

Dream of a Nation
A People-Centered and Accountable Government

Infographic

1. Judging only from the statistics provided which model does the contemporary United States government fall more closely into, a Machiavellian model or a Rousseauian model?
2. Tally how much of this information would be judged beneficial for a methodological individualist. Then tally how many would be perceived as positive by a methodological holist. Which pattern does the United States tend to fall under, as a whole? Is this consistent with contemporary political rhetoric?

Toward a Living Democracy

1. Are capitalism and democracy compatible? Do both systems provide an opportunity for the positive and negative freedoms Isaiah Berlin described in his 1958 lecture on freedom?
2. Does the idea of a living democracy reconcile the conflict between individual rights and the common good?

Redefining Security for Strong Communities and a Safer World

3. What is the contemporary American government's source of authority? How does this correspond with the nature of legitimate authority?
4. How does the idea of nationalism inform governmental decisions on security issues—including those identified as new priority security issues?

Getting Money Out of Politics: Putting the Public First

5. Using John Stuart Mill's argument that, "The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant," examine whether political power, gained through monetary expenditure, allows an individual to exercise their will and whether it is ultimately for popular, physical or moral good.
6. What is the root cause of private financing of political campaigns?

Citizens Strengthening Democracy

7. In *On Liberty*, Mill says, "That mankind are not infallible; that their truths, for the most part, are only half-truths; that unity of opinion, unless resulting from the fullest and freest comparison of opposite opinions, is not desirable, and diversity not an evil, but a good, until mankind are much more capable than at present of recognizing all sides of the truth, are principles applicable to men's modes of action not less than to their opinions." How does Mill's idea of diversity support or refute the idea of participatory democracy?
8. Define democracy. Contemplate the barriers to an inclusive political process in contemporary American society.

Bridging the Political Divide

9. What are the historical roots of each major political party in the United States? What are their vested interests?
10. How does each party embody different views on the nature of humankind and how does that manifest diversity in political agency?

Post Reading Questions-

11. Would a people-centered and accountable government be ideologically structured or infinitely responsive? How would government maintain authority and structure in either case?
12. What is the state's relation to the individual? What is the historical and socio-political presupposition inherent in your view?