THE CONCEPTS OF FREEDOM, ORDER, AND EQUALITY

- **Order**
  - Preserving life and protecting property
    - Domestic Tranquility cited in the preamble
  - Preserving social order
    - The accepted way of doing things
    - Some say not a legitimate function of government
    - State can use police power
Equality

- Political equality
  - One person, one vote

- Social equality
  - Wealth, education, and status all equal

- Equality of opportunity
  - Each person has the same chance to succeed

- Equality of outcome
  - Society must ensure everyone is equal
  - Government-supported rights
TWO DILEMMAS OF GOVERNMENT

- Maintaining Order and Promoting Equality
  - Must sacrifice individual freedom to attain
- The Original Dilemma: Freedom versus Order
  - Protect life, property, and make citizens safe from violence
  - People value freedom and order
    - Two values inherently conflict
The Modern Dilemma: Freedom versus Equality

- Two values clash when government promotes social equality
  - Equal Pay Act
  - School busing to minimize segregation
  - Pay Equity
  - Discrimination issues (employment, public services)
AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

- Personal Liberty
- Equality
- Popular Consent
  - The idea that governments must draw their powers from the consent of the governed
- Majority Rule
  - Central premise of direct democracy in which only policies that collectively garner the support of a majority of voters will be made into law
- Popular Sovereignty
  - Right of the majority to govern themselves based on natural law (ethical principles that are part of nature and understood by reason)
Civil Society

Society is created when citizens are allowed to organize and express their views publicly as they engage in open debate about public policy.

Individualism
CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

- Size and Population
- Changing Demographics
  - Racial and Ethnic Composition
    - Immigration has changed the nation.
    - 1600-1700: Western Europeans
    - Gold Rush in 1848: Chinese
    - 1850s: Irish Catholics
    - 1880s to 1910s: Southeast Asians, Cubans, and Mexicans
    - 1900s: Eastern Europeans
    - Racial balance changing dramatically today.
CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

- Changes in Age Cohort Composition
  - No longer nation of young
  - Graying of America
  - Types of services and policies demanded from government change
  - Age profile
    - Baby Boomers (born in late 1940s-early 60s)
    - Generation X-ers (children of Boomers – late 60s-mid 70s) tougher economic times
    - Generation Y (born from 1977-1994)
    - Millennials Born since 1994
CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

- Changes in Family and Family Size
  - Large families were norm and gender roles were clearly defined.
  - Industrialization and knowledge of birth control methods began to shrink family size.
    - 1949-49% said 4 or more children was an ideal family size.
    - 1997-only 8% favored large families.
    - Since 1970 the number of female-headed families has increased from 5.5 million to 12.8 million.
Americans’ views about and expectations of government affect the political system.

- High expectations
- Mistrust Politicians
- Voter Apathy

Redefining our Expectations
PARTISAN DIFFERENCES OVER IMMIGRATION

- Republicans
- Independents
- Democrats

- Stop Illegal Immigration
- Legal Residency

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THE THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

- Democratic Origins
  - Ancient Greek philosophies
  - Autocracy
    - Power in the hands of a monarch
  - Oligarchy
    - Power in the hands of the elite
  - Democracy
    - Power in the hands of the people
The Meaning and Symbolism of Democracy

- Originated with the Greeks
- Demos = common people, Kratos = power
- Greeks feared democracy
  - Demagogue
- Two schools of thought today:
  - Democracy is a form of government
  - Democracy is a procedural approach
The Procedural View of Democracy

- Universal participation
  - Who should participate in decision making?

- Political equality
  - How much should each participant’s vote count?

- Majority rule
  - How many votes are needed to reach a decision?
A Complication: Direct Versus Indirect Democracy

- Participatory democracy
  - Town meetings
  - Rare in U.S.
- E-government
  - Boston's “Street Bump”
- Representative democracy
  - Instituted by U.S. Constitution
- Responsiveness
A Complication: Direct Versus Indirect Democracy

Four principles of procedural democracy

- Universal participation
- Political equality
- Majority rule
- Government responsiveness to public opinion
The Substantive View of Democracy

- Focuses on substance, not procedures
- Based on Bill of Rights and amendments
  - Government should guarantee civil liberties and civil rights
  - Disagreement among theorists over social rights
    - Conservatives have narrow view
    - Liberals have broader view
Procedural Democracy versus Substantive Democracy

- Substantive
  - No clear, precise criteria

- Procedural
  - Can produce undesirable social policies
  - Clashes with minority rights

Choosing procedures or policies

Compromise: balance minority and majority interests
INSTITUTIONAL MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

- Institutional Mechanisms Required
  - Elections
  - Political parties
  - Legislatures
  - Interest groups

- Two Models of Democracy
  - Majoritarian
  - Pluralist
The Majoritarian Model of Democracy

- Government by majority of the people
- Popular election of government officials
- Elections decide government policies
  - Referendum
  - Initiative
  - Recall
- Critics: Americans not knowledgeable enough
- Defenders: Americans have coherent opinions
An Alternative Model: Pluralist Democracy

- Government by people operating through competing interest groups
  - A shift from mass electorate to organized groups
- Two major mechanisms
  - Interest groups
  - Decentralized government
The Majoritarian Model Versus the Pluralist Model

- Majoritarian
  - Mass public controls government
  - Relies on majority rule
  - Cohesive political parties
  - Centralized government
For New Jersey Fast-Food Workers, Low Wages = Reliance on Government Support

42% of families of NJ low-wage fast-food workers rely on at least one safety net program

The annual cost?

$117 million

Source: The University of California’s Institute for Research on Labor and Employment

NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE
The Majoritarian Model Versus the Pluralist Model

- Pluralist
  - Relies on interests of specialized groups
  - Limits majority action
  - Decentralized government
An Undemocratic Model: Elite Theory

- A small group makes most important decisions
  - Government controlled by wealthy; business connections
  - Control key financial, communications, industrial, government institutions
  - Would call U.S. an oligarchy
  - Difficult to test validity of theory
Elite Theory Versus Pluralist Theory

- Difference: durability of ruling minority
- Pluralist believes in struggle between competing interests
  - Wealthy have advantage in struggle
  - Justifies disparities among segments of society
AMERICANS DIVIDED OVER WHETHER AMERICA IS DIVIDED

-- Graph showing percentage of people who believe America is divided --

- Purple line: No, not divided
- Green line: Yes, America divided

Percentage: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80

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Two Models of Democratic Government

- Majoritarian: representative government
  - No government achieves responsiveness demanded

- Pluralist: respond to minority interests
  - No government offers equal access to all competing groups

- No consensus on which is preferable
Establishing Democracies

- Governments meet some criteria but not others
- Slight decline in democracies in recent years
- Democratization a difficult process
  - The Arab Spring – did not lead to democracy
  - Ethnic and religious conflicts
  - Vulnerable to attack by opponents
  - Nations need democratization to succeed economically
Critical Thinking Question

The bar chart shows the number of elections from the 1950s to the 2000s, categorized by type of voting system. The chart is color-coded:

- Orange: Majoritarian
- Green: Proportional
- Blue: Mixed

The number of elections for each decade is as follows:

- 1950s: Majoritarian - 50, Proportional - 60, Mixed - 10
- 1960s: Majoritarian - 40, Proportional - 70, Mixed - 5
- 1970s: Majoritarian - 60, Proportional - 60, Mixed - 20
- 1980s: Majoritarian - 40, Proportional - 70, Mixed - 30
- 1990s: Majoritarian - 100, Proportional - 90, Mixed - 50
- 2000s: Majoritarian - 120, Proportional - 140, Mixed - 60

The chart indicates a significant increase in the number of proportional and mixed elections compared to majoritarian elections, particularly in the 1990s and 2000s.
American Democracy: More Pluralist Than Majoritarian?

- Principle drawback of pluralism: favors the well-organized so affluent receive more benefits
- Recently, parties more sharply divided making U.S. system more majoritarian
- People’s trust in American government fallen in past years
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S EXECUTIVE ORDER TO RAISE MINIMUM WAGE

Click picture to view video
VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is a minimum wage increase a controversial issue?

2. Are we a nation of “haves” and “have nots”? Is this executive order a step toward economic equality?

3. Should special interests control the federal minimum wage discussion?