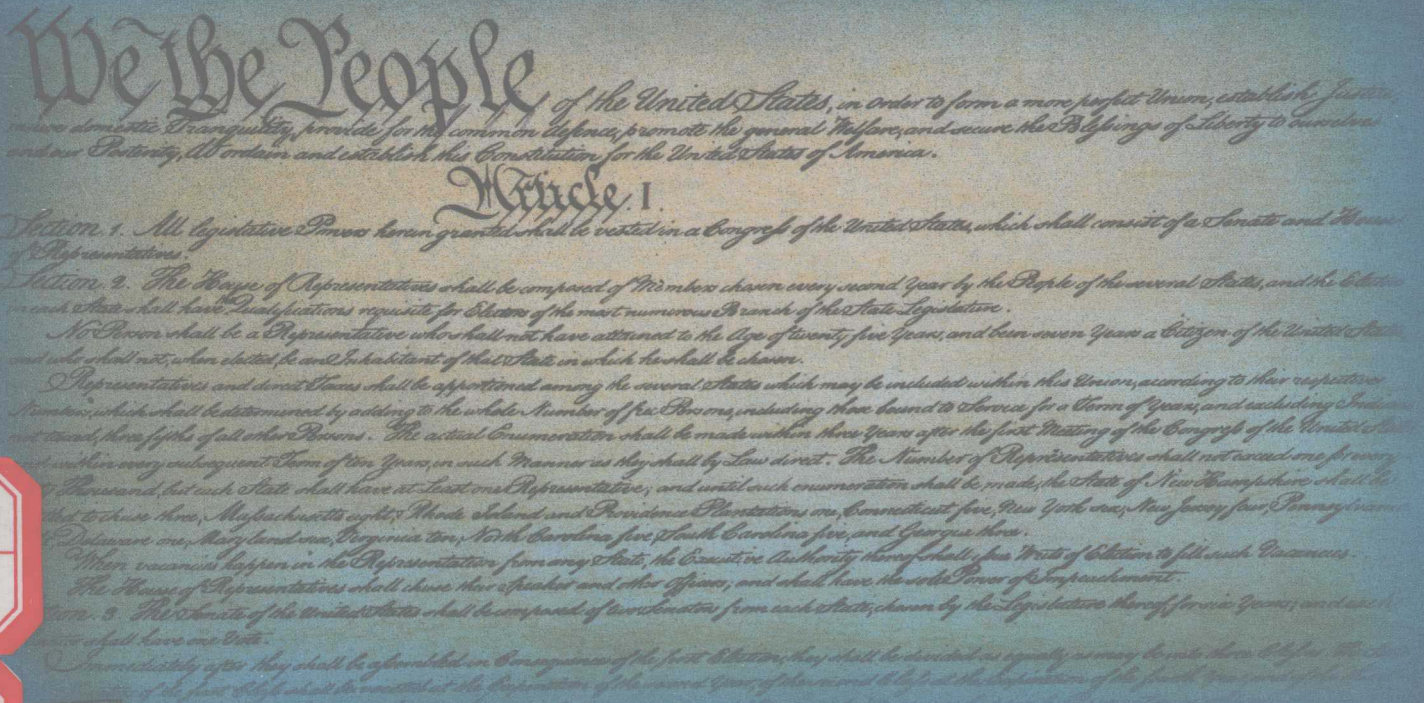
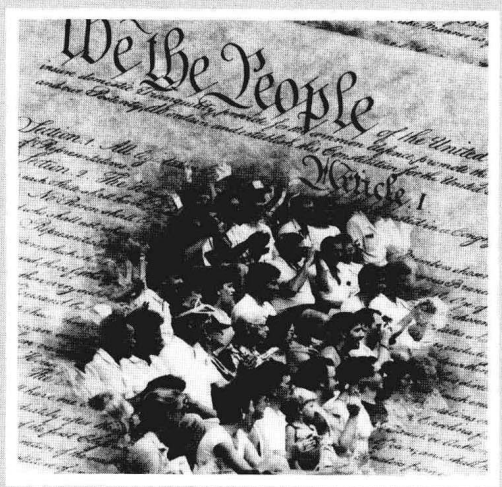
Charles M. Redenius David M. Billeaux Martin W. Slann

# THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

## Politics, Institutions, and Policies



**Charles M. Redenius**
*The Pennsylvania State University*
**David M. Billeaux**
*Oklahoma State University*
**Martin W. Slann**
*Clemson University*




# The American Republic

## Politics, Institutions, and Policies

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*Credits continued following index*

# The American Republic

# Preface

On September 17, 1987, the United States celebrates the bicentennial of the Constitution. On July 4, 1986, Americans, and much of the rest of the world, observed the 100th birthday of the Statue of Liberty. The national celebrations surrounding these historic events have convinced us that the time is ripe for a text in which the standard topics of American politics are animated by a historical and values-oriented approach to the study of American government. We are further convinced that only through a careful examination of historical developments and American ideals can we gain a well-rounded appreciation of why our political system produces the types and kinds of public policies it does. This approach forms the background to the entire work and we believe that our text is most fully intelligible when this historical and values-oriented approach to the policy process is kept in mind.

Our sense that we were on the right track was confirmed by how well our reviewers responded to our text and how quickly they drew us back to that approach when we strayed from it. To them we owe a deep debt of gratitude that cannot be fully captured by our acknowledgment of their assistance. We can only say that our text has benefited immensely from their suggestions and from their concern for the text's integrity. They have given of themselves and we trust they feel the same pride in this text as we do. Since two of these individuals, Danny Adkison of Oklahoma State University and Charles Dunn of Clemson University, are also our colleagues, we know from first-hand experience the value of collegiality. No less valuable, however, were the contributions of:

Lon Felker of East Carolina University,
Walter Jones of Memphis State University,
Henry Kenski of the University of Arizona,
Margaret Kenski of Pima Community College,
Ed Sidlow of Northwestern University, and
Martha Zebrowski of the City College of New York.

No author of a scholarly paper, let alone a textbook, can produce a final product without the dedication of a secretarial staff, library assistants, and reference librarians. We wish to recognize and to applaud Gladys Brown, Wendy Eidenmuller, and Vaunita Struble for their patient, understanding, and always-helpful contributions to our efforts. Patricia Gainer and Steve Sandbakken of the Penn State-Behrend College Library provided assistance on occasions too numerous and too painful to recall.

The birth pangs of our text were also considerably eased by our editor and production team at West Publishing. Clark Baxter's keen interest in our text kept us plugging away. Peggy Adams was always cheerful and kept the production schedule on track. Caroline Smith provided some gentle nudges that improved our thinking about how best to market our text in a highly-competitive arena.

Finally, with the completion of this textbook, each of us has learned once again that a wife is truly one's better-half. To our wives, Marilyn Betit Redenius, Ana Martinez Billeaux, and Ruth Isaac Slann, we dedicate this textbook with the affection that triumphed over the trials of authorship.

# The American Republic

# Contents

*The role of government and its relationship to the individual has been changed so radically that today government is involved in almost every aspect of our lives. Political, economic, and racial forces have developed which we have not yet learned to understand or control. If we are ever to master these forces, make certain that government will belong to the people, not the people to the government, and provide for the future better than the past, we must somehow learn from the experience of the past.*
Bernard Baruch

# Chapter 1

# Analyzing a Changing America: Values, Institutions, and the Policy Process

**Chapter Outline**

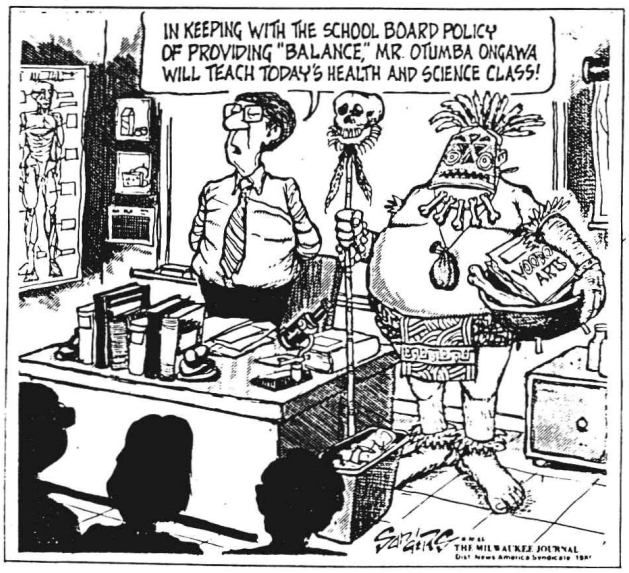
## Introduction

Since the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1789, our political institutions and the values Americans hold have undergone significant changes. Revolutionary advances in the technology of communication and transportation, the dramatic growth of governmental programs, the advent of formidable challenges to America's economic and military supremacy, and the rise of ideologies hostile to the American way of life have all combined to produce a society that would barely be recognizable to Americans of only a few generations ago. These changes, we argue in this text, have had a direct impact on the policies of the national government.

At one time or another throughout our history, the national government has been held responsible for all that has happened, good or bad (recognizing that it is sometimes difficult to tell good from bad). Today, the role of government, and particularly that of the national government, has become the focus of intense debate. We are unsure what its role in economic matters, social problems, or international affairs should be. We can agree only that government is, and will surely remain, a presence in all our lives.

The complexity and confusion of public policies confounds most average citizens. The surgeon general warns us that the use of tobacco is dangerous to our health, while we continue to subsidize tobacco farmers and to encourage the export of tobacco products. We are told that a good citizen pays taxes and refrains from cheating in filing a tax return, but at the same time, special interests compete to secure tax advantages. Anomalies such as these strongly suggest a lack of coherence in governmental policies.

Throughout this text, we discuss how the American federal system works and why, sometimes, it doesn't. In either case, the values Americans hold, organized interests, and the institutions of government all contribute to uncertain and unpredictable policy outcomes, despite the best of intentions. Americans have come to expect that government will (somehow) reconcile competing policy interests. The nation's wheat farmers in the middle 1980s were filing for bankruptcy in record numbers and many of them blamed government policy. For the wheat farmer, it was the worst of times. But for




Bill Sanders, News America Syndicate, The Milwaukee Journal

**Policymakers (and political scientists) must often make choices among competing points of view.**

American consumers, it was the best of times because they were able to purchase their groceries at relatively low prices, also a result of public policy.

All this would seem to suggest a simple truism: It is impossible for public policy makers to satisfy all parties to a conflict. One party will benefit and the other will bear a cost. If policy makers provide a subsidy for wheat farmers, they can do so only by increasing the economic burden for some other group. In the ongoing struggle to change the allocation of costs and benefits, policy makers must mediate the conflict between competing groups while striving for fairness and equity. Under such conditions, the policy process will at best produce imperfect results.

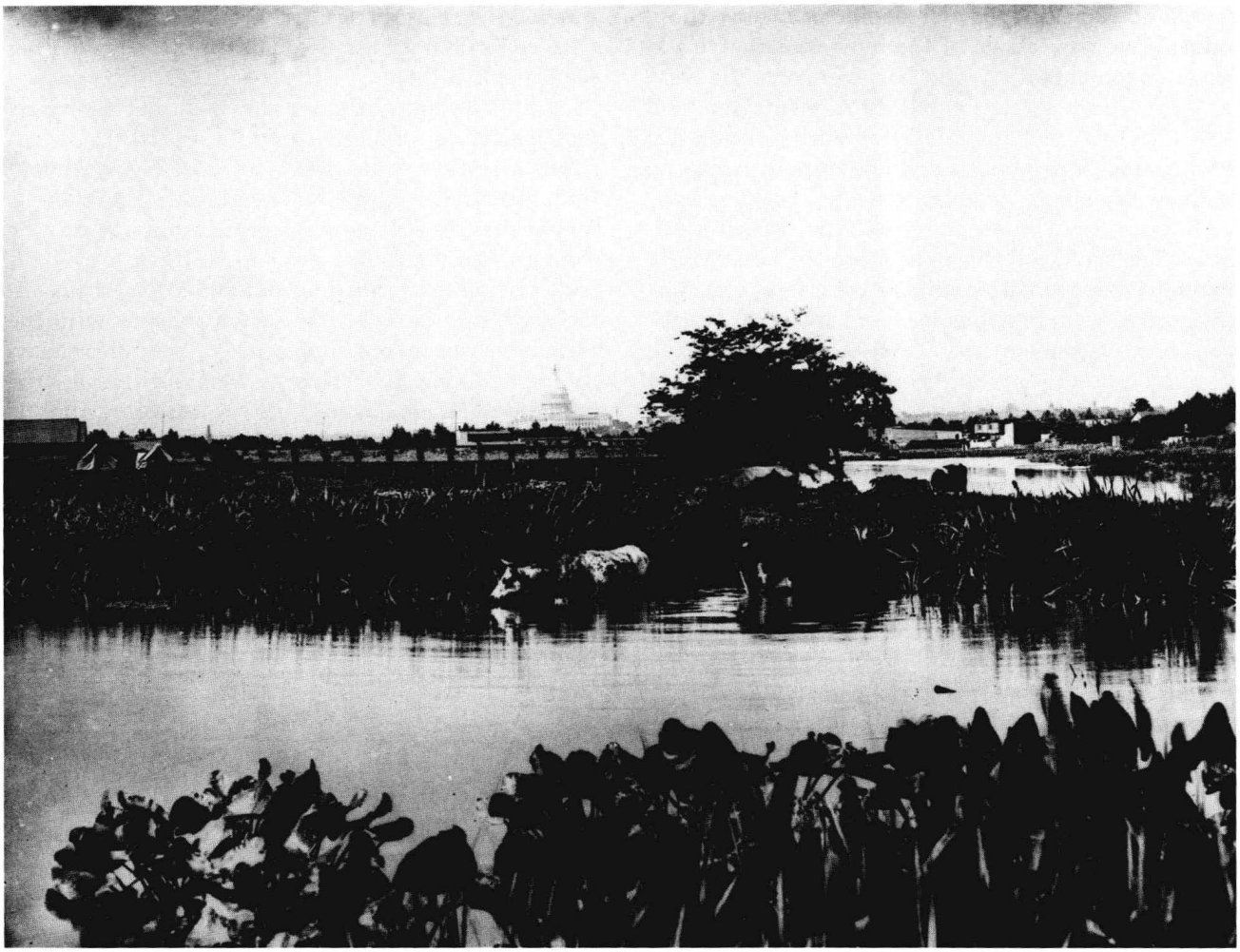
Yet that should not be an occasion for despair. Politics, like any other human enterprise, will record some notable successes and some unexpected failures. We have had plenty of both during the two centuries of American independence! However, the United States is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, **democracy** in the world. Our success must be more than a fortunate set of historical accidents. And, despite the warning that it is better not to know how either sausages or laws are made, we are convinced that good government requires a body of citizens who are aware of, and concerned about, how public policies affect their lives.

In this text, we examine how the values Americans hold have shaped our democracy; how those values gave rise to two of the most remarkable political documents the world has ever seen, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; and how those values have interacted with our political institutions to produce a distinctive policy-making process, in both its strengths and its weaknesses.

Because the United States is basically a free society, the faults of the policy process are readily apparent. Cartoonists, political commentators, opposing interests, religious leaders, civil rights activists, conservationists, and a host of others are quick to point out the government's shortcomings. But many of these shortcomings, for example, welfare dependency and an expensive, burgeoning bureaucracy to administer welfare programs, are often unintended and unforeseen consequences of dealing with complex social issues. The question is whether we can solve them.

The Founding Fathers recognized that an imperfect species could hardly produce a perfect government. They sought to create a form of government that although resting on republican foundations would be flexible enough to accommodate the changes that the future was sure to bring. This bedrock of political principle underpins American democracy, and is one of the chief reasons why the form of government adopted in 1789 endures today. By recognizing that change was inevitable, the Founding Fathers ensured the success of our political institutions.

**Welcome to the Land of Freedom—an ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty: scene on the steerage deck**



**One dimension of the nation's change is illustrated by this 1882 photo of Washington, D.C.**

The Founders were also aware that any given policy is the result of complex interactions involving strongly held values, organized political interests, and governmental institutions. Given this context, they knew there was no guarantee that the policy process would always produce the most desirable results. All these factors add to rather than detract from the strength and durability of our government. Had flexibility, openness, and willingness to experiment been lacking, the immense changes of the last two hundred years would have overwhelmed the American government. We stress the great extent of change because perhaps more than any other factor, it is the velocity of social change that distinguishes the last two centuries from the previous two centuries. The next section describes some of the changes that have had a marked impact on our form of government.

## Political, Economic, and Demographic Change: 1780s–1980s

In the 1780s, the United States consisted of thirteen former colonies on the Atlantic coast, occupying a land area of 889,000 square miles, whose western boundary was the Mississippi River. By the 1980s, the United States included fifty states, the District

of Columbia, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and several territories, occupying a total of 3.6 million square miles. The first census in 1790 counted less than four million inhabitants, approximately one-fourth of whom were nonwhite. Only 10 percent of the nation's population lived in an urban area. Philadelphia was the largest city with a population of about forty thousand.

By the middle 1980s, Americans numbered 240 million, approximately 12 percent of whom were nonwhite. Natural increase provided the greatest growth, but the forty million immigrants who came throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth made a major contribution. Seventy percent of the population now lives in an urban area. The New York metropolitan area with more than fourteen million people is the nation's largest, but the fastest growing areas, such as Atlanta, Houston, and Los Angeles, are in the Sunbelt.

Using a variety of sources, economists have determined that the gross national product (GNP), the total of all goods and services produced in a year, for the 1780s was roughly $3 billion. By 1987, GNP had grown to $4.5 trillion (twice as much as the next largest GNP, the Soviet Union's). During the first half-century, the national government expended $1.09 billion, and until 1900 had spent a total of only $16.5 billion. By the middle 1980s, expenditures had grown to $1 trillion per fiscal year, with a deficit that surpassed $200 billion. In the 1780s and 1790s, the national debt was actually reduced. By the 1980s, interest on the national debt stood at more than $140 billion per year, an amount exceeded only by spending on Social Security and national defense.

In the 1780s, negative government was the prevailing philosophy: "That government which governs least governs best." For many, the only two appropriate functions of government were to guarantee domestic tranquility and to protect the country against foreign invasion. Although these may sound like the conditions for laissez-faire **capitalism,** with its focus on a free market economy, such an economic system had little appeal for the leaders of the new nation. Neither Alexander Hamilton nor Thomas Jefferson, who were the leading economic thinkers in the United States, could be accurately described as a laissez-faire capitalist.

Hamilton espoused an economic philosophy that was more mercantilist than capitalist. As the first secretary of the treasury, Hamilton urged the Congress to adopt economic policies whereby the federal government would direct the nation's economic development. Although Jefferson viewed Hamiltonian policies as essentially government grants of economic privilege to the affluent and he supported efforts to end such practices,[1] he was not opposed to government actions that would benefit all Americans: Witness his purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803, which doubled the size of the United States. The Scottish economist Adam Smith, in contrast, the leading exponent of laissez-faire capitalism, had proposed an end to all government regulation of the economy as a precondition for healthy economic growth.

Since the 1930s, the prevailing theory of government, despite some resistance from the political right, is that of positive government, or the welfare state. This theory maintains that the national government has the primary responsibility for addressing the nation's social and economic problems. The size of the federal deficit in recent years, however, has caused this theory of government to come under attack. In 1985, Congress passed the so-called Gramm-Rudman budget bill, mandating across-

## TWO CENTURIES OF POPULATION GROWTH

A brief comparison with other major industrialized nations illustrates how dramatic the population growth of the United States has been over the last two centuries.

**Population**
(in millions) *

| Country | 1780s | 1980s | Percentage of Increase * |
|---|---|---|---|
| France | 20 | 54 | 225 |
| Russia (Soviet Union) | 40 | 275 | 700 |
| United Kingdom | 7 | 55 | 800 |
| United States | 4 | 240 | 6,000 |

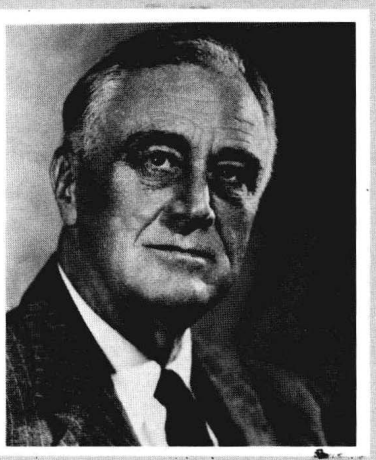
* All figures are approximate.

## FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (1882–1945) AND THE RISE OF WELFARE CAPITALISM

A new era in American politics began during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Before his tenure of office, the national government's economic and social role was minimal. All that was changed by the Great Depression.

Herbert Hoover's inability or unwillingness to use the powers of the national government to combat the Depression led to Roosevelt's smashing victory in 1932. On taking office, he rallied the American people by declaring that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Roosevelt insisted the American people were not the helpless victims of a system they had themselves created, and he promised action.

The New Deal called for both government intervention in the economy and the creation of government programs to alleviate the suffering caused by the Depression. In a whirlwind "Hundred Days," Congress enacted the necessary legislation that created a broad array of agencies to deal with the nation's problems. Among the most important were the AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Agency), the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), the NRA (National Recovery Administration),



and the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority).

Although many of these agencies have either ceased to exist or are no longer important, virtually all of the national government's social programs trace their origins back to the 1930s. Today, these programs account for approximately 40 percent of the federal budget. The largest single expenditure is for Social Security, which by itself accounts for almost 30 percent of federal spending.

Roosevelt shattered the two-term precedent established by George Washington by being elected to the presidency four times (1932–1944). He also led the Democratic party to a position of dominance that it held until the 1980s. Although crippled by polio, Roosevelt must be ranked along with Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson as among the most vigorous presidents of the century. His leadership, however, was not without its critics. Probably no other president since Abraham Lincoln has been so bitterly hated by his opponents, just as none has been so deeply loved by his admirers.

Whatever may be the final verdict on Roosevelt's presidency, he must be credited with one achievement: He restored the faith of the American people in their capacity to shape their destiny, in their form of government, and in their future. By the time Roosevelt died in April 1945, less than three months into his fourth term, the New Deal had waged a largely successful war on the Depression, and the United States had waged a successful two-ocean war against Germany and Japan. Perhaps more than any other American, Franklin Roosevelt played a pivotal role in the vast changes that swept over this nation in the twentieth century.

the-board cuts in government expenditures to reduce the federal deficit. Despite this cost-cutting effort, budget projections for the next several years show an increase in federal expenditures.

Given this level of governmental spending, the United States can best be described as having a mixed economy rather than a **laissez-faire economy.** Yet the appropriate governmental role in economic matters is still open to vigorous debate. Most Americans agree that the national government has a responsibility to assure a minimum level of economic well-being for every individual. A conservative president like Ronald Reagan recognizes this consensus. However, what concerns President Reagan and the conservatives is the growth of the social programs that originated in the New Deal of

the 1930s. Such programs now make up nearly half of the federal budget. Government expenditures for Social Security and Medicare in the middle 1980s, for example, stood at more than $270 billion, or approximately 28 percent of the federal budget. A half-century ago, Social Security did not even exist.

The problems associated with an industrial society not only have impacted on governmental policies but have also affected how Americans earn their living. Choice of occupation, location of the workplace, skills and education required, compensation, and length of the workday have all undergone far-reaching changes. With the emergence of computer technology, it seems likely that even more profound changes are just over the horizon. Table 1.1 indicates how industrialization has affected workers at selected points in our history.

The table reveals a massive shift from the primary, mainly agricultural, sector to the tertiary, or services, sector brought about in part by governmental policies that enhanced farm productivity. The table, however, does not reveal the dramatic rate of growth in the number of women workers in the past two hundred years. Women employed outside the home in the 1780s were rare. By the early 1980s, women accounted for approximately 43 percent of the labor force. For the first time in the nation's history, more married women work outside the home than are housewives. Finally, this table indicates only implicitly the role of technological developments, such as computers, in economic growth. Such developments, of course, play a decisive role in determining the composition of the labor force.

**Table 1.1**
**Labor Force Participation Rates: Percentages for Selected Years**

| | 1790 | 1860 | 1900 | 1950 | 1960 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary Sector (agriculture, fishing, forestry) | (80) | 59 | 38 | 12 | 7 | 2 |
| Secondary Sector (industry, construction, mining) | (10) | 20 | 38 | 33 | 36 | 32 |
| Tertiary Sector (services: professional, administrative, transport, commerce, education) | (10) | 20 | 24 | 55 | 57 | 66 |

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report, 1981* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), Table 19.

**There are not only a lot of us, but as this photo of Fifth Avenue in New York shows, most of us are employed in the tertiary sector.**

Despite all the changes of the last two centuries, American society has maintained certain constants of interests and values. The following sections identify and evaluate what we view as some of the most significant changes and some of the most important, enduring characteristics of American politics.

## Changes in the Pattern of Interests: 1780s–1980s

In the 1780s, Americans were faced with problems arising from four major sets of interests:

**(1)** the commercial classes, located principally in the north,
**(2)** southern plantation owners,
**(3)** large and small states, and
**(4)** East and West.

Overall, these interests were a compound of economic, political, and geographic factors. The commercial classes worried whether the new government would be able to protect their interests as creditors against debtors, most of whom were small farmers. Southern plantation owners were anxious that slavery and the slave trade not be interfered with. The large and the small states were

determined to protect their independence and **sovereignty** in the new Union. Smaller eastern states such as Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Delaware were understandably fearful of newer and bigger states that would inevitably be carved out of the old Northwest Territory and the other territories that stretched to the Mississippi River.

Interest competition in the 1980s, by contrast, involves a bewildering variety of claims on the government.[2] Major influences on the policy-making process today include the business community, organized labor, and farm interests. Civil rights, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups also play important roles. Nor can the influence of women and gay liberation groups be ignored. An important milestone in women's participation in the political process was the precedent established at the 1984 Democratic National Convention where a woman, Geraldine Ferraro, was named to the party's ticket. Environmentalists and conservationists, weaker in influence than in the 1970s, remain a force to be reckoned with.

Urban areas, of which there were very few in the 1780s, are today led by energetic mayors who often bypass the state governments to seek assistance from the national government. Over the last two decades, interests groups focusing on specific issues like school prayer and abortion have captured the attention of policy makers. Better-informed consumers, although not well organized nor particularly well led, have also gained recognition.

Perhaps the single biggest change, is the emergence of the nation as a whole as an "interest group" on the international stage, especially the ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Many Americans are convinced that the Soviets represent a threat to freedom, to economic prosperity, and to world peace.[3] As a consequence of this rivalry, both nations feel compelled to expend large sums of money on national defense and to form military alliances with their ideological counterparts.

Despite the complexity of interest competition in the 1980s, we can assess the power or influence of competing groups in three ways: First, the recognition and success (or failure) of an interest can be measured by institutional influence. If an interest is "represented" by a cabinet position, a congressional committee, or a justice on the Supreme Court, that group's interests are likely to be adequately protected by governmental policy. On the other hand, the absence of such institutional representation probably means that a group's interests are not being adequately protected by public policy. Given these criteria, it can be argued that organized labor is more likely to be adequately protected than consumers.

Second, changes in the composition of government spending may reflect a group's changing influence. Although farmers have a cabinet position and congressional committees servicing their interests, their share of the federal budget dollar (and their contribution to the federal deficit) has declined over the last decade. This would seem to indicate that farmers as a group are less influential than they used to be. By contrast, governmental programs for the elderly experienced rapid budgetary growth during the same period.[4] This has been largely a consequence of numbers. By 1984, approximately 25.2 million Americans were sixty-five or over, 22.1 percent of the population. As their number increases, older Americans will see their electoral influence further enhanced nationally and in congressional districts located in such states as Arizona and Florida.

Third, efforts by a group to enhance its status can indicate, in a rough way, the influence of that group. The struggle over the Equal Rights Amend-

## AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE 1980s

By 1983, a process that had long been under way reached a milestone. For the first time in American history, more women worked outside the home than in it. Women are entering the labor force in record numbers and in most blue- and white-collar professions. Such a dramatic social change has far-reaching implications. How, for example, will the daily absence of women from the home affect child rearing? What will be the social consequences of job competition between men and women (and between women and women)? Will the size of the family continue to shrink? The effects of this social transformation are still uncertain.