AP United States Government & Politics
Summer Assignment 2020-2021

Welcome to AP GoPo! I am excited that you chose to enroll in this course, as it demonstrates your interest in learning about and willingness to engage in American government and politics. This is significant, as an informed and civic-minded citizenry is a vital component of our democracy. AP U.S. Government & Politics provides a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political ideals, institutions and processes that characterize the constitutional system of the United States.

Please note the curriculum is rigorous, as it requires students to examine U.S. foundational documents, analyze Supreme Court decisions, read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, students will complete a community service project. In order to be prepared for the start of class, compete the following assignments. A test comprised of multiple-choice and free-response questions will be administered the first week of school to assess your comprehension of the material. Stop by my room B-108 or email me at lafleurm@luhsd.net should you have any questions. Have a great summer☺

1. Read Chapter 1 "American Government and Politics" on pages 5-16 in the text, *American Government: Stories of a Nation*, by Scott Abernathy & Karen Waples. Then, respond to the following prompts:

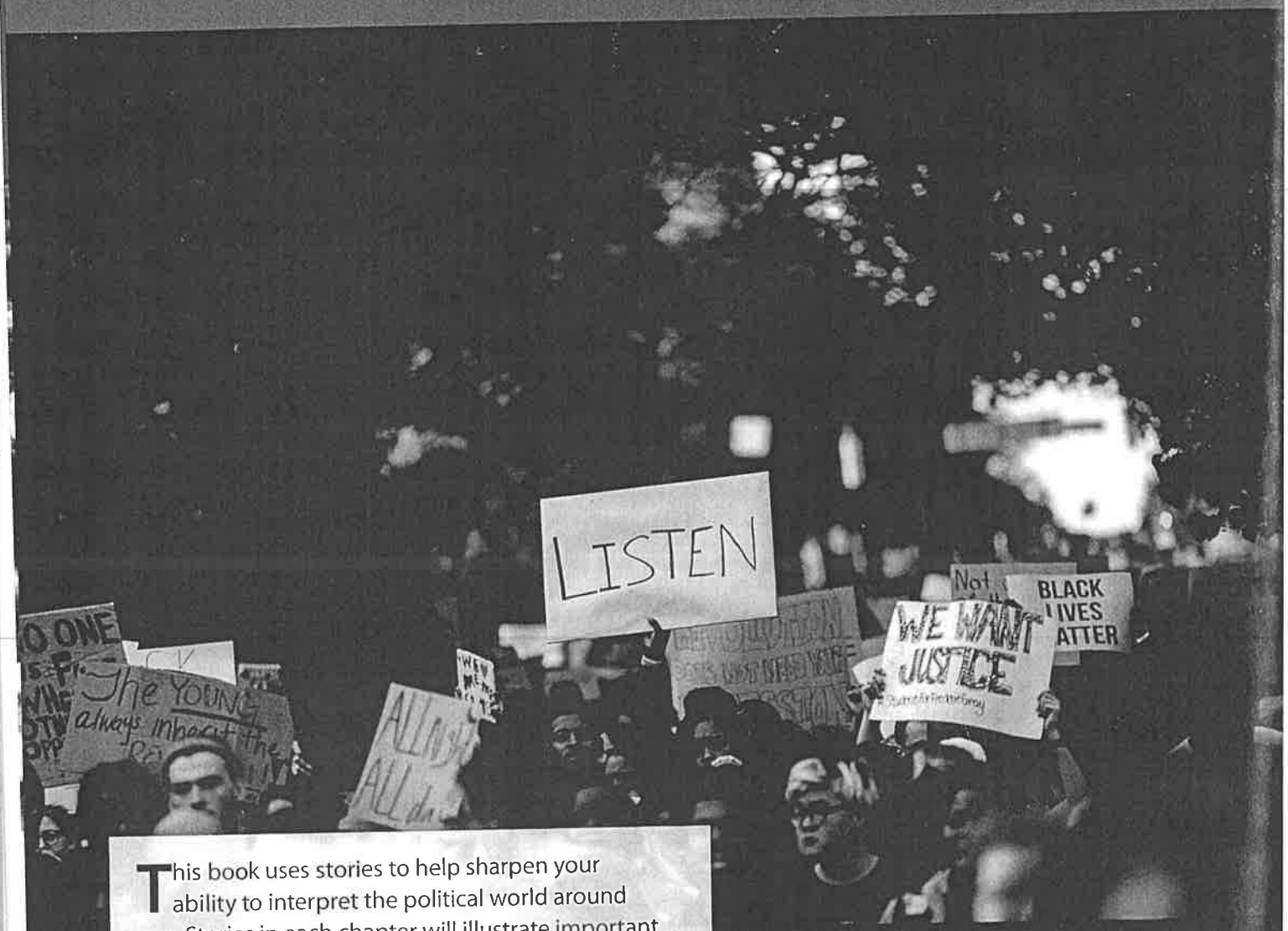
   - Describe *government* and *politics* and explain the difference between the two terms. Provide an example to support your answer.
   - What is *political culture*? Describe three beliefs or values shared by Americans.
   - Read the pie chart "Faith in the American Dream" on page 11. Then, respond to the following prompts: 1) Identify the most common belief about the American Dream, 2) Describe one limitation of the pie chart in measuring beliefs about the American Dream, 3) Explain one way in which politicians might use the results of the survey to advocate for or against programs to assist low-wage workers.
   - Describe the three competing theories of representative democracy: *participatory*, *pluralist*, *elitist*. Explain which model is most in line with your views.
   - What is a *republic*? Describe the difficulty in our pursuit to maintain order and secure freedom. Explain how we attempt to resolve these conflicting aims.

2. Read "The Power Elite" by C. Wright Mills. Talk-to-the-Text (TttT) by circling unfamiliar terms, highlighting main ideas, and annotating key points in the margins. When done, write a persuasive paragraph that is approximately five to seven-sentences in length, which identifies the author's claim, cites evidence from the text, and explains how the evidence supports the thesis.

3. Watch a Sunday morning talk show broadcast on a major network, such as *Meet the Press (NBC), Face the Nation (CBS), This Week (ABC), Fox News Sunday (Fox),* or *State of the Union (CNN).* When done, write a summary that is approximately five-sentences in length, which identifies the significant *who*, *what*, *where*, *why* and *when* of the lead story.

1 American Government and Politics

The Stories of Our Nation



College and high school students march in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2015 in protest of the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody. Their protest is part of the American political story: people claiming their constitutional rights and demanding to be heard.
Andrew Burton/Getty Images

This book uses stories to help sharpen your ability to interpret the political world around you. Stories in each chapter will illustrate important concepts in the study of American politics. They are meant to make those ideas come to life—to help you understand that American government is not something that exists apart from you.

Hardly any of the stories have tidy endings. And because they are *real* stories, in all their messy, complicated glory, they will urge you and your classmates to think in ways that don't amount to either/or. Stories are a way to learn to walk in the shoes of people whose circumstances, experiences, and opinions differ from yours.

Read the stories. Absorb the nuts-and-bolts facts and concepts that you are studying. Most important, however, connect the facts to concepts. Use the stories to more deeply understand the complexity of American politics. Use them to understand the many voices that are a part of the national conversation. Use the stories to make your own arguments stronger, better formed, more politically savvy, and more effective.

The stories told in this book illustrate how big questions are resolved and revisited through **politics**, the process of influencing the actions and policies of a **government**. Politics and government are closely connected, but they are not the same. Politics describes processes; government describes the rules and institutions that make up the system of policymaking within a country. Throughout the book, we'll hear from people who have engaged with those institutions and who have taken part in those processes.

politics
the process of influencing the actions and policies of government.

government
the rules and institutions that make up that system of policymaking.

We will begin with two stories about schools: one about a young woman in Nebraska who fought for the right to start a Bible study group, the other about a group of Kentucky students who wanted to establish a Gay-Straight Alliance.

We will witness the efforts of many kinds of people who have wrestled with the meaning of fundamental rights in American democracy and see how they, as individuals and groups, have fought for their rights.

LEARNING TARGETS

By connecting to those stories about the foundations of American government, you will be able to

1.1 Describe the balance between governmental power and individual rights.

1.2 Describe American political culture.

1.3 Explain and compare models of representative democracy.

1.4 Describe a constitutional republic.

1.1 The Fight for Students' Rights

Bridget Mergens walked into the office of her school principal in Omaha, Nebraska, with a request. She wanted to start a student group—a Christian Bible study club. Mergens's high school sponsored many other extracurricular clubs, including a photography club and a scuba diving club. Her principal and her local school board denied her request, claiming that the religious club she proposed was different from the other approved clubs. To Mergens, the school board's arguments were flawed.

Mergens was represented by a Christian advocacy group, the National Legal Foundation. The legal basis of Mergens's claim was a national law, the Equal Access Act



Liz Loverde, a sophomore at Wantagh Senior High School on Long Island, New York, in 2014. Loverde successfully pressured her school to allow a Bible study club, following in the footsteps of others, such as Bridget Mergens, in claiming rights under the Equal Access Act of 1984.

The Liberty Institute

of 1984 (EAA).[1] The law's main intent was to restrict the ability of public high schools to exclude religious extracurricular clubs.

In 1981, before the act's passage, the Supreme Court had already affirmed these rights for students at public colleges and universities, but it had not yet done so for those in public high schools. One consideration was whether high school students are mature enough to distinguish between their school's efforts to provide an open forum and the possibility that the school endorsed the club members' religious beliefs.

In June 1990, five years after Bridget Mergens tried to start the Bible study club, the Supreme Court ruled in her favor. The Court upheld high school students' rights to have the same access for their faith-based extracurricular clubs as that granted to other student groups. It also upheld the constitutionality of the EAA. In her majority opinion in *Board of Education of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens*, Supreme Court justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote, "High school students are mature enough and are likely to understand that a school does not endorse or support student speech that it merely permits on a nondiscriminatory basis."[2]

Others, including some of the justices of the Supreme Court, worried that the free-speech provisions of the EAA might also guarantee access for student groups with much more controversial agendas. It was this possibility that had especially worried school administrators. Omaha principal James Findley recounted, "I didn't have a concern about the five or six kids having a Bible study club. I was concerned about what and who it opens the doors to. I've had students say they'll start a Satanist club or a skinheads group."[3]

As it turned out, other groups of high school students *did* test the system, including a group of high school students in Boyd County, Kentucky, who circulated a petition to start a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). In 2002, school officials turned down the students' request to form the GSA. Of twenty-one student group applications, theirs was the only one denied. Requests from groups such as the Future Business Leaders of America and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes were approved.[4] The students then contacted the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for help. One month after the ACLU sent a letter to the school board that referred to the Equal Access Act, the board reversed itself and approved the formation of the GSA.[5]

But that didn't fully settle the matter. Back at Boyd County High School, at the first official meeting of the GSA, a crowd "directly confronted the GSA supporters 'with facial expressions, hand gestures . . . some very uncivil body language . . . people were using loud voices and angry voices.'"[6] Two days later, a group of students protesting outside the school "shouted at [GSA] students as they arrived, 'We don't want something like that in our school.'"[7]

In an emergency meeting held in December, the school board suspended all non-curricular clubs for the remainder of the 2002–03 school year.[8] Members of the GSA stopped meeting at the school, but other groups, including the school's drama and Bible study clubs, continued to use the high school's facilities. The members of the GSA went to court.

In 2004, the ACLU announced a settlement with the Boyd County public schools: "The settlement requires that the district treat all student clubs equally and conduct an



Decades after both the *Mergens* and the *Boyd County* cases, Jennifer Villasana, president of the Gay-Straight Alliance at Richland High School, holds a badge that she wears at the White House LGBT Conference on Safe Schools and Communities held at the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday, March 20, 2012.
Rodger Mallison/Fort Worth Star-Telegram/MCT via Getty Images

anti-harassment training for all district staff as well as all students in high school and middle school."[9]

The efforts of these students highlight the ways in which individuals have used the political tools available to them to secure their rights. In filing her lawsuit and pursuing her claims, Bridget Mergens had help from the National Legal Foundation, a Christian public interest law firm.[10] The Boyd County High School GSA had the help of the ACLU. Both Mergens and the members of the Boyd County High School GSA based their claims on the same federal law, the Equal Access Act. With help, they harnessed the power of the American judicial system to realize their goals.

Both groups' efforts demonstrate how to use tactics effectively in the political process. In this book, we will consider those dynamics in detail. We will also dive into the stories of many other individuals and groups who have sought to assert their rights and reshape the laws. Whether the others whose stories you will read "won" or "lost" is not the most important consideration. By adding their voices to the American conversation, they mattered.

AP® Political Science PRACTICES

Exam Task Verbs

The AP® U.S. Government and Politics exam contains three free-response questions and one argumentation question. Task verbs tell you how to write your response. These task verbs appear on the exam:

Identify: To name a factor, person, power, or other term.

Example: *Identify* the tactic used by Bridget Mergens to assert her rights.

Answer: Mergens filed a lawsuit.

Describe: To state the meaning of a term or concept.

Example: *Describe* the Equal Access Act of 1984.

Answer: The EAA protects the right of students to form religious clubs in public high schools.

Explain: To give a cause or reason. Explanations usually include the word *because*.

Example: *Explain* how the Equal Access Act of 1984 causes tension between liberty and order.

Answer: The EEAA demonstrates tension between liberty and order because when students form controversial clubs, school officials worry that the controversy will cause protest and disorder within the school.

Section Review

This chapter's main ideas are reflected in the Learning Targets. By reviewing after each section, you should be able to

—**Remember** the key points,
—**Know** terms that are central to the topic, and
—**Think** critically about these questions.

1.1 Describe the balance between governmental power and individual rights.

REMEMBER The American system of government is complex and balances competing rights.

KNOW
- *politics*: the process of influencing the actions and policies of government. (p. 5)
- *government*: the rules and institutions that make up the system of policymaking. (p. 5)

THINK How do the actions of the students and school officials featured in this story demonstrate the balance between protecting liberty and establishing order?

1.1 Review Question: Free Response

The Equal Access Act of 1984 (EAA) states, "It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance . . . to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting . . . on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings."[11]

After reading the passage, please respond to parts A, B, and C.

A. Describe the purpose of the EAA.

B. Describe how Bridget Mergens and the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at Boyd County High School used the EAA to assert their rights.

C. Explain one way in which the efforts of Bridget Mergens and the GSA, and the actions of officials at their schools, illustrate the tension between protecting liberty and establishing order.

1.2 American Political Culture

When they asserted their rights, Bridget Mergens and members of the Boyd County High School GSA did so on the basis of a handful of ideas that form the foundation of the American Republic. Indeed, these ideas were affirmed in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, making them part of the country's basic DNA: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." These were revolutionary ideas, but they were not original ones.

The Declaration of Independence

In drafting the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson drew upon ideas about liberty and government that were widely known in the colonies and Great Britain—ideas Jefferson wanted to convey so persuasively that they would launch a revolution. From the histories and philosophical works of ancient Greece and Rome came the idea of **democracy** (from the Greek *demos*, meaning "people," and *kratos*, "power"), in which power is held by the people.

democracy
a system of government where power is held by the people.

The would-be revolutionaries also borrowed from English Enlightenment philosopher John Locke, who had argued against a divine, or God-given, right of kings to rule with absolute power. Locke argued that people are born with **natural rights** that kings cannot give or take away.[12] These rights include life, liberty, and property. According to Locke, government is based on a **social contract**, in which people give to their governments the ability to rule over them to ensure an orderly and functioning society. If a government breaks that social contract by violating people's natural rights, then the people have the right to replace that unjust government with a just one.

natural rights
the right to life, liberty, and property, which government cannot take away.

social contract
people allow their governments to rule over them to ensure an orderly and functioning society.

From the French Enlightenment, Jefferson drew on the works of the Baron de Montesquieu,[13] who proposed that power in government should be divided between different branches so that no one branch could become too powerful. Jefferson also relied on Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume.[14] Noticing the tendency of leaders throughout history to abuse political power, Hume believed a just government should be carefully designed to keep the greedy and ambitious from using political power to their own advantage.

Today, the ideas of liberty, equality, and rights shape the shared set of beliefs, customs, traditions, and values that define the relationship of Americans to their government. We call those shared beliefs **American political culture**. Rodgers Smith, a contemporary political scientist, argues that there are multiple, often contradictory, political traditions.[15] Republicanism, with its roots in ancient Greece, emphasized participatory rights and a focus on the common good, even as a hierarchical tradition has embraced racial and gender hierarchies and inequality, where some people had more rights than others.[16]

American political culture
the set of beliefs, customs, traditions, and values that Americans share.

AP® TIP

Vocabulary matters!
The AP® U.S. Government and Politics exam assesses knowledge of important concepts. Pay attention to the bold terms in the textbook. Understanding key concepts means much more than just memorizing words. It's crucial to understand why each concept is important and to be able to apply it to new scenarios.

The Declaration of Independence contains five parts. In the preamble, Jefferson wrote, "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another . . ." This set the stage for the argument that the British government was no longer legitimate. Next, Jefferson defined citizens' rights as "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Jefferson deviated from John Locke in this statement of rights, replacing "property" with "happiness." The longest part of the Declaration is a list of grievances against the King of England, including charges that the colonists were not being represented in government, justice was obstructed, standing armies threatened colonists, and unfair taxes were imposed, along with a long list of other complaints. The Declaration ends with a statement separating the colonies from Great Britain and with a pledge by the signers to each other to protect "our Lives, our Fortunes, and our Sacred Honor."

On July 4, 1776, Congress approved Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, which became the first formal document establishing the basic principles of American democracy.

Popular Sovereignty and Republicanism

Sovereignty is the right of a government to rule. It can derive from many sources, such as monarchy, a divine right given by a god, or the leadership of an elite group. American political culture is based on the principle of **popular sovereignty**—the idea that the government's right to rule comes from the people. As stated in the Declaration's preamble, all of the government's power comes from the citizens, and when the citizens are unhappy, they can replace the government through regular, free, and fair elections.

popular sovereignty
the idea that the government's right to rule comes from the people.

American political culture is also based on the concept of **republicanism**, which means that the authority of the government comes from the people. Long gone are the days of the

republicanism
a system in which the government's authority comes from the people.

direct democracy practiced in ancient Greece, where eligible male citizens met to vote on policy issues. Representative government is much more practical and efficient than asking Americans to vote on every issue facing the nation. In representative government, citizens can choose representatives to assert their interests in the national policymaking process. Furthermore, representatives are held accountable in free and fair elections that take place at frequent and regular intervals. Members of the U.S. House of Representative stand for election every two years, and the term of a U.S. senator is six years. Presidential elections happen every four years.

Inalienable Rights

inalienable rights
rights the government cannot take away.

The thinking behind the Declaration of Independence is that some rights are *self-evident.* These are called **inalienable rights** in the sense that government may not take them away. The rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are among those inherent, self-evident rights. A just system of political rule must be constructed to protect these rights and their expression. The desire to safeguard individuals' rights led to the complex structure of American political institutions in the Constitution, which we will explore in the next chapter.

Two Visions of Liberty

liberty
social, political, and economic freedoms.

Another foundational American ideal expressed in the Declaration is a commitment to **liberty**—to social, political, and economic freedoms. Liberty may mean freedom *from* interference by a government or a freedom *to* pursue one's dreams. There is often a tension between these two visions of liberty. In the case of the Bridget Mergens's Bible study club, the tension between these two freedoms came into sharp focus. Mergens and her fellow students claimed the freedom *to* explore their faith in an extracurricular club. By allowing the group, however, Omaha public school officials risked violating other students' freedoms *from* having a government endorse a particular religious faith or endorse religious over nonreligious beliefs.

The Pursuit of Happiness and the American Dream

When Thomas Jefferson wrote about "the pursuit of Happiness," he was tapping into another core American political value: the belief that individuals should be able to achieve their goals through hard work, sacrifice, and their own talents. Throughout U.S. history, there have been debates about what it means to "pursue" happiness and the American Dream.

Religion and American Political Culture

Religious traditions have also helped shape American political culture. Religion has played a more influential role in America than it has in many modern democratic governments. Some of the first British colonies were founded by groups fleeing religious persecution. While the diversity of religious belief represented in American society continues to expand, America is a nation partly defined by religious faith and expression. In this book, we will continue to explore how the government balances religious freedom with other important interests.

AP® Political Science PRACTICES

Analyzing Pie Charts

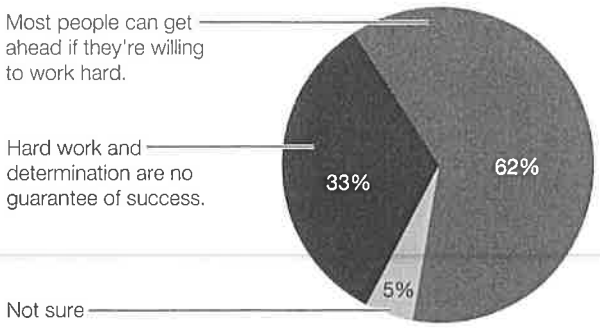
The state of the American dream in the twenty-first century is something that we can study. Words are not the only way to tell stories, nor are images and videos. Data can tell political stories as well. In this book, we will investigate data—numbers, statistics, observations, and survey results—as well as the stories that political actors and reporters construct around the numbers. Stories told by data can be used for political ends, too. This book includes Political Science Practices features that require you to analyze data. The goal of these features is twofold: to help you become more capable and confident at interpreting data and to help you gain the skills to critically examine the narratives constructed around data.

We start with what at first glance seems like a simple data story—one taken from the results of a survey by the social-services and relief agency, Oxfam. In the 2013 survey, Oxfam asked low-wage workers whether most people can get ahead if they work hard.[17] The results of the survey are shown.

1. Identify the most common belief about the American Dream based on the pie chart.
2. Describe one limitation of the pie chart in measuring beliefs about the American Dream.
3. Explain one way in which a politician might use the results of the survey in advocating for or against social programs to assist low-wage workers.

Faith in the American Dream

"Which comes closer to your views?"



Data from Oxfam

You may think that low-wage workers have given up on the American dream, but in the survey, 62 percent of low-wage workers believed that most people can advance with enough hard work. However, that's not the end of the story. It's important to know what groups were surveyed, how the survey was taken, and what questions were asked.

AP® REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

In chapter 1, you have just met the first required document in the AP® U.S. Government and Politics course, the Declaration of Independence. In chapter 2, you will encounter the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and three other required foundational documents that were written during the period when the Constitution was ratified.

Document	Scope
Declaration of Independence	• You are required to read and understand the entire Declaration of Independence. • The Declaration has five sections: the Preamble, the Statement of Human Rights, Charges against Human Rights, Charges against the King and Parliament, and the Statement of Separation. • The Declaration of Independence is a statement of political philosophy and not a governing document.

Section Review

1.2 Describe American political culture.

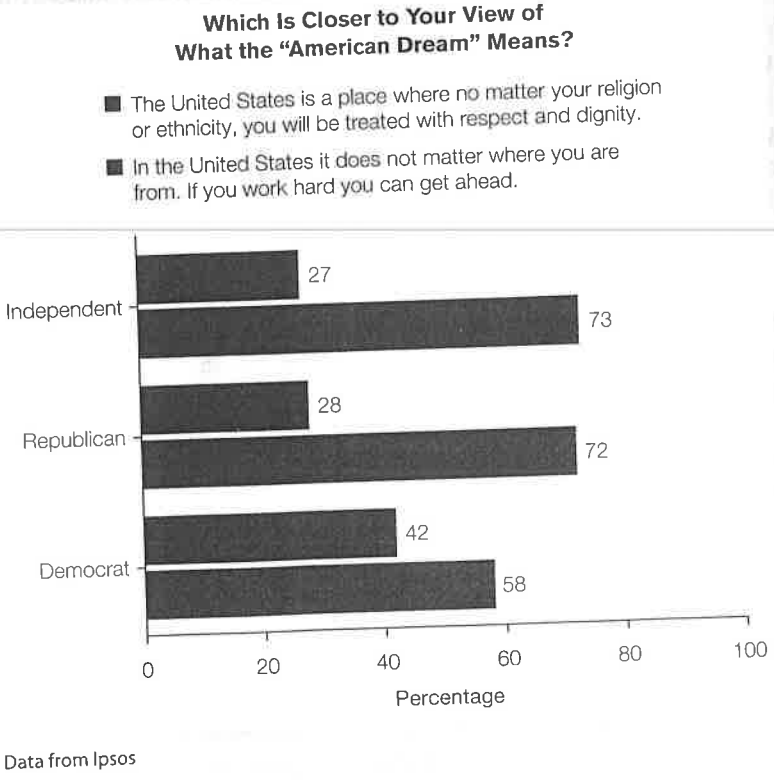
REMEMBER American political culture consists of the beliefs, customs, traditions, and values that Americans share. American political culture values popular sovereignty, natural rights, and republicanism.

KNOW

- *democracy*: a system of government where power is held by the people. (p. 8)
- *natural rights*: the right to life, liberty, and property, which government cannot take away. (p. 9)
- *social contract*: people allow their governments to rule over them to ensure an orderly and functioning society. (p. 9)
- *American political culture*: the set of beliefs, customs, traditions, and values that Americans share. (p. 9)
- *popular sovereignty*: the idea that the government's right to rule comes from the people. (p. 9)
- *republicanism*: a system in which the government's authority comes from the people. (p. 9)
- *inalienable rights*: rights the government cannot take away. (p. 10)
- *liberty*: social, political, and economic freedoms. (p. 10)

THINK How might changing values influence American political culture in the future?

1.2 Review Question: Free Response



Data from Ipsos

Use the information in the bar chart to answer parts A, B, and C.

A. Identify the most common belief about the American dream shown in the bar chart.

B. Describe difference of opinion shown in the bar chart, based on political ideology.

C. Explain one reason why it is difficult to measure beliefs about the American dream.

1.3 Competing Theories of Democracy

Not everyone agrees about how power and influence are distributed in American democracy. Some theorists believe that political participation drives our system, others think that groups have the most influence, and some believe that most of the power is held by the elite.

Participatory Democratic Theory

Widespread participation in politics is the key to **participatory democracy**. This includes joining **civil society groups**, independent associations outside the government's control. Those who believe in the theory of participatory democracy emphasize the importance of citizen involvement. In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*,[18] author Robert Putnam laments the decline of civil society in America. The book's title refers to the fact that the same number of Americans go bowling as they did in the past, but fewer Americans are joining bowling leagues. This means more Americans are bowling with like-minded friends, instead of joining bowling leagues where they would meet a diverse group of individuals. Putnam argues that fewer Americans are participating in civil society, which is a cornerstone of participatory democracy. When people join groups, they meet others from their communities, develop new perspectives, and are more likely to work for the common good. Critics of Putnam's argument point out that many people, especially young people, are actively involved in their communities. While they may not be joining traditional organizations, like bowling leagues, they are finding new ways to organize and interact for the common good.[19]

participatory democracy
a theory that widespread political participation is essential for democratic government.

civil society groups
independent associations outside the government's control.

Pluralist Theory

One of the best ways to influence the political process is by joining a group of like-minded citizens. In the 1830s, French writer Alexis de Tocqueville noted something distinctive about U.S. culture, "Americans of all ages, all conditions, all minds constantly unite."[20] From this observation comes the expression, "a nation of joiners." **Pluralist theory** emphasizes the role of groups in the policymaking process. Bridget Mergens relied on the National Legal Foundation, a group that advocates for Christians' beliefs and protects their interests. The GSA at Boyd County High School got help from the ACLU, an organization that defends and protects civil rights and liberties. There are thousands of interest groups in America, each advocating for its own interests, such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

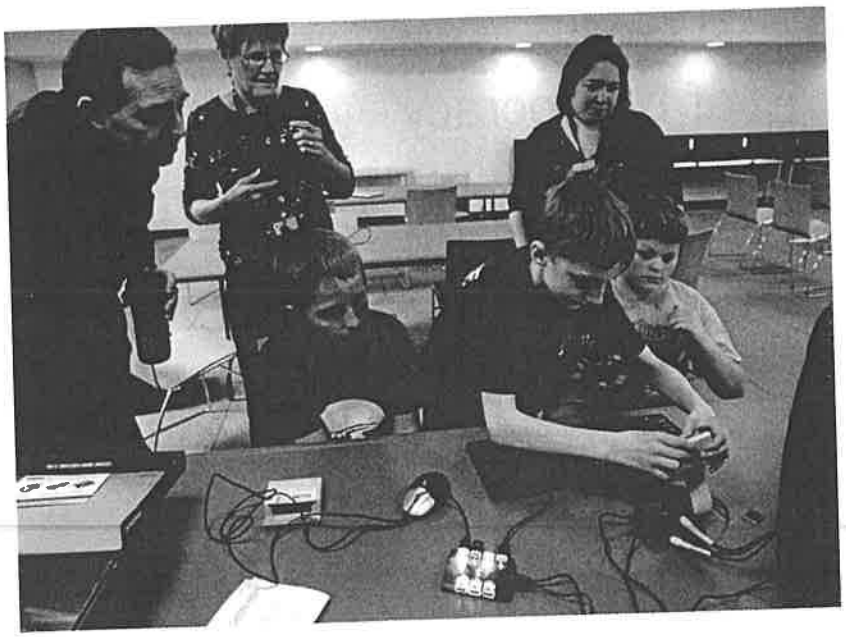
Those who believe in pluralist theory point out that thousands of groups are competing in the political process.[21] Therefore, it is impossible for one of them to win all of the time. Groups have many ways to influence the government, including contacting government officials, donating to campaigns, and filing lawsuits. Pluralists argue that groups weak in one resource, like money, still have other resources, like a large number of members or a smart legal team. According to pluralists, policymaking is complex and results from bargaining and compromise.

pluralist theory
a theory of democracy that emphasizes the role of groups in the policymaking process.

Elitist Theory

Some people are less optimistic about how American democracy works. According to **elitist theory**, a small minority with most of the economic power controls government

elitist theory
a theory of democracy that the elites have a disproportionate amount of influence in the policymaking process.





While traditional associations like bowling leagues may be in decline, new groups are forming. The photo shows a Raspberry Pi computer club, an effort that stresses build-it-yourself computing and coding. Other groups that have recently arisen include yarn bombing and forms of "craftivism" that involve decoration of public spaces, as shown by these yarn-bombed trees in California.
(top) AP Photo/Daily Herald, George LeClaire; (bottom) All Access Photo/Splash News/Los Angeles/USA

and politics, and elected officials are too heavily influenced by wealthy interest groups. Those who support elitist theory point out that some groups have more money, and more influence, than others.[22] They argue that groups representing big businesses have much more sway than smaller public interest groups.

Elite theorists are concerned with the growing income gap in America, and they believe that the top 1 percent of wealth holders have too much control over policymaking. While poor Americans may benefit from social programs like Medicaid, which provides medical assistance to low-income individuals, rich people and businesses, elites argue, get far more benefits from tax exemptions and lax government regulations. Critics of elitist theory argue that groups with less money can still participate in the political process through other effective methods, like filing lawsuits and encouraging their members to vote.

Section Review

1.3 Explain and compare models of American democracy.

REMEMBER The participatory, pluralist, and elitist models differ in their description of how American democracy functions.

KNOW

- *participatory democracy*: a theory that widespread participation is essential for democratic government. (p. 13)
- *civil society groups*: independent associations outside the government's control. (p. 13)
- *pluralist theory*: a theory of democracy that emphasizes the role of groups in the policymaking process. (p. 13)
- *elitist theory*: a theory of democracy that the elites have a disproportionate amount of influence in the policymaking process. (p. 13)

THINK Bridget Mergens used a law firm to assert her rights. Does her story best represent pluralism, elitism, or participatory democracy?

1.3 Review Question: Free Response

> Our politicians have aggressively pursued a policy of globalization—moving our jobs, our wealth, and our factories to Mexico and overseas. Globalization has made . . . politicians very wealthy. But it has left millions of our workers with nothing but poverty and heartache.
>
> —Donald Trump, excerpts from campaign speech in Monessen, Pennsylvania, June 28, 2016.[23]

Three models of representative democracy—participatory, pluralist, and elite—have been used to describe American democracy. After reading the quotation, please respond to parts A, B, and C.

A. Describe the model of democracy that is best represented in the quotation.

B. Describe a different model of democracy from the model you described in part A.

C. Explain one reason why civil society is a cornerstone of the participatory and pluralist models of democracy.

1.4 Institutions, Systems, and Power

In devising a system of government, two basic questions need to be resolved: how much power government will have, and how political power will be distributed. Different forms of governments distribute power in very different ways. Totalitarian governments have no limitations on their own power. Similarly, authoritarian governments suppress the voices of their citizens to maintain a grip on power. Unlike totalitarian systems, however, authoritarian systems may have some economic or social institutions not under governmental control that may serve to moderate the government's power, and the government does not exert total control over citizens' lives.

The United States Constitution forms the basis of the nation's government and establishes the framework of **political institutions**, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. To protect Americans' fundamental rights, it limits the power of the national government. The first seven words of the Preamble, "We the People of the United States," establish that sovereignty comes from the citizens.

political institutions
the structure of government, including the executive, legislature, and judiciary.

Americans have tried to create institutions that balance order and security with freedom and prosperity. Giving the national government the power to maintain order runs the risk that it will use its power to oppress citizens. The United States of America is a **constitutional republic**. Americans elect representatives to make most of the laws and policies in the nation, rather than voting on them directly, which would be unwieldy in a nation of more than 300 million people. Further, and crucially, limits are placed on the power of government to prevent it from infringing on people's rights. The Constitution is the supreme law of the nation.

constitutional republic
a democratic system with elected representatives in which the Constitution is the supreme law.

Our Nation and Your Story

American government and politics are all about real people and their choices. This book will not try to persuade you to adopt a particular point of view. The goal instead is to help you sharpen your skills in analyzing and dealing with the governmental decisions that influence your life and with the political challenges our nation faces.

Should you choose to act in American politics—should you choose to stake your own claims for your rights—you should be well informed, both about your own positions on critical issues and the positions of those with whom you disagree. You have to develop your skills in analyzing the words, images, and data that will serve as tools along the way.

People like you matter. And your stories matter as well, even if nobody ever retells them in a book.

Section Review

1.4 Describe a constitutional republic.

REMEMBER A constitutional republic is a democracy in which people elect representatives to carry out their interests and the Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

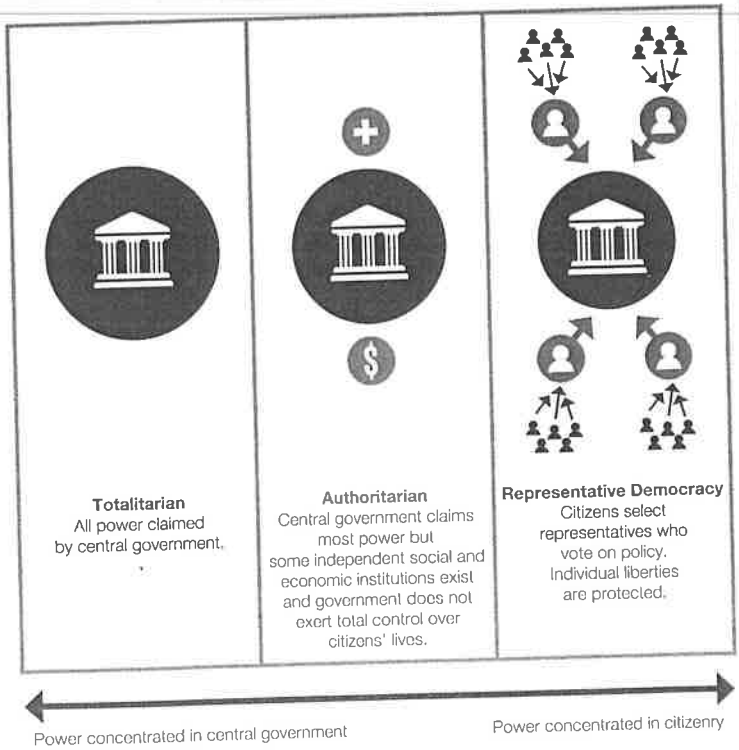
KNOW

- *political institutions*: the structure of government, including the executive, legislature, and judiciary. (p. 15)
- *constitutional republic*: a democratic system with elected representatives in which the Constitution is the supreme law. (p. 15)

THINK Are the three models of democracy the best way to describe our system? Why or why not?

1.4 Review Question: Free Response

Types of Governments



4

C. WRIGHT MILLS

From *The Power Elite*

C. Wright Mills's book The Power Elite *stands as a classic in political science. In it he offers one of several possible answers to the question "Who rules America?" A three-part elite rules, he believes, composed of corporate, political, and military leaders. These sectors of American life are connected, creating an "interlocking" power structure with highly centralized decision-making. Mills considers a conspiracy theory to account for the power elite's control, but rejects it for something much more frightening. Average Americans are like "trusting children" who rely on the power elite to run things smoothly and well. Today, a half-century after Mills wrote, his ideas seem a bit ultra-dramatic and overstated. However, recent political events recall Mills's view: the 2008 recession bailout of big banks and companies such as AIG; the Supreme Court's 2010 decision in* Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, *allowing corporations and labor unions to contribute large sums of money to campaigns; and the creation of Super PACS as a way for wealthy individuals and groups to circumvent previous campaign contribution limits. And all of this has occurred at a time when the gap in wealth between the richest and the poorest Americans has grown wider. Mills offers a warning about power in America that is timeless, one that many people believe is truer now than ever before.*

THE POWERS OF ORDINARY men are circumscribed by the everyday worlds in which they live, yet even in these rounds of job, family, and neighborhood they often seem driven by forces they can neither understand nor govern. "Great changes" are beyond their control, but affect their conduct and outlook none the less. The very framework of modern society confines them to projects not their own, but from every side, such changes now press upon the men and women of the mass society, who accordingly feel that they are without purpose in an epoch in which they are without power.

But not all men are in this sense ordinary. As the means of information and of power are centralized, some men come to occupy positions in American society from which they can look down upon, so to speak, and by their decisions mightily affect, the everyday worlds of ordinary men and women. They are not made by their jobs; they set up and break down jobs for thousands of others; they are not confined by simple family re-

sponsibilities; they can escape. They may live in many hotels and houses, but they are bound by no one community. They need not merely "meet the demands of the day and hour"; in some part, they create these demands, and cause others to meet them. Whether or not they profess their power, their technical and political experience of it far transcends that of the underlying population. What Jacob Burckhardt said of "great men," most Americans might well say of their elite: "They are all that we are not."

The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions: their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make. For they are in command of the major hierarchies and organizations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centered the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy.

The power elite are not solitary rulers. Advisers and consultants, spokesmen and opinion-makers are often the captains of their higher thought and decision. Immediately below the elite are the professional politicians of the middle levels of power, in the Congress and in the pressure groups, as well as among the new and old upper classes of town and city and region. Mingling with them, in curious ways which we shall explore, are those professional celebrities who live by being continually displayed but are never, so long as they remain celebrities, displayed enough. If such celebrities are not at the head of any dominating hierarchy, they do often have the power to distract the attention of the public or afford sensations to the masses, or, more directly, to gain the ear of those who do occupy positions of direct power. More or less unattached, as critics of morality and technicians of power, as spokesmen of God and creators of mass sensibility, such celebrities and consultants are part of the immediate scene in which the drama of the elite is enacted. But that drama itself is centered in the command posts of the major institutional hierarchies.

The truth about the nature and the power of the elite is not some secret which men of affairs know but will not tell. Such men hold quite various theories about their own roles in the sequence of event and decision. Often they are uncertain about their roles, and even more often they

allow their fears and their hopes to affect their assessment of their own power. No matter how great their actual power, they tend to be less acutely aware of it than of the resistances of others to its use. Moreover, most American men of affairs have learned well the rhetoric of public relations, in some cases even to the point of using it when they are alone, and thus coming to believe it. The personal awareness of the actors is only one of the several sources one must examine in order to understand the higher circles. Yet many who believe that there is no elite, or at any rate none of any consequence, rest their argument upon what men of affairs believe about themselves, or at least assert in public.

There is, however, another view: those who feel, even if vaguely, that a compact and powerful elite of great importance does now prevail in America often base that feeling upon the historical trend of our time. They have felt, for example, the domination of the military event, and from this they infer that generals and admirals, as well as other men of decision influenced by them, must be enormously powerful. They hear that the Congress has again abdicated to a handful of men decisions clearly related to the issue of war or peace. They know that the bomb was dropped over Japan in the name of the United States of America, although they were at no time consulted about the matter. They feel that they live in a time of big decisions; they know that they are not making any. Accordingly, as they consider the present as history, they infer that at its center, making decisions or failing to make them, there must be an elite of power.

On the one hand, those who share this feeling about big historical events assume that there is an elite and that its power is great. On the other hand, those who listen carefully to the reports of men apparently involved in the great decisions often do not believe that there is an elite whose powers are of decisive consequence.

Both views must be taken into account, but neither is adequate. The way to understand the power of the American elite lies neither solely in recognizing the historic scale of events nor in accepting the personal awareness reported by men of apparent decision. Behind such men and behind the events of history, linking the two, are the major institutions of modern society. These hierarchies of state and corporation and army constitute the means of power; as such they are now of a consequence not before equaled in human history—and at their summits, there are now those command posts of modern society which offer us the sociological key to an understanding of the role of the higher circles in America.

Within American society, major national power now resides in the economic, the political, and the military domains. Other institutions seem

off to the side of modern history, and, on occasion, duly subordinated to these. No family is as directly powerful in national affairs as any major corporation; no church is as directly powerful in the external biographies of young men in America today as the military establishment; no college is as powerful in the shaping of momentous events as the National Security Council. Religious, educational, and family institutions are not autonomous centers of national power; on the contrary, these decentralized areas are increasingly shaped by the big three, in which developments of decisive and immediate consequence now occur.

Families and churches and schools adapt to modern life; governments and armies and corporations shape it; and, as they do so, they turn these lesser institutions into means for their ends. Religious institutions provide chaplains to the armed forces where they are used as a means of increasing the effectiveness of its morale to kill. Schools select and train men for their jobs in corporations and their specialized tasks in the armed forces. The extended family has, of course, long been broken up by the industrial revolution, and now the son and the father are removed from the family, by compulsion if need be, whenever the army of the state sends out the call. And the symbols of all these lesser institutions are used to legitimate the power and the decisions of the big three.

The life-fate of the modern individual depends not only upon the family into which he was born or which he enters by marriage, but increasingly upon the corporation in which he spends the most alert hours of his best years; not only upon the school where he is educated as a child and adolescent, but also upon the state which touches him throughout his life; not only upon the church in which on occasion he hears the word of God, but also upon the army in which he is disciplined.

If the centralized state could not rely upon the inculcation of nationalist loyalties in public and private schools, its leaders would promptly seek to modify the decentralized educational system. If the bankruptcy rate among the top five hundred corporations were as high as the general divorce rate among the thirty-seven million married couples, there would be economic catastrophe on an international scale. If members of armies gave to them no more of their lives than do believers to the churches to which they belong, there would be a military crisis.

Within each of the big three, the typical institutional unit has become enlarged, has become administrative, and, in the power of its decisions, has become centralized. Behind these developments there is a fabulous technology, for as institutions, they have incorporated this technology and guide it, even as it shapes and paces their developments.

The economy—once a great scatter of small productive units in au-

tonomous balance—has become dominated by two or three hundred giant corporations, administratively and politically interrelated, which together hold the keys to economic decisions.

The political order, once a decentralized set of several dozen states with a weak spinal cord, has become a centralized, executive establishment which has taken up into itself many powers previously scattered, and now enters into each and every crany of the social structure.

The military order, once a slim establishment in a context of distrust fed by state militia, has become the largest and most expensive feature of government, and, although well versed in smiling public relations, now has all the grim and clumsy efficiency of a sprawling bureaucratic domain.

In each of these institutional areas, the means of power at the disposal of decision makers have increased enormously; their central executive powers have been enhanced; within each of them modern administrative routines have been elaborated and tightened up.

As each of these domains becomes enlarged and centralized, the consequences of its activities become greater, and its traffic with the others increases. The decisions of a handful of corporations bear upon military and political as well as upon economic developments around the world. The decisions of the military establishment rest upon and grievously affect political life as well as the very level of economic activity. The decisions made within the political domain determine economic activities and military programs. There is no longer, on the one hand, an economy, and, on the other hand, a political order containing a military establishment unimportant to politics and to money-making. There is a political economy linked, in a thousand ways, with military institutions and decisions. On each side of the world-split running through central Europe and around the Asiatic rimlands, there is an ever-increasing interlocking of economic, military, and political structures. If there is government intervention in the corporate economy, so is there corporate intervention in the governmental process. In the structural sense, this triangle of power is the source of the interlocking directorate that is most important for the historical structure of the present.

The fact of the interlocking is clearly revealed at each of the points of crisis of modern capitalist society—slump, war, and boom. In each, men of decision are led to an awareness of the interdependence of the major institutional orders. In the nineteenth century, when the scale of all institutions was smaller, their liberal integration was achieved in the automatic economy, by an autonomous play of market forces, and in the automatic political domain, by the bargain and the vote. It was then assumed that

out of the imbalance and friction that followed the limited decisions then possible a new equilibrium would in due course emerge. That can no longer be assumed, and it is not assumed by the men at the top of each of the three dominant hierarchies.

For given the scope of their consequences, decisions—and indecisions—in any one of these ramify into the others, and hence top decisions tend either to become co-ordinated or to lead to a commanding indecision. It has not always been like this. When numerous small entrepreneurs made up the economy, for example, many of them could fail and the consequences still remain local; political and military authorities did not intervene. But now, given political expectations and military commitments, can they afford to allow key units of the private corporate economy to break down in slump? Increasingly, they do intervene in economic affairs, and as they do so, the controlling decisions in each order are inspected by agents of the other two, and economic, military, and political structures are interlocked.

At the pinnacle of each of the three enlarged and centralized domains, there have arisen those higher circles which make up the economic, the political, and the military elites. At the top of the economy, among the corporate rich, there are the chief executives; at the top of the political order, the members of the political directorate; at the top of the military establishment, the elite of soldier-statesmen clustered in and around the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the upper echelon. As each of these domains has coincided with the others, as decisions tend to become total in their consequence, the leading men in each of the three domains of power—the warlords, the corporation chieftains, the political directorate—tend to come together, to form the power elite of America. . . .

The conception of the power elite and of its unity rests upon the corresponding developments and the coincidence of interests among economic, political, and military organizations. It also rests upon the similarity of origin and outlook, and the social and personal intermingling of the top circles from each of these dominant hierarchies. This conjunction of institutional and psychological forces, in turn, is revealed by the heavy personnel traffic within and between the big three institutional orders, as well as by the rise of go-betweens as in the high-level lobbying. The conception of the power elite, accordingly, does *not* rest upon the assumption that American history since the origins of World War II must be understood as a secret plot, or as a great and co-ordinated conspiracy of the members of this elite. The conception rests upon quite impersonal grounds.

There is, however, little doubt that the American power elite—which

contains, we are told, some of "the greatest organizers in the world"—has also planned and has plotted. The rise of the elite, as we have already made clear, was not and could not have been caused by a plot; and the tenability of the conception does not rest upon the existence of any secret or any publicly known organization. But, once the conjunction of structural trend and of the personal will to utilize it gave rise to the power elite, then plans and programs did occur to its members and indeed it is not possible to interpret many events and official policies of the fifth epoch without reference to the power elite. "There is a great difference," Richard Hofstadter has remarked, "between locating conspiracies *in* history and saying that history *is*, in effect, a conspiracy . . . "

The structural trends of institutions become defined as opportunities by those who occupy their command posts. Once such opportunities are recognized, men may avail themselves of them. Certain types of men from each of the dominant institutional areas, more far-sighted than others, have actively promoted the liaison before it took its truly modern shape. They have often done so for reasons not shared by their partners, although not objected to by them either; and often the outcome of their liaison has had consequences which none of them foresaw, much less shaped, and which only later in the course of development came under explicit control. Only after it was well under way did most of its members find themselves part of it and become gladdened, although sometimes also worried, by this fact. But once the co-ordination is a going concern, new men come readily into it and assume its existence without question.

So far as explicit organization—conspiratorial or not—is concerned, the power elite, by its very nature, is more likely to use existing organizations, working within and between them, than to set up explicit organizations whose membership is strictly limited to its own members. But if there is no machinery in existence to ensure, for example, that military and political factors will be balanced in decisions made, they will invent such machinery and use it, as with the National Security Council. Moreover, in a formally democratic polity, the aims and the powers of the various elements of this elite are further supported by an aspect of the permanent war economy: the assumption that the security of the nation supposedly rests upon great secrecy of plan and intent. Many higher events that would reveal the working of the power elite can be withheld from public knowledge under the guise of secrecy. With the wide secrecy covering their operations and decisions, the power elite can mask their intentions, operations, and further consolidation. Any secrecy that is imposed upon those in positions to observe high decision-makers clearly works for and not against the operations of the power elite.

There is accordingly reason to suspect—but by the nature of the case, no proof—that the power elite is not altogether "surfaced." There is nothing hidden about it, although its activities are not publicized. As an elite, it is not organized, although its members often know one another, seem quite naturally to work together, and share many organizations in common. There is nothing conspiratorial about it, although its decisions are often publicly unknown and its mode of operation manipulative rather than explicit.

It is not that the elite "believe in" a compact elite behind the scenes and a mass down below. It is not put in that language. It is just that the people are of necessity confused and must, like trusting children, place all the new world of foreign policy and strategy and executive action in the hands of experts. It is just that everyone knows somebody has got to run the show, and that somebody usually does. Others do not really care anyway, and besides, they do not know how. So the gap between the two types gets wider.