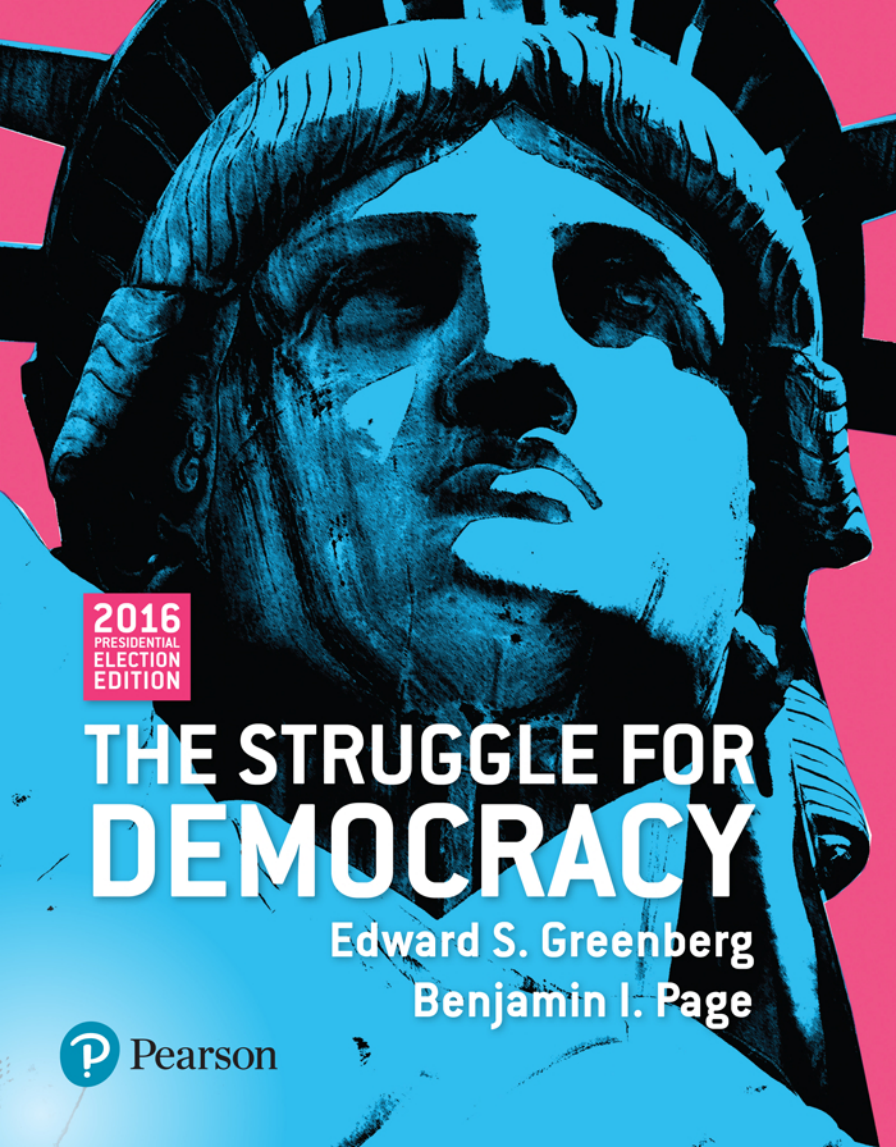
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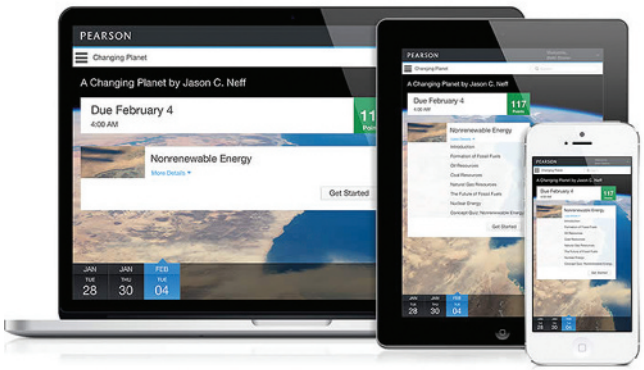

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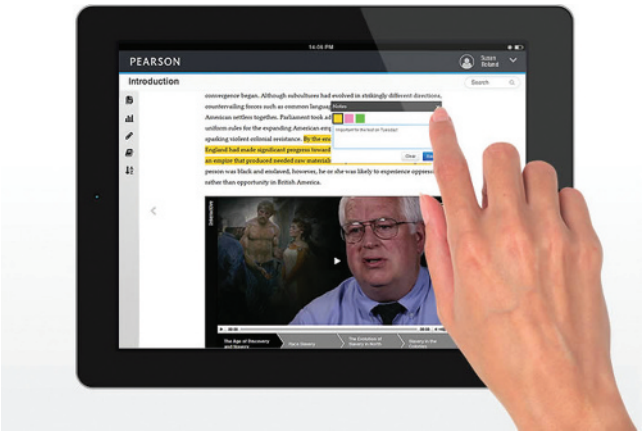

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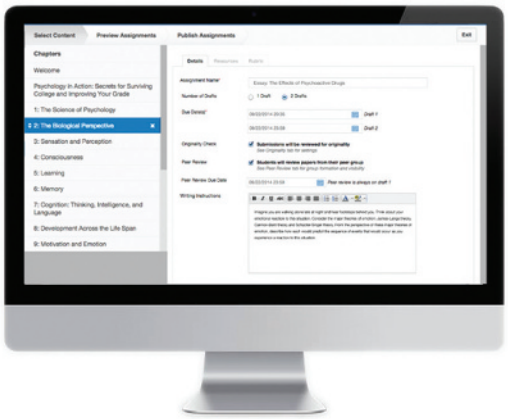

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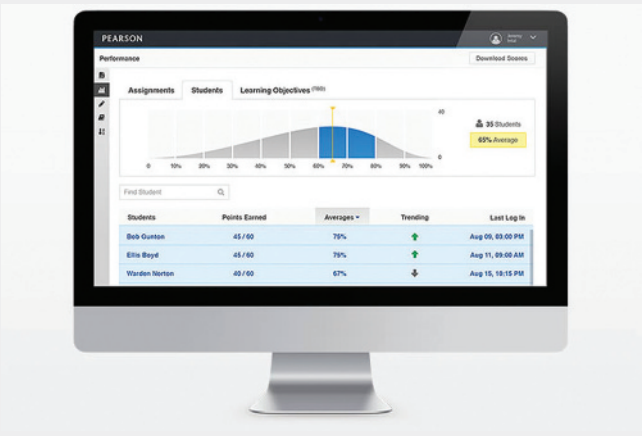

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THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY

2016 Presidential Election Edition

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To the Student

Why study American government and politics, and why read this textbook to do it? Here's why: Only by understanding how our complex political system operates and how government works can you play a role in deciding what government does. Only by understanding the obstacles that stand in your way as you enter the political fray, as well as the abundant opportunities you have to advance your ideas and values in the political process, can you play an effective role.

You can learn this best, we believe, by studying what political scientists have discovered about American politics and government. Political science is the systematic study of the role that people and groups play in determining what government does; how government goes about implementing its policy decisions; and what social, economic, and political consequences flow from government actions. The best political science research is testable, evidence-based, and peer-reviewed—as free as possible from ideological and partisan bias as it can be.

The Struggle for Democracy not only introduces you to that research but also gives you tools to decode the American political system, analyze its pieces, consider its linkages, and identify opportunities to make a difference. A simple but powerful framework will guide you in discovering how government, politics, and the larger society are intertwined and how government policies are a product of the interactions of actors and institutions across these domains.

Our hope and expectation is that *The Struggle for Democracy* will enable your success in your introduction to American government and politics course. But we are interested in more than your classroom experiences. We believe that knowing how politics and government work and how closely they conform to our democratic values will also enable a lifetime of productive choices. Put all naïveté aside, however. Making a mark on public policies is never easy. Like-minded individuals need to do more than vote. Those who gain the most from government policies have, after all, substantial resources to make certain that government treats them well.

But you have resources to make changes, too. Beyond voting, opportunities for affecting change may come from your involvement in political campaigns, from using social media to persuade others of your views or to organize meetings and demonstrations, from participating in social movements, from contributing to groups and politicians who share your views, and from many more such avenues. So, much like waging war, making your voice heard requires that you know the "lay of the land," including the weapons you have at your disposal (we would call them political tools) and the weapons of those arrayed against you. But, much like peacemaking, you need to know how and when compromises can be reached that serve the interests of all parties.

Lest all of the above seems too daunting, we also have tried to make this book enjoyable, accessible, and fun. If your experience in reading *The Struggle for Democracy* comes close to the pleasure we had in writing it, we have come as near as possible to achieving our goal.

Meet Your Author

EDWARD S. GREENBERG is Professor Emeritus of Political Science and a Research Professor of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Ed's research and teaching interests include American government and politics, domestic and global political economy, and democratic theory and practice, with a special emphasis on workplace issues. His multi-year longitudinal panel study, funded by the NIH, examining the impact of technological change and the globalization of production on Boeing managers and employees, is reported in his book *Turbulence: Boeing and the State of American Workers and Managers* (Yale University Press, 2010, co-authored with Leon Grunberg, Sarah Moore, and Pat Sikora). He is currently doing research on the global competition between Boeing and Airbus and its impact on people who work in these firms.

To the Instructor

Ben Page and I decided to write this book because, as instructors in introductory American government courses, we could not find a book that provided students with usable tools for critically analyzing our political system and making judgments about how well our government works. *The Struggle for Democracy* does not simply present facts about government and politics—it also provides several analytical and normative frameworks for putting the flood of facts we ask our students to absorb into a more comprehensible form. By doing so, I believe we have made it easier and more satisfying for instructors to teach the introductory course.

Our goal all along was to create a textbook that treats students as adults, engages their intellectual and emotional attention, and encourages them to be active learners. Every element in this text is designed to promote the kind of critical thinking skills scholars and instructors believe students need to become the engaged, active, and informed citizens that are so vital to any democracy. Over the next several sections, I show the elements we created to meet these objectives.

Features

APPROACH *The Struggle for Democracy* provides several analytical and normative frameworks for putting the flood of facts teachers ask their students to absorb into a more comprehensible form. Although all topics that are common and expected in the introductory American government and politics course are covered in this textbook, the two main focal points—an analytical framework for understanding how politics and government work and the normative question "How democratic are we?" (addressed in concluding remarks at the end of each chapter under the "Using the Democracy Standard" headline)—allow for a fresh look at traditional topics.

This book pays great attention to *structural factors*—which include the American economy, social and demographic change in the United States, technological innovations and change, the American political culture, and changes in the global system—and examines how they affect politics, government, and public policy. These factors are introduced in Chapter 4—a chapter unique among introductory texts—and they are brought to bear on a wide range of issues in subsequent chapters.

The Struggle for Democracy attends very carefully to issues of *democratic political theory*. This follows from a critical thinking objective, which asks students to assess the progress of, and prospects for, democracy in the United States and from a desire to present American history as the history of the struggle for democracy. For instance, *Struggle* examines how the evolution of the party system has improved democracy in some respects in the United States, but hurt it in others.

Struggle also includes more *historical perspective* because it provides the necessary context for thinking comprehensively and critically about contemporary political debates. It shows, for example, how the expansion of civil rights in the United States is tied to important historical events and trends.

Comparisons of developments, practices, and institutions in the United States with those in other nations add another dimension to our understanding. We can better comprehend how our system of social welfare works, for example, when we see

how other rich democratic countries deal with the problems of poverty, unemployment, and old age.

COVERAGE In an effort to build a ground-up understanding of American politics and the policy outcomes it does (and does not) produce, the chapters in *Struggle* mirror the structure of our analytical pyramid framework. Part 1 includes an introduction to the textbook, its themes, and the critical thinking tools used throughout the book. Part 2 covers the *structural foundations* of American government and politics, addressing subjects such as the U.S. economy and political culture and its place in the international system; the constitutional framework of the American political system; and the development of federalism. Part 3 focuses on *political linkage* institutions such as parties, elections, public opinion, social movements, and interest groups that convey the wants, needs, and demands of individuals and groups to public officials. Part 4 concentrates on the central institutions of the national government, including the presidency, Congress, and the Supreme Court. Part 5 describes the kinds of policies the national government produces and analyzes how effective government is at solving pressing social and economic problems. The analytical framework used in this book also means that the subjects of *civil liberties* and *civil rights* are not treated in conjunction with the Constitution in Part 2, which is the case with many introductory texts, but in Part 5, on public policy. This is because we believe that the real-world status of civil liberties and civil rights, while partly determined by specific provisions of the Constitution, is better understood as the outcome of the interaction of structural, political, and governmental factors. For example, the status of civil rights for gays, lesbians, and transgendered people depends not only on constitutional provisions but also on the state of public opinion, degrees of support from elected political leaders, and the decisions of the Supreme Court.

PEDAGOGY *The Struggle for Democracy* offers unique features that help students better understand, interpret, and critically evaluate American politics and government.

- **Chapter-opening** stories provide useful frames of reference for defining why the principal topic of each chapter matters to the citizens of our American democracy.
- A unique visual tool that maps out the many influences in the American political process and how they shape political decisions and policies, the **Applying the Framework** model makes clear that government, politics, and society are deeply intertwined in recognizable patterns. The framework simplifies complex associations, builds on the "deep structures" that underlay American politics and government—the economy, society, political culture, and the constitutional rules—and encourages holistic comprehension of American politics.
- More than one hundred **figures and tables** strengthen the narrative and help students extract meaning and insights from data that drive political decision making and government action.
- **Timelines** appear throughout this book to help students develop a sense of historical context and to clarify the chronology of a particular period. Timeline topics include federalism milestones and a history of the civil rights movement.
- Every chapter includes a **marginal glossary of key terms** to support students' understanding of new and important concepts at first encounter. For easy reference, key terms from the marginal glossary are repeated at the end of each chapter and in the end-of-book glossary.
- Every chapter includes a **Using the Democracy Standard** section to help students consolidate their thinking about the American political system as a whole by

using a normative democracy "yardstick" that asks students to assess the degree to which the United States has become more or less democratic.

- **Review the Chapter** sections organized around chapter learning objectives is included at the end of each chapter to help students better understand and retain information and to think critically about the material.

New to This Edition

Key updates to *The Struggle for Democracy* include:

- Substantial coverage of the contentious **2016 presidential nomination contests** in both parties and the **consequential 2016 national elections**, with special attention to the partisan aspects of the election in Chapter 9, the voting and campaign aspects in Chapter 10, the consequences for Congress in Chapter 11, and the impact on the presidency in Chapter 12.
- Coverage throughout, but especially in Chapters 3, 10, 14, 15, 16, and 17, on important rulings by the Supreme Court on same-sex marriage, voting rights, immigration, affirmative action, election financing, the scope of the commerce clause, and the Affordable Care Act.
- Consideration, especially in Chapter 12, "The Presidency," and Chapter 18, "Foreign Policy and National Defense," on the new challenges posed by the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq; nuclear weapons programs in North Korea, Pakistan, and especially Iran; China's emergence as a competing world power; and Russia's attempt to reassert its power in Ukraine, in other countries formerly a part of the Soviet Union, and in Syria and the greater Middle East.
- Increased attention to the **growing partisan bitterness** in Washington and across much of the nation that affects how government addresses or fails to address virtually every major problem facing the nation whether it be energy, illegal immigration, climate change, or the shrinking middle class (Chapters 5, 9, 10, 11, and 17).
- Questions of whether and to what degree income and wealth inequality has increased, and if it has, with what political and public policy consequences were thoroughly considered during this revision. We also look closely at **globalization and technological change and their impact on Americans**, with extensive research and analysis of particular note evident in Chapters 4 and 18.
- The ways in which social, economic and technological trends shape government action are also considered, including legislation to regulate the financial industry, executive orders that increase the number of Americans who are eligible to be paid time-and-a-half for overtime work and increasing gas mileage requirements for cars and trucks, and prosecution of government employees who leak confidential government information to social media sites (Chapters 4, 6, 15, 17, and 18).
- **Photos** in this edition were selected not only to capture major events from the last few years but to illustrate the relevancy of politics in our daily lives. They show political actors and processes as well as people affected by politics, creating a visual narrative that enhances rather than repeats the text. Each includes critical thinking questions that allow readers to engage with the material more intensely.
- The data in all of the **figures and tables** have been updated throughout with the intention of helping users think critically not only about political decisions in retrospect but also about pending government action.

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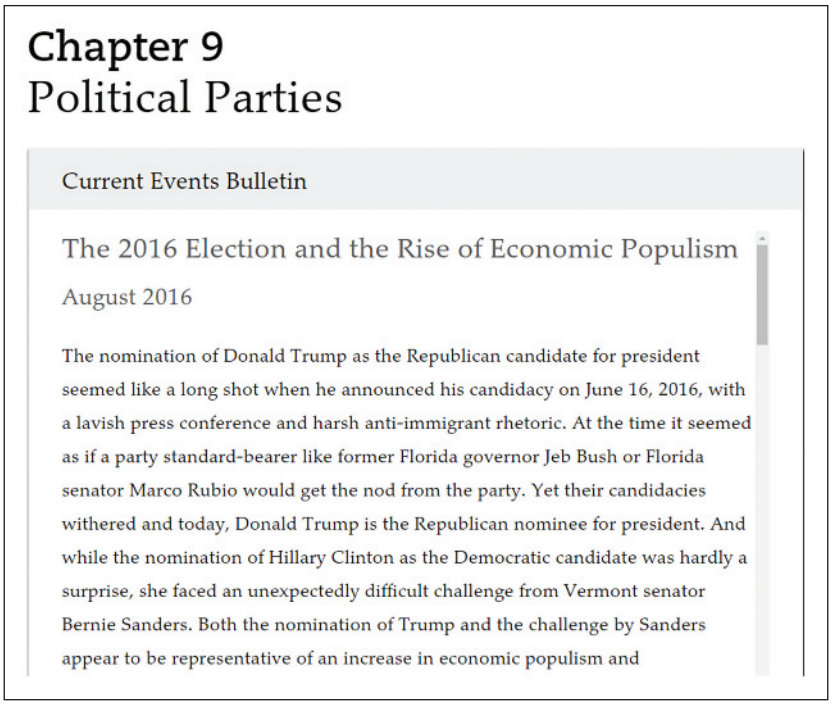
Revel enlivens course content with media interactives and assessments—integrated directly within the authors' narrative—that provide opportunities for students to read about and practice course material in tandem. This immersive educational technology boosts student engagement, which leads to better understanding of concepts and improved performance throughout the course.

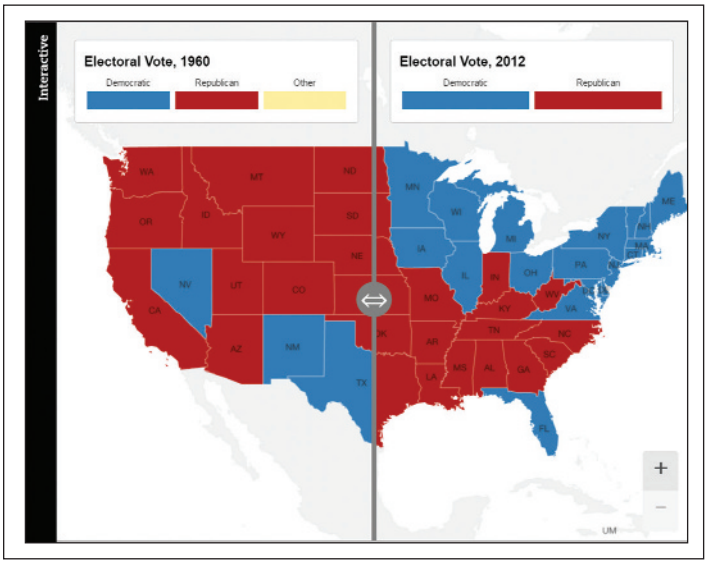
Some of the particularly exciting highlights of this Revel edition include the following:

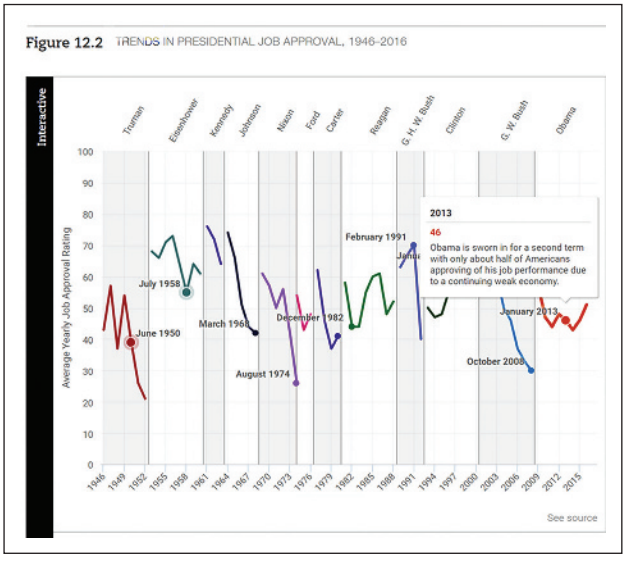
- Chapter-opening **Current Events Bulletins** feature author-written articles that put breaking news and current events into the context of American government. Examples include the 2016 elections in context, the strained relationship between the U.S. and Russia, and how Democratic turnout in the 2016 election helps to explain Trump's victory.



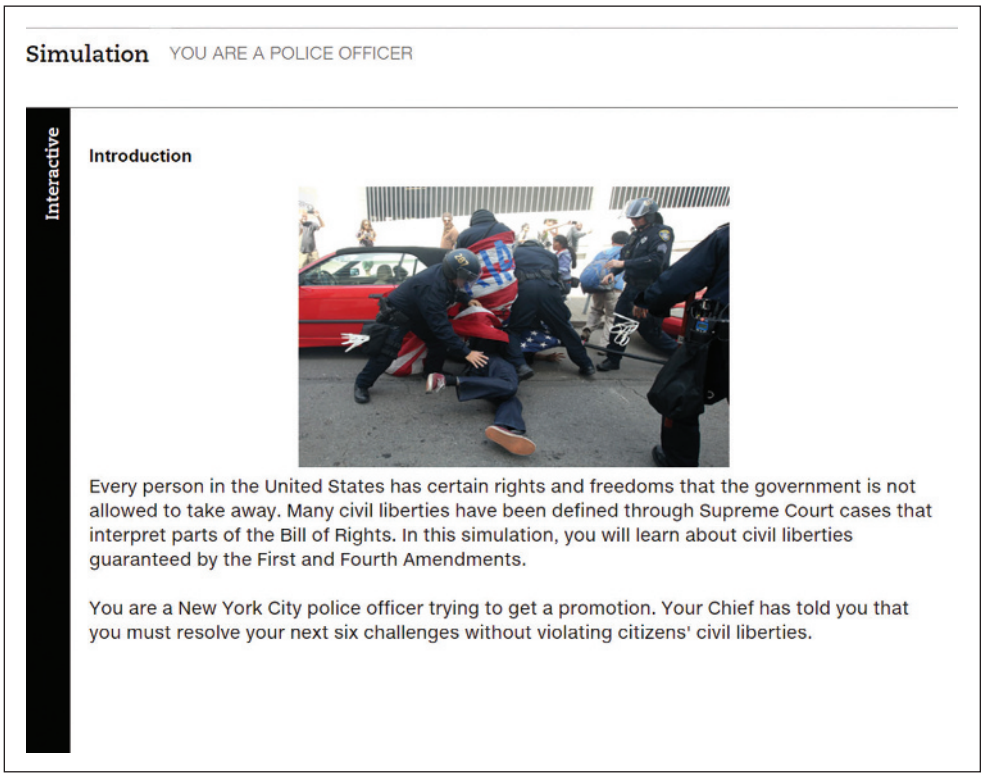
- Captivating **videos** bring to life chapter content and key moments in American government. ABC news footage provides examples from both current and historical events. Examples of footage include FDR visiting the newly completed Boulder Dam (Hoover Dam), an NRA lobbyist's proposition to put guns in schools one week after the Sandy Hook tragedy, and President Obama's struggle to make a case for air strikes in Syria. In addition, each chapter concludes with an author-narrated video subtitled "Why It Matters," helping students to put chapter content in a real-world context. For example, Chapter 16, "Civil Rights: The Struggle for Political Equality," concludes with a discussion of the real-life implications of affirmative action in college admission and on campus—a topic immediately relevant to today's undergraduate students.

- **Interactive maps, figures, and tables** featuring innovative Social Explorer technology allow for inputting the latest data, toggling to illustrate movement over time, and clicking on hot spots with pop-ups of images and captions. Examples include Figure 12.2: Trends in Presidential Job Approval, 1946–2016 (line graph); Figure 9.2: Presidential Elections, 1960 and 2012 (map); and Figure 11.2: Women and Minorities in the U.S. Congress (bar chart).

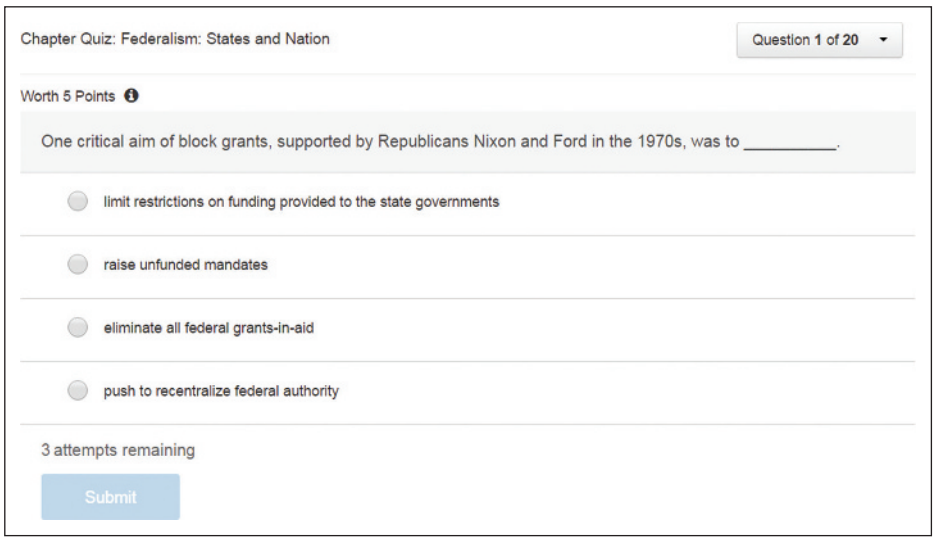




- **Interactive simulations** in every chapter (beginning with Chapter 2) allow students to explore critical issues and challenges that the country's Founders faced and that elected officials, bureaucrats, and political activists still face today. Students apply key chapter concepts in realistic situations. For example, in Chapter 3, students have the opportunity to imagine themselves as federal judges; in Chapter 8, they lead a social movement; and in chapter 15, they are police officers.

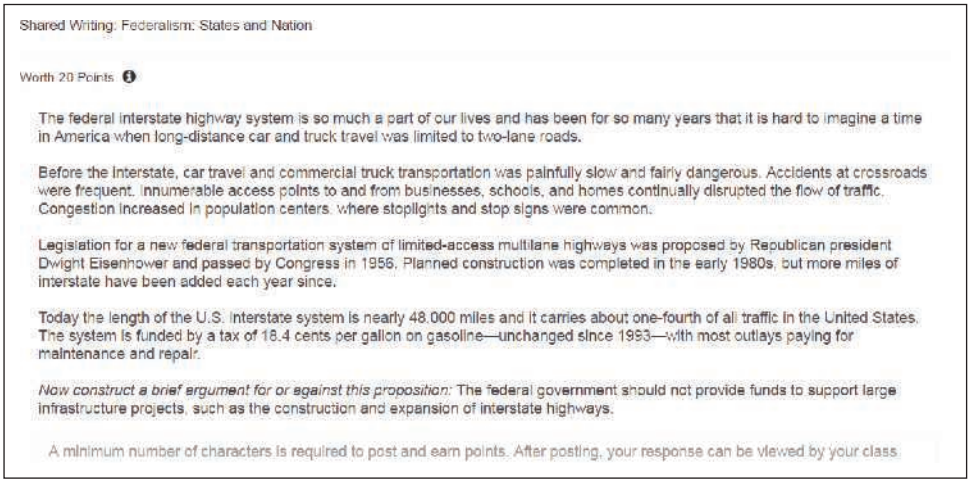


- Interactive **Conclusion and Review** summaries using video, learning objectives, image galleries, and flashcards featuring key terms and definitions allow students to review chapter content.
- **Assessments** tied to primary chapter sections, as well as full chapter exams, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.



- **Integrated Writing Opportunities** To help students reason and write more clearly, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts:
  - **Journal prompts** in nearly every section across the narrative ask students to consider critical issues that are first presented in a relevant photograph and associated photo caption. These questions are designed to reinforce one of the material's primary goals: to equip students to engage critically with American government and thereby ensure a healthy, thriving democracy.

- **Shared writing prompts,** following each chapter's Conclusion and Review section, encourage students to consider how to address the challenges described in the chapter in an essay format. For example, in Chapter 3, students must argue for or against the proposition that the federal government should not provide funds to support large infrastructure projects, such as the construction and expansion of interstate highways. Through these shared writing prompts, instructors and students can address multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to each other's viewpoints.



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Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *The Struggle for Democracy*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access.

TEST BANK Evaluate learning at every level. Reviewed for clarity and accuracy, the Test Bank measures this book's learning objectives with multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word, BlackBoard, and WebCT versions available on the IRC and Respondus versions available upon request from www.respondus.com.

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POWERPOINT PRESENTATION WITH CLASSROOM RESPONSE SYSTEM (CRS) Make lectures more enriching for students. The PowerPoint Presentation includes a full lecture script, discussion questions, photos and figures from the book, and links to MyPoliSciLab multimedia. With integrated clicker questions, get immediate feedback on what your students are learning during a lecture. Available on the IRC.

Acknowledgments

Heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to Ben Page, friend and long-time collaborator, who co-authored many editions of this book, though not this one. For over a year after I first broached the idea about our doing a textbook together, we hashed out whether it was possible to write a textbook that would be consistent with our standards as teachers and scholars, offer a perspective on American government and politics that was unique in the discipline, and do well in the marketplace. Once we concluded that it was possible to produce a textbook that hit these benchmarks and that we passionately wanted to make happen, we spent more than two years writing what became the First Edition of *The Struggle for Democracy*. When Ben and I started this process, we were only acquaintances. Over the years, in the process of collaborating on the publication of several editions of this textbook, we became and remain very good friends. Though Ben has not been an active co-author on this edition of *Struggle*, his brilliant insights, analytical approach, and elegant writing are visible on virtually every page, and it is why his name sits next to mine on the cover and the title page. Ben Page, of course, is one of the most brilliant, cited, visible, and admired political scientists in the

world, and hardly needs additional praise from me. But, I will say that I feel extraordinarily lucky to have worked with him for a good part of my academic career.

This edition of *Struggle* has been refreshed by and has benefited from the work of three extremely talented and energetic young political scientists, all former teaching assistants of mine in the large introductory course on American government and politics at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and all now launched on their own academic careers as teachers and scholars. David Doherty of Loyola University Chicago, Josh Ryan of Utah State University, and Scott Minkoff of SUNY New Paltz, took on a substantial portion of the burden of producing this new edition of *Struggle*, each taking responsibility for updating three chapters and each responsible for creating or modernizing chapter features that make this book such an exciting tool for student learning. I am grateful to each of them and hope and trust we will work together on future editions.

I also want to thank the many students, teaching assistants, and faculty at the University of Colorado and other universities, colleges, and two-year institutions who have used this book over the years as a learning and teaching tool and who have let me know what worked and what didn't work in previous editions. I appreciate their insight and candor.

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Santa Fe College; Jennifer Sacco, Quinnipiac University; Larry W. Smith, Amarillo College; J. Joel Tovanche, Tarrant County College

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CHAPTER
1

AT LONG LAST, THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The 1965 Voting Rights Act allowed African Americans in the Deep South to vote for the first time without fear. In this photo from the period, African Americans wait to enter the Haywood County Courthouse to register to vote, unimpeded by the brutalities and humiliations of Jim Crow. Passage of the act, an example of the struggle for democracy at work in American politics, put an end to a long history of refusing to protect the voting rights of minorities. *Do measures such as voter ID requirements for voting, recently implemented in a number of states, and which mostly affect the youngest and oldest voters, rural people, and racial and ethnic minorities, suggest that the struggle for democracy must continue? Or does it mean that our democracy has matured and we no longer need worry about access to the voting booth?*

DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS

CHAPTER OUTLINE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

1.1 Explain democracy as the standard by which American government and politics can be evaluated.

HOW DO GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS WORK?

1.2 Construct an analytical framework for examining how government and politics work.

The Struggle for Democracy

ROBERT MOSES AND THE STRUGGLE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR VOTING RIGHTS

Although the right to vote is fundamental to democracy, African Americans in the South were not able to vote in any numbers until after 1965, despite passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, which prohibited discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

In Mississippi in the early 1960s, only 5 percent of African Americans were registered to vote, and none held elective office. In Walthall County, not a single African American was registered, although roughly three thousand were eligible.[1] A combination of exclusionary voting registration rules, economic pressures, hard and stubborn racial discrimination, and violence kept them from the polls.

When the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) launched its Voter Education Project in 1961 with the aim of ending black political powerlessness in the Deep South, its first step was to create "freedom schools" in the segregated counties of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. The first freedom school was founded in McComb, Mississippi, by a remarkable young man named Robert Parris Moses. Shrugging off repeated threats to his life, vicious assaults, arrests, fines, and public recriminations, Moses taught African American citizens about their rights under the law and sent them in droves to county registrars' offices.

Despite the voter registration efforts of Moses and other SNCC volunteers, African Americans in the Deep South would have to wait four more years—for the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act—to exercise their constitutional right to elect representatives to govern in their names.[2] The Voter Education Project, a key building block of a powerful and growing civil rights movement, along with many moral and political acts of defiance, did eventually force federal action to support the citizenship rights of African Americans in the South. Robert Moses and many other African Americans were willing to risk all they had, including their lives, to gain full and equal citizenship in the United States. They would, most assuredly, have been gratified by the election of Barack Obama in 2008 as the nation's forty-fourth president.

* * * * *

The struggle for democracy is happening in many countries today, where people fight against all odds for the right to govern themselves and to control their own destinies.[3] In the United States, democracy, although honored and celebrated, remains an unfinished project. The continuing struggle to expand and perfect democracy is a major feature of American history and a defining characteristic of our politics today. It is also a central theme of this book.

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

1.1 Explain democracy as the standard by which American government and politics can be evaluated.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better, or equal, hope in the world?

—Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address

Anarchist
One who believes that people are natural cooperators capable of creating free and decent societies without the need for government.

Anarchists believe that people can live in harmony without any form of authority; however, most people believe that when living together in groups and communities, there is a need for an entity of some sort to provide law and order; to protect against external aggressors; and to provide essential public goods such as roads,

waste disposal, education, and clean water. It is safe to say that most people do not want to live in places where there is effectively no government at all, as in Somalia, or where there is a failed state, as in Haiti and Syria. If government is both necessary and inevitable, certain questions are unavoidable: Who is to govern? How are those who govern encouraged to serve the best interests of society? How can governments be induced to make policies and laws that citizens consider legitimate and worth obeying? How can citizens ensure that those who govern both carry out laws and policies the people want and do so effectively? In short, what is the best form of government? For most Americans, the answer is clear: democracy.

Democracy's central idea is that ordinary people want to rule themselves and are capable of doing so.[4] This idea has proved enormously popular, not only with Americans, but with people all over the world.[5] To be sure, some people would give top priority to other things besides self-government as a requirement for good society, including such things as safety and security or the need to have religious law and values determine what government does. Nevertheless, the appealing notion that ordinary people can and should rule themselves has spread to all corners of the globe, and the number of people living in democratic societies has increased significantly over the past two decades,[6] even given recent setbacks in Turkey, Egypt, and Russia, where autocratic governments have reemerged.[7]

It is no wonder that a form of government based on the notion that people are capable of ruling themselves enjoys widespread popularity, especially compared with government by the few (by the Communist Party in China and in Cuba) or by a single person (by dictator Kim Jong-un in North Korea). Some political thinkers argue that democracy is the form of government that best protects human rights because it is the only one based on a recognition of the intrinsic worth and equality of human beings. Others believe that democracy is the form of government most likely to produce rational policies because it can count on the pooled knowledge and expertise of a society's entire population: a political version, if you will, of the wisdom of crowds, something like the wiki phenomenon.[8] Still others claim that democracies are more stable and long-lasting because their leaders, elected by and answerable to voters, enjoy a strong sense of legitimacy among citizens. Many others suggest that democracy is the form of government most conducive to economic growth and material well-being, a claim with substantial scholarly support.[9] (In the years ahead, the relative economic growth of India, a democracy, and China, a one-party-state, will be a real-world test of this proposition.) Still others believe that democracy is the form of government under which human beings, because they are free, are best able to develop their natural capacities and talents.[10] There are many compelling reasons, then, why so many people have preferred democracy.

Americans have supported the idea of self-government and have helped make the nation more democratic over the course of its history.[11] Nevertheless, democracy in America remains an aspiration rather than a finished product. The goal behind this book is to help you think carefully about the quality and progress of democracy in the United States. We want to help you reach your own judgments about the degree to which politics and government in the United States make the country more or less democratic. You can then draw your own conclusions about which political practices and institutions in the United States encourage and sustain popular self-rule and which ones discourage and undermine it. To help you do this, we must be clear about the meaning of democracy.

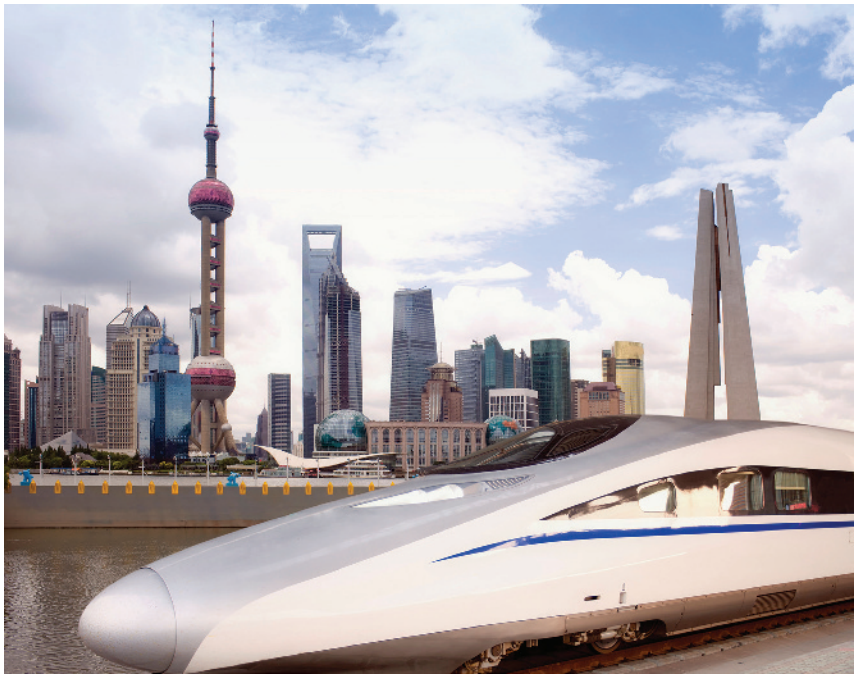
The Origins of Democracy

Many of our ideas about democracy originated with the ancient Greeks. The Greek roots of the word *democracy* are *demos*, meaning "the people," and *kratein*, meaning "to rule." Greek philosophers and rulers, however, were not uniformly friendly to the

DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Some scholars assert that fully functioning democracies are a prerequisite to economic growth, a claim that is supported by fast-growing India—symbolized in the top photo by the skyscraper boom in Mumbai's business district—but belied by the Chinese example in the bottom photo. China, whose economic growth is without precedent—note the gleaming high-speed train and visually captivating skyline in Shanghai—is anything but a democracy ruled as it is by the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Can you think of other examples that address the question of the relationship between economic growth in a society and its form of government? Were Britain, France, Germany, and Japan democracies when they were in their most dynamic periods of economic activity? Or, do you believe that the relationship is the other way around, that economic growth makes it more likely that a society will become more democratic as its middle classes insist that they have a greater say in society's affairs? If so, will China become more democratic in the long run?



idea that the *many* could and should rule themselves. Most believed that governing required the greatest sophistication, intelligence, character, and training—certainly not the province of ordinary people. Aristotle expressed this view in his classic work *Politics*, in which he observed that democracy "is a government in the hands of men of low birth, no property, and vulgar employments."

Instead, the Greeks preferred rule either by a select *few* (by an aristocracy, in which a hereditary nobility rules, or by a clerical elite, as in Iran today) or by an enlightened *one*, somewhat akin to the philosopher-king described by Plato in his *Republic* or as in England in the time of Elizabeth I. **Democracy**, then, is "rule by the people" or, to put it as the Greeks did, self-government by the many, as opposed to **oligarchy** (rule by the *few*) or **monarchy** (rule by the *one*). The idea that ordinary people might rule themselves represents an important departure from most historical beliefs.[12] In practice, throughout human history, most governments have been quite undemocratic.

Inherent in the idea of self-rule by ordinary people is an understanding that government must serve *all* its people and that ultimately none but the people themselves can be relied on to know, and hence to act in accordance with, their own

democracy
A system of government in which the people rule; rule by the many as opposed to rule by one, or rule by the few.

oligarchy
Rule by the few, where a minority holds power over a majority, as in an aristocracy or a clerical establishment.

monarchy
Rule by the one, such as where power rests in the hands of a king or queen.

values and interests.[13] In this sense, democracy is more a set of utopian ideas than a description of real societies. Athens of the fifth century BCE is usually cited as the purest form of democracy that ever existed. There, all public policies were decided in periodic assemblies of Athenian citizens, though women, slaves, and immigrants were excluded from participation.[14] Nevertheless, the existence of a society where "a substantial number of free, adult males were entitled as citizens to participate freely in governing"[15] proved to be a powerful example of what was possible for those who believed that rule by the people was the best form of government. A handful of other cases of popular rule kept the democratic idea alive across the centuries. Beginning in the fifth century BCE, for example, India enjoyed long periods marked by spirited and broadly inclusive public debate and discourse on public issues. In the Roman Republic, male citizens elected the consuls, the chief magistrates of the powerful city-state. In the Middle Ages, some European cities were governed directly by the people (at least by men who owned property) rather than by nobles, church, or crown. During the Renaissance, periods of popular control of government (again, limited to male property holders) occurred in the city-states of Venice, Florence, and Milan.

RULE BY THE FEW

Although the elected president of Iran is influential in determining what the Iranian government does, real power in the country is exercised by an unelected clergy and the Revolutionary Guards, the country's leading security force with considerable influence in the political sphere. The mullahs (or clerics), the ideological custodians of all Iranian institutions and debates, listen to presidential addresses for any slackening in ideological commitment. *Is a system that is responsive, in theory, to the many but run, in reality, by the few likely to retain legitimacy over the long term? How might the people of Iran move their system to one where the majority rules rather than the few?*

Direct Versus Representative Democracy

To the ancient Greeks, democracy meant **direct democracy**, rule by the common people exercised *directly* in open assemblies. They believed that democracy implied face-to-face deliberation and decision making about the public business. Direct democracy requires, however, that all citizens be able to meet together regularly to debate and decide the issues of the day. Such a thing was possible in fifth century BCE Athens, which was small enough to allow all male citizens to gather in one place. Men had time to meet and to deliberate because women provided household labor and slaves accounted for most production.

Because direct (participatory) democracy is possible only in small communities where citizens with abundant leisure time can meet on a face-to-face basis, it is an unworkable arrangement for a large and widely dispersed society such as the United States.[16] Democracy in large societies must take the representative form, since millions of citizens cannot meet in open assembly. **Representative democracy** is a system in which the people select others, called *representatives*, to act on their behalf.

direct democracy
A form of political decision making in which policies are decided by the people themselves, rather than by their representatives, acting either in small face-to-face assemblies or through the electoral process as in initiatives and referenda in the American states.

representative democracy
Indirect democracy, in which the people rule through elected representatives; see liberal democracy.

The Benchmarks of Representative Democracy

Democracy is rule by the many. What does this mean in a large society where representatives of the people make government policies? How can we know that the many are in charge when they are not themselves making decisions in public assemblies, as the ancient Athenians did? What features must exist in representative systems to ensure that those who govern do so on behalf of and in the interest of the people? This involves more than the existence of elections.[17]

Three additional benchmarks are necessary to clarify our understanding of representative democracy in large societies: *popular sovereignty*, *political equality*, and *political liberty*, with the latter two being necessary for the first (that is to say, for popular sovereignty to work, political equality and political liberty must exist). A society in which all three flourish, we argue, is a healthy representative democracy. A society in which any of the three is absent or impaired falls short of the representative democratic ideal.

RULE BY THE MANY

In small towns throughout New England, local policies and budgets are decided at regular town meetings, in which the entire town population is invited to participate.
What are some advantages of town meetings? What might be the drawbacks? What other kinds of forums might there be where direct democracy is possible?

popular sovereignty
The basic principle of democracy that the people are the ultimate source of government authority and of the policies that government leaders make.

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY **Popular sovereignty** means that people are the ultimate source of government authority and that what the government does is determined by what the people want. If ultimate authority resides not in the hands of the *many* but in the hands of the *few* (as in an aristocratic order) or of the *one* (whether a benevolent sovereign or a ruthless dictator), democracy does not exist. Nor does it exist if government consistently fails to follow the preferences and to serve the interests of the people. The following seven conditions are especially important for popular sovereignty to flourish.

Leaders are Selected in Competitive Elections The existence of a close match between what the people want and what government does, however, does not necessarily prove that the people are sovereign. In an **autocracy**, for example, the will of the people can be shaped through coercion or propaganda to correspond to the wishes of the leadership. For influence to flow from the people to the leadership, some mechanism must ensure responsiveness and accountability to the people. The best mechanism ever invented to achieve these goals is the contested election, in which both existing and aspiring government leaders periodically face the people for judgment. Elections in which voters choose among competing candidates and political parties is one of the hallmarks of democratic political systems.

autocracy
General term that describes all forms of government characterized by rule by a single person or by a group with total power, whether a monarchy, a military tyranny, or a theocracy.

Elections are Free and Fair If elections are to be useful as a way to keep government leaders responsive and responsible, they must be conducted in a fashion that is free and fair. By free, we mean there is no coercion of voters or election officials and no serious barriers that prevent citizens from running for office and voting. By fair, we mean, among other things, that election rules do not favor some parties and candidates over others and that ballots are accurately counted.

People Participate in the Political Process A process is useful in conveying the will of the people and in keeping leaders responsive and responsible only if the people participate. If elections and other forms of political participation attract only a minority of the eligible population, they cannot serve as a way to understand what the broad public wants or as an instrument forcing leaders to pay attention to what the people want. Widespread participation in politics—including voting in elections, contacting public officials, working with others to bring matters to public attention, joining associations that work to shape government actions, and more—is necessary to ensure not only that responsive representatives will be chosen, but that they will also have continuous incentives to pay attention to the people. Because widespread participation is so central to popular sovereignty, we *can* say that the less political participation there is in a society, the weaker the democracy.

High-Quality Information Is Available If people are to form authentic and rational attitudes about public policies and political leaders, they must have access to accurate political information, insightful interpretations, and vigorous debate. These are the responsibility of government officials, opposition parties, opinion leaders, and the news media. If false or biased information is provided, if policies are not challenged and debated, or if misleading interpretations of the political world (or none at all) are offered, the people cannot form opinions in accordance with their values and interests, and popular sovereignty cannot be said to exist.

The Majority Rules How can the opinions and preferences of many individual citizens be combined into a single binding decision? Because unanimity is unlikely—so the insistence that new policies should require unanimous agreement for them to be adopted would simply enshrine the status quo—reaching a decision requires a decision rule of some sort. If the actions of government are to respond to all citizens, and each citizen is counted equally, the only decision rule that makes sense is **majority rule**, which means that the government adopts the policy that the *most* people want.[18] The only alternative to majority rule is minority rule, which would unacceptably elevate the preferences and the interests of the *few* over the *many*.

VOTING IN A DANGEROUS PLACE

In a burqa that completely covers her, a woman shows, by her inked finger, that she had cast a ballot in the April 2014 presidential election in Afghanistan. Voter turnout was very high—more than 60 percent of eligible voters went to the polls—an outcome that surprised many observers because of Taliban threats to bomb polling places.

Is voting, clearly important to people in Afghanistan and in other troubled spots around the globe, a sufficient condition for democracy, or must other conditions exist to ensure that political leaders act as representatives of the people?

Government Policies Reflect the Wishes of the People The most obvious sign of popular sovereignty is the existence of a close correspondence between what government does and what the people want it to do. It is hard to imagine a situation in which the people rule but government officials continuously make policies contrary to the expressed wishes of the majority of the people; sovereign people would most likely react by removing such officials from power.

But does the democratic ideal require that government officials always do exactly what the people want, right away, responding to every whim and passing fancy of the public? This question has troubled many democratic theorists, and most have answered that democracy is best served when representatives and other public officials respond to the people after the people have had the opportunity to deliberate among themselves about the issues.[19] We might, then, want to speak of democracy as a system in which government policies conform to what the people want over some period of time.

POLITICAL EQUALITY The second benchmark of representative democracy and a necessary condition for popular sovereignty to exist is **political equality**, the idea that each person, having an intrinsic value that is equal to that of other human beings, carries the same weight in voting and other political decision making.[20] Imagine, if you will, a society in which one person could cast a hundred votes in an election, another person fifty votes, and still another twenty-five votes, while many unlucky folks had only one vote each—or none at all. Democracy is a way of making decisions in which each person has one, and only one, voice.

Most people know this intuitively. Our sense of what is fair is offended, for instance, when some class of people is denied the right to vote in a society that boasts the outer trappings of democracy. The denial of citizenship rights to African Americans in the South before the passage of the **1965 Voting Rights Act** is such an example. We count it as a victory for democracy when previously excluded groups win the right to vote.

Political equality also involves what the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution calls "equal protection," meaning that everyone in a democracy is treated the same by government. Government programs, for example, cannot favor

majority rule
The form of political decision making in which policies are decided on the basis of what a majority of the people want.

political equality
The principle that each person carries equal weight in the conduct of the public business.

1965 Voting Rights Act
A law that banned racial discrimination in voting across the United States; it gave the federal government broad powers to register voters in a set of states, mostly in the South, that had long practiced election discrimination, and required that such states pre-clear any changes in its election laws with the Department of Justice.

WORTH THE WAIT

African Americans wait outside a polling station at a rural grocery store in Alabama in order to vote in the 1966 national election, something that was only possible because of the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that invalidated many practices by state governments designed to keep African Americans from voting. Nearly fifty years later, a similarly long line awaited voters in Hartford, Connecticut, on Election Day in 2012. *Are voting rights for African Americans in any danger today? If so, what role should the federal government take in ensuring that voting rights are protected?*

one group over another or deny benefits or protections to identifiable groups in the population, such as racial and religious minorities. Nor should people be treated better or worse than others by law enforcement agencies and the courts. Taken together, political equality and equal treatment are sometimes called **civil rights**.

civil rights
Guarantees of equal treatment by government officials regarding political rights, the judicial system, and public programs.

But does political equality require that people be equal in ways that go beyond having a voice in decision making and treatment by government? In particular, does democracy require that inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth not be too extreme? While many do not think this is the case, thinkers as diverse as Aristotle, Rousseau, and Jefferson thought so, believing that great inequalities in economic circumstances almost always translate into political inequality.[21] Political scientist Robert Dahl describes the problem in the following way:

> If citizens are unequal in economic resources, so are they likely to be unequal in political resources; and political equality will be impossible to achieve. In the extreme case, a minority of rich will possess so much greater political resources than other citizens that they will control the state, dominate the majority of citizens, and empty the democratic process of all content.[22]

POLITICAL EQUALITY UNDER THE FLAG

Although Americans enjoy formal political equality, some Americans, clearly, are more equal than others in their ability to mobilize resources that enable the exercise of real political influence. A homeless person sleeping on a park bench in Brooklyn, New York, though probably eligible to vote, is less likely than better off Americans to register, cast a ballot, circulate a petition, make a campaign contribution, or petition members of Congress or the administration. *What, if anything, can be done to ensure that policy makers hear from more than a limited number of better-educated and more affluent Americans?*

Later chapters will show that income and wealth are distributed in a highly unequal way in the United States, that the scale of this inequality has become dramatically more pronounced over the past two decades, and that this inequality more often than not translates into great inequalities among people and groups in the political arena. For example, powerful groups representing the most privileged sectors of American society shape elections and legislation more than other Americans do.[23] In such circumstances, the political equality benchmark is in danger of being violated.

POLITICAL LIBERTY A third benchmark of democracy in representative systems, and a necessary condition for popular sovereignty to exist, is **political liberty**. Political liberty refers to basic freedoms essential to the formation and expression of majority opinion and its translation into public policies. These essential liberties include the freedoms of speech, of conscience and religion, of the press, and of assembly and association embodied in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Philosopher John Locke thought that individual rights and liberties were so fundamental to the good society that their preservation was the central responsibility of any legitimate government and that their protection was the very reason people agreed to enter into a **social contract** to form government in the first place.

political liberty
The principle that citizens in a democracy are protected from government interference in the exercise of a range of basic freedoms such as the freedoms of speech, association, and conscience.

social contract
The idea that government is the result of an agreement among people to form one, and that people have the right to create an entirely new government if the terms of the contract have been violated by the existing one.

Without these First Amendment freedoms, as well as those freedoms involving protections against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, the other fundamental principles of democracy could not exist. Popular sovereignty cannot be guaranteed if people are prevented from participating in politics or if authorities crush any opposition to the government. Popular sovereignty cannot prevail if the voice of the people is silenced and if citizens are not free to argue and debate, based on their own ideas, values, and personal beliefs, and to form and express their political opinions.[24] Political equality is violated if some people can speak out but others cannot. Voting without liberty can lead to elected autocrats such as Vladmir Putin in Russia and Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Egypt, an outcome that is clearly undemocratic because opposition voices have been silenced.

For most people today, democracy and liberty are inseparable. The concept of *self-government* implies not only the right to vote and to run for public office, but also the right to speak one's mind, to petition the government, and to join with others in political parties, interest groups, or social movements.