

Critical Thinking Essay:

Why the United States Government Works Exactly as Designed

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Throughout life as an American we face many blessings and many hardships by living and enduring our life within the United States of America. While the United States is a wonderful country that provides many forms of freedom that cannot be found anywhere else in the world, the government that is found in the United States of America is what is ultimately going to be the crippling factor for most of its civilians for a vast number of reasons. The main issue with the United States government is not the fact that it does not work properly, but the fact that it works exactly as designed.

According to National Geographic (2020), “the founding fathers of America were focused on creating a government that had checks and balances to prevent one branch of government from ever accumulating too much power.” This was a great idea when you think about the way a government should be ran when it comes down to managing the lives of 2.5 million people that were alive back in 1776, but today America has a population of 330 million people and the same principles of government that were implemented back then are what is crippling America today. According to Ezra Klein (2020) “Everyone that is involved with America lives with identity politics since we all form and fold identities constantly” (p. xxi). These identities that we form are often influenced upon us throughout our lives, which can have

a great impact on the way we live our everyday lives mentally, physically, spiritually, and most of all politically.

This idea of identity politics explains why majority of people in America usually support groups that align with their personal identity and thoughts, but often are forced into thinking into one of two trains of thought and that is for and against. This is what is known as “group politics” (Klein, 2020, p. 52-55), which act a form of division that we naturally do without ever fully recognizing that we are doing so. This is what many supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement argue that majority of cops are trained to view groups of colored people differently than groups of white people due to their being a higher rate of crime if you are a person of color. This is because mentally these cops are associating those people into a mental group identity without even recognizing it. These group identities have been implemented into American politics since the start of the two-party system back in the late 1790’s. This implementation of the two-party system acts as a constant form of division amongst the people of the United States of America so that way we are polarized by our political climate without ever realizing what is truly happening.

By creating the terms Democrat and Republican, in a sense they were creating a different term for left and right trains of thought. This soon got associated with American politics and once that group identity was created and mentally established amongst the American people then then they begin to align themselves with a political identity and most often just that one political identity. One article by Hugh Williamson (1950) stated, “this system does not afford sufficient scope for the expression of opinion” (p. 405- 406). This is due to the two-party system simply having just what it is known for and that is two major political parties to align your ideologies with. This division amongst ideas has ultimately led to a lot of disagreements between the two

political parties and makes it so they rarely can ever come to an agreement on any given situation, which has crippled the United States of America and its civilians for over 200 years.

Another major issue that many people often face with the two-party system is the fact that they are so polarized by their own political group identity that they often can not come to terms with the other side. This is often fueled by the political media scene that is ultimately identarian media because we only listen to media that fuels our own perception of any given narrative or situation. This is especially true in today's political climate since every different party in America has their own form of news network to support that train of thought for likeminded individuals. If a person does not agree with what CNN or Fox News has to say then they simply just flip to a news network that conforms with their ideology and therefore Klein (2020) claims that, "audience driven media is ultimately identarian media for the way that we consume our political information" (p. 66-69). This happens in multiple different ways throughout life and has been this way since before the invention of most modern-day technology. Back in the day these media divisions were not as prevalent, but ever since the invention of the printing press the ability to spread information that can persuade others has influenced and changed the political climate into a game of disagreeing political identities.

These two major political identities have pushed two different political agendas through different forms of persuasion throughout generations to get themselves lots of supporters and this is ultimately hurting America. This is because there is not always going to be a correct answer or solution given to the American people on a given situation if there are not enough political parties for people to align their ideas with. This sounds like a good idea in theory but as Klein states (2020), "more parties ultimately will mean more problems" (p. 218- 223). This is because this creates a need for political parties that represent the diversity of population that is found

within the United States of America, but also creates the issue on whether they will have enough supporters to exist and make a difference in the political climate that has only supported two political parties for the last 200 years. If a new political party starts up and people vote for that party, but it does not even represent a large percentage of the American population then they are essentially throwing away their right to voice their opinion by voting for an option that stands no chance. While many people can argue that this can be beneficial because you are voicing your opinion in the end, it does not mean that you are voicing it in a manner where it will get heard. The United States of America is fully aware that by having just two political identities then it prevents any party from rising and changing the true inner workings of the government. Therefore, the politicians running the government have more to gain from traditional politics in its current state with two disagreeing political identities rather than hundreds of political identities that are just simply searching for the best overall solution to any given problem that also represents the voice of majority of America.

This game of disagreeing political parties usually stirs up every 2 and 4 years when election cycles are in full effect. This is usually due to political parties knowing the prime time to ‘rally the troops.’ The biggest problem that we face with these two major political parties rallying their troops is that politics globally are a team sport. Most of the time since we live in the country, people would like to assume that we would all vote as one big team, but this rarely happens due to this constant divide between the two political identities. As Klein states in his book (2020),” while high minded factors like policy ideas and ideology played some role in how partisans felt, the over-whelming driver⁵ was the strength of partisan identity” (p. 60- 61). This exemplifies how the American political system is really just two major opposing political identities that are working against each other rather than working together due to the agendas

that these parties are usually pushing whenever they are running for elections. The American people have always loved drama, and therefore they enjoy the us vs them comparisons that many politicians must make in order to rally support behind their political ambitions. As long as this is how American politics are playing out, then the United States of America will never reclaim their hold of the title for the greatest country in the world.

The reason why many people believe that the United States of America is no longer the best country in the world is often due to a variety number of reasons. According to Shlomo Sprung (2012), “increasing rate of incarceration within our country, the decreasing rank in our education system, and the amount of money that we spend on the police and military force. Most of these issues are all political issue that can be fixed if the two major political identities in the United States of America worked together to fix the underlying issues that are constantly going on due to this ever-dividing gap between the two political identities. Therefore, Ezra Klein has stated multiple times throughout his book that he believes the political system and government in the United States of America is not broken, but simply just working as it is supposed to.

Overall, the United States of America is still a wonderful country that offers many freedoms that can not be found anywhere else in the world. While there are plenty of pros and plenty of cons for living in America, we must understand the way the political identity system works in America to further understand why the United States of America is no longer the greatest country in the world. Many of its rules and regulations that have passed in the last 200 years have made it so the rich have gotten richer, while the poor have gotten poorer and this is due to the way we are polarized by our political climate. Whenever we feel frustrated by the way the government works whenever it is not in our favor, we must simply remind ourselves that the government is not broken but simply just working how it was originally designed.

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