” all “in varying degrees, under the president’s control” is only further evidence of the change wrought by a public perception of the role that political structure should have in their everyday lives.

A true analysis of any subject requires knowledge that goes beyond function, because the shape of that function is always influenced by outside variables. The same is true for the government. To examine only the institutions of government, to separate the function of an apparatus from its sources of energy in the social, economic, and political pressures that the world places upon it is incredibly naive. It cannot be forgotten that nothing about the government is natural. It is a purely social construct, and it is imprinted with the values of the society that creates it. To honestly answer the question of what type of government we would like to see in our country, we must first have a true and accurate knowledge of the existing government, in order to analyze its underlying principles and pass a judgement on its effectiveness and compatibility with our own moral standards. That image can only be formed when the motives of those people and collectives which shape the government are analyzed in concert with the government itself.

A Choice of Enemy or Villain

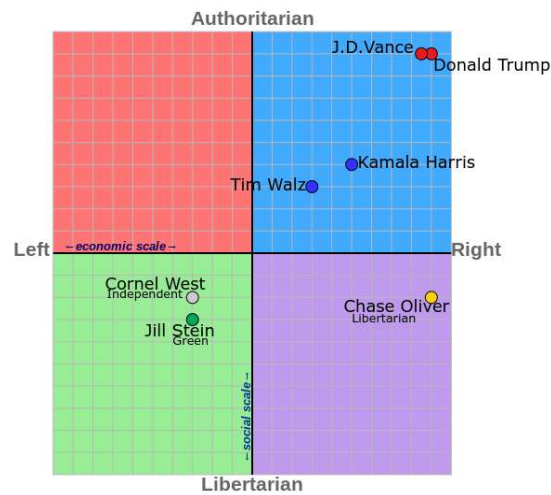
The status quo is defined as the existing state of affairs in society, with a particular emphasis on the political, legal, religious and economic facets of said community. This phrase is of particular interest because of its prevalence in modern rhetoric; those without power preach a change to the status quo, and those in power feign ignorance of its existence. We, the people, cannot, of course, fault them for sticking their collective heads in the sand, because for them, the status quo is of great benefit. The current system of government in the United States favors those with money, who can pay their way to the ear of sympathetic politicians, and who can pay for these same politicians' campaigns, making them beholden to their interests. In the financial world, the two parties that are constantly locking horns in the media, appear to be the same animal. Those with money know that whoever wins will pay tribute to the rich, the only difference will be in how public they make their tithes. Although there are some differences in party lines, and the occasional policymaker will slip through the corporate minefield unscathed, it remains extremely difficult to disprove that the Democratic and Republican parties do not represent the same interests.

That principle, that parties represent interested parties in the government, is the argument of the Magruder's American Government textbook. They claim that a party is “A group of persons, joined together on the basis of certain common principles, who seek to control the government in order to secure the adoption of certain public policies and programs.” The textbook gives the illusion of honesty, but then shatters it, by stating that “Political parties are absolutely essential to democratic government. They are a vital link between the people and their government” (Shea & Magruder, 2023). Parties are certainly a group of people, working together to control the government for their own aims, but it is certainly not a group of voters, of the

common people, and parties in no way further the principles of democracy. The commonality of both parties is their focus on making money for their candidates, taking investments from corporations and the wealthy, and then giving out favors to these benefactors. The textbook then appears just as beholden to the party as the party is to the wealthy, informing its readers about the importance of the party and admonishing them to “remember that point the next time a comedian on late-night television ridicules some candidate, party or officeholder.” Excuse the self-interested politician, they say, he’s from a major political party, and they are very important to our democracy. The textbook also claims that political parties “Soften the impact of extremists at both ends of the political spectrum.” This could actually be a point in the party's favor. Collaboration is an important part of a stable and functioning government, and if parties make this task easier, then they could truly be important. In truth, however, the lack of so-called ‘extreme’ policies from either party results in little difference between either party’s policy platforms. “Both parties seek the same prize: the votes of a majority of the electorate. To capture that prize, they must win over essentially the same people,” and to win over the same people, both say essentially the same thing (Shea & Magruder, 2023).

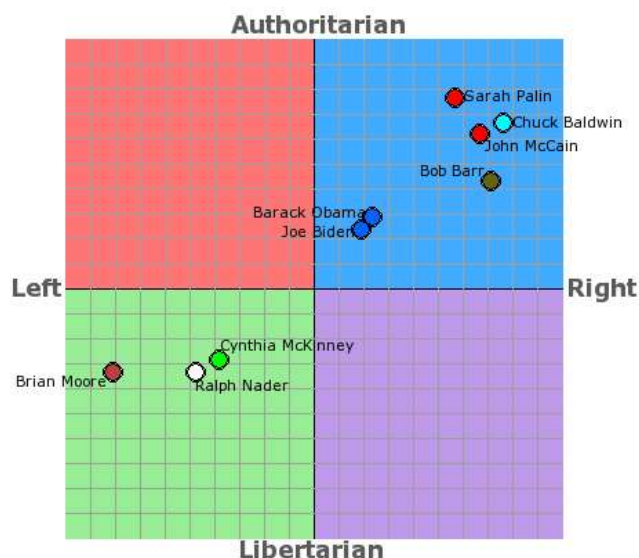
The textbook’s analysis of the political parties is rife with contradictions. A simpler analysis could come from The Political Compass. The Political Compass analyzes the rhetoric, policy, and stated goals of various politicians, most notably, those running for President in the U.S. Analyzing candidates on two scales, a standard left to right scale as a measure of a candidate’s economic beliefs, and an authoritarian to libertarian scale to measure a candidate’s beliefs on government. Examining the graph of the 2024 candidates yields a few conclusions (The Political Compass, 2024).

The US Presidential Election 2024



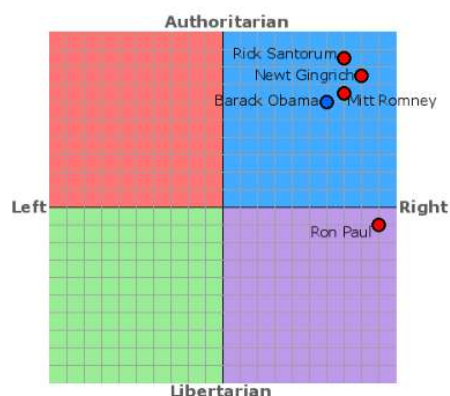
First, we discern that the two mainstream candidates, Kamala Harris, and Donald Trump, are both firmly right authoritarians. In other words, they believe in capitalism with few social programs, and a large governmental influence on the market and on the lives of the citizenry. However, it should also be noted that there is a gap between the two former candidates, Harris is less economically right, and significantly less authoritarian than Donald Trump and his running mate. These are differences greater than a few percentage points. We can also note the positions of the alternate candidates, with both the Green and Independent party fielding candidates that are both libertarian and socialist. However, these positions are scarcely discussed, media minutes are saved for finding the differences between Kamala and Trump.

The Political Compass has been recording data points for presidential candidates since the turn of the century, giving its audience a wealth of information, and a means of comparing the effect of office over the course of two terms (The Political Compass, 2024).



In 2008, Barack Obama, was near the center of the graph, a borderline social libertarian. This metric was based upon his rhetoric during his meteoric rise to the presidential candidacy. However, just four years later, the tendrils of the establishment had already ensnared him.

The US Presidential Election 2012



In 2012, Obama has, policy wise, become almost synonymous with his Republican competitors. In four years in office, he became an authoritarian capitalist, just like almost every other major candidate in the last century. While the 2012 election was certainly not as politicized as the most recent one, voters still believed they were making a choice between two distinct candidates,

when, according to the Political Compass, there wasn't really a difference between the two. This phenomenon then, of lack of distinction between political parties, is not distinct to the last election cycle (The Political Compass, 2024).

The parties themselves would disagree wholeheartedly with these statements. Examining the parties individually, we can discern the ways that they present their platform and then compare the two policy packages.

The Republican party was founded in the antebellum period as a coalition of abolitionist movements. It retained this spirit for many years, and continued to advocate, as its main platform, redress for social issues. Benjamin Harrison, in accepting the Republican presidential nomination in 1892, said that "it is practically the duty of the educated and influential to help the ignorant and weak when possible." This sentiment gradually shifted as the "evolution of the Republican party moved away from such support for strong central government authority to support for decentralization and state self-determination." But did this shift reflect the beliefs of the party members that would be voting for these candidates? The author argues that "Ideology, in this country at least, may be preeminently an elite-level phenomenon. If so, the logical site for an investigation into party ideology is the leadership stratum, not the rank and file" (Speel, 2000). And as the elites of both parties, Democratic and Republican, are essentially a homogenous class, it is not a gross generalization to assume that policies coming from a similar class would develop some sort of overlap.

This paper does not argue that every single party member or elected official holds the same beliefs. There are some that are truly principled, that actually embody the stated beliefs of both parties and fight hard for policy they believe will help their constituents. Examining the Democratic party for a moment, these people, like Bernie Sanders or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez,

are then grouped with Obama or Biden or Harris, people that, as Cortez says, “would not belong to the same party as [Sanders and I] in a European political system.” This presents an interesting conundrum. Historically, U.S. political parties have not represented an ideal or policy point so much as they have represented a type of group. For Democrats, that is the “out group”, those that feel marginalized in American society (Mandelbaum, 2020).

In the 19th century [Democrats] 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 (Mandelbaum, 2020).

Republicans have occupied the opposite side, the ‘in-group’ who are satisfied with the status quo, and work to defend it. The parties then are dynamic, they are flexible and adapt to changing world conditions, and therefore remain significant powers (Mandelbaum, 2020). In this sense, the two parties represent no firm ideals. In the antebellum period, parties rose and fell over election cycles, parties with specific goals in policy, like the Free-Soil party. This is also how many parliamentary parties function. But the Democrats and Republicans have no such basis. In fact, over the century and a half of their function, they have switched platforms and ideas many times. This then makes them the ultimate protectors of the status quo. They are, as the textbook said, vested with the sole aim of taking and maintaining power in the government. They have no fixed ideology, and they will say or pretend to say and do and pretend to do whatever it takes to garner the votes they so desperately claw after. The political parties embody Orwell's famous line “We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power...Power is not a means, it is an end” (Orwell, 1949/2017).

Despite the obvious similarities, Republicans and Democrats often see each other as alien races. Republicans say that Democrats are not concerned with their country that “Progressives

ask: “What is unfair?” “What am I owed?” “What has offended me today?” “What must my country do for me?” as opposed to noble Republicans who asks what they can do for their country (The 3 Big...n.d.). Democrats are crazed by any choice but for their candidate, “people who signal their virtue and moral incorruptibility by refusing to vote for the (admittedly only slightly) less worse choice” (Brown, 2020). For many voters, both parties present bad options, because the options are essentially the same. Every election seems to always be a choice between two bad options, and for many, voting is akin to survival, trying to find a candidate that will protect family and community the most (Moreno, 2024). Bad options for a majority of the populace stem directly from the makeup of our electoral system, beginning with the need for capital to wage any sort of effective race.

This is the money primary, the first, and, in many instances, the most important round of the contest. It eliminates more candidates than any other hurdle. Because it eliminates them so early and so quietly, its impact is often unobserved (Clawson et al., 2003).

The candidates that might actually represent the people will never have a chance to win, because the people cannot easily give them the money that they need to compete with the established, corporate funded candidates. Although it may seem like a grassroots effort is possible, the numbers do not lie. Of candidates challenging an incumbent seat in the house of representatives,

Only one winning challenger spent less than \$500,000, 12 spent between half-a-million and a million dollars, and 10 spent more than a million dollars. Furthermore, 13 of the 23 winning challengers outspent the incumbent. A House challenger who can't raise at least a half-million dollars doesn't have a one percent chance of winning (Clawson et al., 2003).

And where does all that money come from? Well, “a disproportionate number of such contributors are corporate political action committees (PACs), executives, and lobbyists.” These contributors have a direct, often material interest, in governmental policy. Contributions provide leverage for businesspeople, creating paths of direct access to policy makers. Such undue influence is illustrated through the almost unopposed bipartisan support for billions in bank bailouts, as compared with the defeat of measures for unpaid maternity leave (Clawson et al., 1998/2003).

For these corporations, it “really doesn’t matter” who wins the US presidential election, because both Donald Trump and Kamala Harris will be good for Wall Street. Blackrock and the government trade their employees, as well as other banks, like Goldman Sachs. Both hedge funds know that Harris and Trump will protect their interests, so the election only matters in the sense of corporate competition, of who can have the most influence and not who can have influence at all. Joe Biden, a democrat, promised, just as Trump has done to not change the standard of living of the rich. This is a promise almost every American president has followed (Norton & Norton, 2024). As the puppet masters, the leaders of the economy become the referees of the government, making the rules of the game. Regardless of a voter’s choice, the BlackRock’s and Goldman Sachs of our world will still be in the driver’s seat, so that the solutions to problems that face voters, but are a disadvantage to these economic powers, are disqualified before they can even be put into consideration (Norton & Norton, 2024). Take for example the military industrial complex. Although the average voter may want to cut the military budget, and stop the killings of millions of people, it can never happen. After being called pro-Chinese, pro-Russian, anti-worker and a traitor, by both Democrats and Republicans, your proposal will be burned at the stake, because too many people are making money off of the

weapons that the voter opposes (Rubenstein, 2024). Similar examples can be found everywhere, regardless of party affiliation. The Democratic nomination for President, Harris,

went out of her way to say that she wouldn't ban fracking. Of course, fracking ought to be banned because it produces fossil fuels, contaminates water supplies, and even produces earthquakes. Harris went on to claim that democrats are concerned about climate change while simultaneously pledging to continue oil production (Kimberley, 2024).

Such hypocrisy is tolerated and even lauded. After all, Harris said she was for the environment. Certainly, a step in the right direction. It lets everyone nod their heads in agreement, and wash their hands of the issue, without helping, and in fact actually harming, the problem of climate change.

The two political parties are careful to maintain a veneer of separation to eliminate widespread social movements which could derail their hegemony. In a survey of democratic and republican voters on specific societal problems, at least 75 percent of responses overlapped. Both groups found the principles of democracy to be important to our country's future, and that bipartisan solutions are essential to its realization (Kimberley, 2024). The people of our nation are alike. They agree with their neighbors, and yet division continues to spread. Overcoming this division, however, could yield a new society. The numbers support this claim. "84% of all Americans believe political leaders are more interested in protecting their power and privilege than doing what is right and 81% percent believe the power of ordinary people to control our country is getting weaker every day as politicians of both parties fight to protect their own power and privilege." 78% believe that the major parties are essentially useless in changing anything,

because they are too beholden to special interests. And most importantly, a majority wish there was a third party that could actually fight for their interests (Washington's Blog, 2016).

These parties exist. Some, like the Green Party, “reflect a broader social movement seeking to reorient civilization in what supporters say are more sustainable and humane directions.” The party “has important differences from both the left and right. Most Greens see themselves on the economic and social left, but their focus on decentralization and local solutions separates them from many traditional socialist parties” (McBride, 2022). Through grassroots efforts, the party has been able to win some seats, and since the turn of the century, has fielded a presidential candidate. However, the movement has enjoyed more support overseas, in parliamentary style governments that more easily reward single issue or non-establishment parties. Although the Green Party is more likely to represent the people's voice, their lack of resources disables them from garnering the widespread support they would need to reflect meaningful change onto the system.

The Green Party is a new player in the political world that attempts to defy corporate centrism and truly embody the progressive spirit which the Democratic Party says it embodies. But “progressivism and corporate centrism are not parts of an ideological spectrum. Centrism isn’t watered-down progressivism; centrism directly opposes progressivism. Centrists want wars and don’t care about the poor; progressives want no wars and care deeply about the poor. There is no room for compromise between the two.” The country needs a new party to escape these confines (Rall, 2020).

Trump, in his bid for president, has made many promises to the American people. He is unique in the fact that the promises he made closely relate to the policies that he will actually implement, because the policies that he promised, namely, to do with the economy, are policies

that could in no way benefit the average citizen. He is unique in the fact that he told the American people, with absolutely no guile, of the tribute he planned to pay to his corporate benefactors. But Trump is not the first to disregard addressing the problems of the people. Former presidents, both Republican and Democrat, have consistently enacted similar policy, and acceded to the wishes of big business. We can imagine the American presidency as a boat race. For both Democrats and Republicans, the finish line is the same. Although each boat may deviate slightly, avoiding a wave, or going around an island, synonymous to the small differences in societal policy that eb and flow with the party structure currently in power, ultimately, each boat is vying to be the first to the same spot. With our current party structure, it is impossible to change the position of the finish line, or to even create multiple finish lines that do not have any overlap. Although Trump's policies can and will affect many people in a negative way, as of now, the political race has not yet deviated from one of its regularly scheduled excursions. It remains to be seen whether the boat will return to the modus operandi, or whether its slight deviation will result in the ship capsizing for good.

Conclusion

By examining the economic, societal, and political structure that surrounds and influences our government, as well as the political parties that form the greatest influence on policy and voters' expressions of their individual opinions, it can be concluded that the will of the people is in relatively short supply in the echelons of government. The effects of major corporations, and the coffers of individuals have an undue influence on policy makers, an influence that easily negates any voice that the people are able to muster. But people want to be heard, and one day, there will be enough of them that are more tired with, and angrier at the

people in power than they are at each other. On this day, change, meaningful change, will finally come.

If the people wish to amend the system, the most realistic pseudo revolution that may come, there are specific policies that could create a government more representative of the people. Strict spending laws and legislation that attempts to reign in super PACs would be a fantastic start and would give third party and non-incumbent candidates a much greater chance of attaining higher offices. Reforms to the electoral college, through proportional allotment or a straight popular vote would create a more accurate depiction of the voice of the people and would encourage more people to exercise their right to vote because their vote would have more of an effect. Legislation which reduces the military budget and gives it to scientific research in space, medicine and technological pursuits as well as policy which limits the rights of corporations and holds them responsible to the people instead of the other way around. Guidelines around lobbying, and the undue effects which outside groups can have on the actions of Congress should also be investigated and implemented.

Change is not a moment; it is a process. These ideas are a starting point, but to achieve the goal we truly strive for when we say that America is the land of democracy and liberty will take the dedicated efforts of millions of citizens all sharing a common purpose, and a hope for a better and brighter future.

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