

TOPIC: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Functionalist Perspective on Government: Pluralist Model

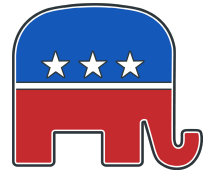
◆ Functionalists consider how governments help society function:

- 1 Planning & directing.
- 2 _____ law & order.
- 3 Meeting _____ of the people.
- 4 Manage international relations.

Pluralist Model

◆ Power is _____ among many groups that represent different interests.

- These groups must negotiate and _____ to achieve goals.
- Ensures that no single group dominates.
- _____ function through a pluralist model.



EXAMPLE

In a U.S. city, decisions regarding urban planning, education, and local parks are all influenced by different groups (neighborhood associations, teachers unions, etc.). No single group makes all the decisions. Which principle of the pluralist model does this best represent?

- a) Elite individuals hold the most power in both the government and the economy.
- b) Economic structures shape politics at the local and national level.
- c) Governments have the primary function of preserving the economy.
- d) Power is spread among many groups that must work together to achieve goals.

PRACTICE

A sociologist who believes in the pluralist model would likely agree with which of the following statements?

- a) Political power is concentrated in a society's most wealthy members.
- b) Government systems are designed to protect and maintain the economy and the power of the ruling class.
- c) Political power is distributed among many groups, ensuring that no single group dominates.
- d) Governments have little power over the people.

TOPIC: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Conflict Perspective on Government: Marxist Political Economy Model

- ◆ Conflict perspective focuses on how power creates and maintains inequality.
- ◆ **Karl Marx** (1818-1883): Focused on _____ that perpetuate inequality.

Marx's Political Economy Model

- ◆ **Political Economy Model:** Political systems are _____ by economic systems.
 - Under capitalism, political and legal systems protect the driving forces of the economy.
 - The rich have _____ resources → _____ influence on policies.
 - Workers are exploited and shut out of politics.



The imbalance of power is seen as _____.

EXAMPLE

Based on what you know about Marx's Political Economy Model, answer the following question:

Is the United States a true democracy? Why or why not?

PRACTICE

Which of the following statements about Marx's political economy are correct?

- This model focuses on the interplay of economics and politics.
- In the political economy model, power is dispersed between many groups that must collaborate.
- In the political economy model, workers are alienated from politics.

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- a) I & II. b) I & III. c) II & III. d) I, II, & III.

TOPIC: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Conflict Perspective on Government: Power Elite Model

- ◆ Conflict perspective focuses on how power creates and maintains inequality.

Power Elite Model

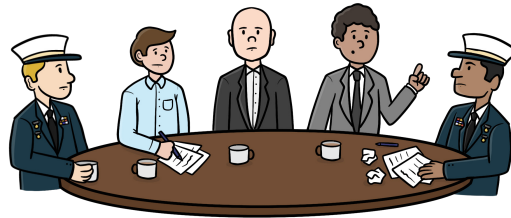
- ◆ **C. Wright Mills** (1916-1962): Expanded on Marx's theories.
- ◆ **Power Elite:** Small group of people at the top of the social hierarchy w/ _____ power.

Government.

Economy/ Business.

Military.

- Can _____ in their favor → allocate gov. spending, taxation, contracts.
- Can _____ between different spheres of influence.



The imbalance of power is seen as systemic _____ concentrated among the elite.

EXAMPLE

In the space below, write 2 ways in which a conflict perspective theorist might argue that the power elite model undermines democracy.

1. _____

2. _____

PRACTICE

Which of the following might be a member of the power elite according to C. Wright Mills?

- a) A 3-star military general.
- b) A public-school teacher.
- c) A small business owner in a large city.
- d) A farmer who employs many migrant workers.