

1 **Political Culture: Core Values**
2 **of American Democracy**
3 Thomas Patterson, political
4 scientist and author of We the
5 People, suggests these are
6 enduring **idealized** core values of
7 American democracy:

8
9 **Liberty** – the principle that
10 individuals should be free to act
11 and think as they choose,
12 provided they do not infringe
13 unreasonably on the freedom and
14 well being of others.

15
16 **Self-government** – the
17 principle that the people are the
18 ultimate source of governing
19 authority and that their general
20 welfare is the only legitimate
21 purpose of government.

22
23 **Equality** – holds that all
24 individuals have moral worth, are
25 entitled to fair treatment under
26 the law, and should have equal
27 opportunity for material gain and
28 political influence.

29
30 **Individualism** – a
31 commitment to personal
32 initiative, self-sufficiency, and
33 material accumulation. This
34 principle upholds the superiority
35 of a private-enterprise economic

36 system that allocates wealth
37 through the marketplace and
38 includes the idea of the
39 individual as the foundation of
40 society.

41
42 **Diversity** – holds that
43 individual differences should be
44 respected and that these
45 differences are a source of
46 strength and a legitimate basis of
47 self-interest.

48
49 **Unity** – principle that
50 Americans are one people and
51 form an indivisible union.

52
53 In addition to these core
54 values, other writers have
55 identified the following
56 **fundamental beliefs** of
57 American constitutional
58 democracy core democratic
59 values:

60
61 **Life** – protected by the US
62 Constitution, includes all
63 personal rights and their
64 enjoyment: acquire knowledge,
65 rights to marry, establish a home,
66 freedom of worship, speech,
67 assembly and press.

68
69 **The Pursuit of Happiness**
70 – the right to seek happiness if

1 doing so does not infringe upon
2 others' rights.

3
4 **Public or Common Good**
5 – people give up some personal
6 freedoms for the good of a larger
7 group of people.

8
9 **Justice** – US citizens are to
10 be treated fairly under the law.

11
12 **Truth** – American
13 democracy depends on people
14 telling the truth in court, in
15 government, in the news, and to
16 each other.

17
18 **Popular Sovereignty** – the
19 people through their votes rule
20 American government.

21
22 Additionally, the following
23 **constitutional principles** of
24 American core democratic values
25 have also been identified:

26
27 **The Rule of Law** –
28 Authorities are to make decisions
29 based on the application of
30 known laws.

31
32 **Separation of Powers** –
33 The governments of the states
34 and the US are divided into three
35 branches – the **legislative**, which

36 makes the laws, the **executive**,
37 which carries out the laws, and
38 the **judicial**, which interprets the
39 laws.

40
41 **Representative**
42 **Government** – An indirect
43 democracy in which citizens
44 elect others to represent their
45 interest, make and enforce laws
46 for them as individuals and for
47 the common good.

48
49 **Checks and Balances** – An
50 arrangement of governmental
51 powers in which each branch
52 checks or balances those of other
53 branches.

54
55 **Individual Rights** – Basic
56 rights government should protect
57 are life, health, personal security,
58 privacy, reputation and the right
59 of personal liberty.

60
61 **Freedom of Religion** –
62 This First Amendment protection
63 gives individuals the freedom to
64 believe and practice their beliefs.

65
66 **Federalism** – It is the
67 joining and distribution of power
68 between the central authority,
69 federal government, and the

1 territorial units, the state
2 governments.

3
4 **Civilian Control of the**
5 **Military** – People control the
6 military by electing leaders to
7 speak for them in government
8 and the Constitution limits the
9 power of each branch of
10 government with checks and
11 balances and rules for military
12 control.

13
14 Consider the six principles
15 of the Preamble to the
16 Constitution:

- 17 (1) Form a more perfect
18 union
- 19 (2) Establish justice
- 20 (3) Insure domestic
21 tranquility
- 22 (4) Provide for the common
23 defense
- 24 (5) Promote the
25 general welfare
- 26 (6) Secure the blessings of
27 liberty

28
29 People may agree on the
30 importance of these principles,
31 but differ on the meaning,
32 interpretation, and
33 implementation of these
34 functions of government.

35

36 **The Power of Ideals**

37 Patterson notes that
38 America’s ideals have had a
39 strong impact on its politics.
40 Ideals serve to define the
41 boundaries of action. Ideals do
42 not determine exactly what
43 people will do, but they have a
44 marked influence on what people
45 will regard as reasonable and
46 desirable.

47 Why does the US spend
48 less money on government
49 programs for the poor and
50 disadvantaged than do other fully
51 industrialized democracies?

52 Patterson believes the reason lies
53 chiefly in the emphasis that
54 American culture places on
55 individualism.

56 The importance of
57 individualism to American
58 society is also evident in the
59 emphasis on equal opportunity.
60 If individuals are to be entrusted
61 with their own welfare, they must
62 be given a fair chance to succeed
63 on their own. Patterson asserts
64 that nowhere is this philosophy
65 more evident than in the
66 country’s elaborate system of
67 higher education. He believes
68 the system is designed to
69 accommodate nearly every
70 individual who wants to pursue a

1 college education. More than a
2 third of the nation's young
3 people enter college, the world's
4 highest rate. Yet, the United
5 States does *not* have the world's
6 most elite system of college
7 education.

8 On the other hand, the idea
9 that success is within the reach of
10 all Americans who strive for it is
11 far from accurate.

12

13 **The Limits of Ideals**

14 Cultural beliefs originate in
15 a country's political and social
16 practices, but they are not perfect
17 representatives of these practices.
18 They are mythic ideas- symbolic
19 positions taken by a people to
20 justify and give meaning to their
21 way of life according to Pulitzer
22 Prize winning author Seymour
23 Lipset. Myths contain elements
24 of truth, but they are far from the
25 full truth.

26 High ideals do not come
27 with a guarantee that a people
28 will live up to them. The clearest
29 proof of this failing in the
30 American case is the human
31 tragedy that began nearly four
32 centuries ago and continues
33 today: the African-American
34 experience in America.

35 Pulitzer Prize winning and
36 nationally syndicated columnist
37 Leonard Pitts notes that African-
38 Americans have been equal
39 under the law only since the
40 passage of the Civil Rights Act
41 of 1964. Patterson and others
42 note that even though today
43 African-Americans have equal
44 rights under the law, they are far
45 from equal. Compared with
46 whites, African-Americans are
47 twice as likely to live in poverty,
48 twice as likely to be unable to
49 find a job, and twice as likely to
50 die in infancy according to US
51 Census Bureau statistics.

52 Despite the lofty claim in
53 the Declaration of Independence
54 that "all men are created equal,"
55 equality has never been an
56 American birthright. In 1882
57 Congress suspended Chinese
58 immigration on the assumption
59 that the Chinese were an inferior
60 people. In fact, it was not until
61 1965 that discrimination against
62 the Chinese and other Asian
63 peoples effectively was
64 eliminated from US immigration
65 laws.

66 The claim that America is a
67 gigantic melting pot has always
68 been as much fable as fact
69 according to Patterson.

FEQ 2

1 How could a nation that
2 upholds the ideal of human
3 equality have barred the Chinese,
4 enslaved African-Americans,
5 betrayed Native Americans, and
6 subordinated women?

7 Patterson reminds us that
8 one reason America’s ideals do
9 not match reality is that they are
10 general principles, not fixed rules
11 of conduct. They derive from
12 somewhat different experiences
13 and philosophical traditions, and
14 there are points at which they
15 conflict. Equality and diversity,
16 for instance, emphasize fairness
17 and a full opportunity for all to
18 partake of society’s benefits,
19 whereas liberty and
20 individualism emphasize
21 personal freedom and threats
22 posed to it by political power.
23 Conflict between these sets of
24 beliefs is inevitable. Both are
25 commendable, but the
26 advancement of one set comes
27 only at some cost to the other.
28 Take the issue of affirmative
29 action. Proponents say that only
30 through aggressive affirmative
31 action programs will women and
32 minorities receive the equal
33 access to higher education and
34 equal treatment in the job market
35 to which they are entitled.

36 Opponents say that aggressive
37 affirmative action discriminates
38 against non-minority college
39 applicants and infringes
40 unreasonably on the liberty of the
41 employer and the initiative of the
42 work force. Yet, each side can
43 say that it has America’s ideals
44 on its side, and no resort to logic
45 can persuade either side that the
46 opposing viewpoint should
47 prevail.

48 The ideals of Americans
49 have had a strong impact on the
50 nation’s politics. Racial, gender,
51 ethnic, and other forms of
52 intolerance constitute the sorriest
53 chapter of the nation’s history,
54 but the centuries-old struggle of
55 Americans to create a more equal
56 society is among its finest
57 chapters. Few nations have
58 battled so relentlessly against the
59 insidious hatreds that stem from
60 superficial human differences
61 such as the color of one’s skin.
62 High ideals are more than mere
63 abstractions. They are a source
64 of human aspiration and,
65 ultimately, of political and social
66 change.

67
68
69

1 **Politics, Government, Power,**
2 **Authority and Policy**

3 Noted political scientist
4 Harold Lasswell wrote in 1938
5 that politics is about who gets
6 what, when and how. To this we
7 may also add why. Why are
8 some ideas accepted? Why are
9 some politicians successful?
10 “Who” covers a broad range of
11 people and institutions. “What”
12 includes the tangible as well as
13 the intangible. Like Lasswell,
14 political scientist and author of
15 We the People, Thomas
16 Patterson, writes that politics is
17 the process that determines
18 whose values will prevail in
19 society. It is a mistake, however,
20 to assume that competition and
21 conflict are the sum of politics.
22 People must find agreeable ways
23 of living together. Politics is not
24 only a means of settling disputes;
25 it is also a way of promoting
26 collective interests. Politics is
27 about problem solving. Public
28 safety, public education, and
29 national defense are examples of
30 people working together to solve
31 problems. Politics is a process
32 that includes conflict and
33 consensus, competition and
34 cooperation. Patterson defines
35 politics as the process through

36 which a society makes its
37 governing decisions.
38 A working definition of
39 government is those institutions
40 that create public policy.
41 Theodore Lowi and Benjamin
42 Ginsberg in their book American
43 Government: Freedom and
44 Power define government as the
45 institutions, processes, and rules
46 that are designed to facilitate
47 control of a particular geographic
48 area and its inhabitants.
49 Governments have two things in
50 common: the capacity to raise
51 revenues (tax) and the ability to
52 compel inhabitants to abide by
53 the government’s rules
54 (coercion).

55 Those who decide issues
56 are said to have power. People
57 or institutions with power control
58 policy decisions. Power
59 determines which interests will
60 decide policy.

61 When power is exercised
62 through the laws and institutions
63 of government, the concept of
64 authority applies. Authority can
65 be defined as the recognized
66 right of an individual,
67 organization, or institution to
68 make binding decisions. There
69 are many sources of authority.
70 But, as Patterson writes,

1 government's authority is more
2 encompassing in scope and more
3 final in nature. Government's
4 authority extends to all within its
5 geographical boundaries. It can
6 be used to redefine the authority
7 of the parent, the teacher, or the
8 firm. Government's authority is
9 also the most coercive. It
10 includes the power to arrest and
11 imprison, even to punish by
12 death those who violate its rules.

13 Although no governing
14 system can assure that power will
15 be applied fairly, the US system
16 strengthens this prospect through
17 an elaborate system of checks
18 and balances. It includes the
19 division of authority among the
20 executive, legislative and judicial
21 branches of government. Each
22 branch acts as a check on the
23 power of the others and balances
24 their power by exercising power
25 of its own. Extreme
26 fragmentation of governing
27 authority is a major characteristic
28 of the American political system
29 writes Patterson. This fact has
30 profound implications for how
31 politics is conducted, who wins
32 out, and what policies result.

33 Governments exercise
34 authority through policy. In its
35 most general sense, policy refers

36 to any broad course of action
37 undertaken by government. But
38 policy is also used more
39 narrowly to refer to specific
40 programs or initiatives. The
41 Head Start program for
42 improving the educational
43 prospects of poor children, for
44 example, is a policy of
45 government. Government also
46 exercises authority by not
47 making decisions as well as by
48 making them. In choosing not to
49 decide, a government accepts the
50 existing situation as well as the
51 distribution of benefits and costs
52 embedded in it.

53 Constitutionally defined,
54 the institutions of government on
55 the national level are the
56 executive branch headed by the
57 president, the legislative branch
58 consisting of Congress, and the
59 judicial branch made up of the
60 Supreme Court. A similar
61 structure exists at the state and
62 local levels. Modern government
63 is also characterized by those
64 agencies that implement public
65 policy – bureaucracies, including
66 regulatory agencies (EPA, FCC,
67 FDA, SEC), independent
68 executive agencies (CIA),
69 government corporations (USPS,
70 Amtrack, FDIC), and the cabinet.

1 These institutions, sometimes
2 acting independently, sometimes
3 acting in concert, create and
4 implement public policy.

5
6 **The Rules of the Game of**
7 **Politics**

8 Patterson writes that
9 politics in the US takes place in
10 the context of democratic
11 procedures, constitutionalism,
12 and capitalism, and involves
13 elements of majority, pluralist,
14 and elite rule.

15 Democracy is a set of rules
16 designed to promote self-
17 government. Democracy is a
18 form of government in which the
19 people govern, either directly or
20 through elected representatives.

21 Democratic government is
22 based on the idea of the consent
23 of the governed, which in
24 practice has come to mean
25 majority rule. Implicit in the
26 notion of majority rule is the
27 possibility that today's minority
28 may be tomorrow's majority,
29 which means that issues and
30 elections are rarely completely
31 settled. Democracy also
32 represents a form of political
33 equality in that the vote of each
34 citizen counts equally, a principle

35 expressed by the phrase “one
36 person, one vote.”

37 As Americans discovered
38 during the 2000 presidential
39 election, even the one person,
40 one vote principle is not
41 inviolate. Al Gore received a
42 half million more votes
43 nationally than George W. Bush
44 but lost the election by receiving
45 fewer electoral votes. Bush's
46 peaceful accession to the
47 presidency is an indication of just
48 how deeply Americans are
49 committed to a system that
50 operates by a set of rules rather
51 than by force or dictate.

52 For many Americans,
53 democracy has the same meaning
54 as liberty – the freedom to think,
55 talk, and act as one chooses.
56 However, the terms are not
57 synonymous. The concept of
58 democracy implies that the will
59 of the majority should prevail
60 over the wishes of the minority,
61 whereas the concept of liberty
62 implies that the minority has
63 rights and freedoms that cannot
64 be taken away by the majority.
65 The democratic model of
66 government has long been
67 accompanied by a fear of tyranny
68 by the majority – the concern that
69 a majority might ruthlessly

FEQ 2

1 impose its will on the minority.
2 Patterson notes that Federalist
3 No. 47 written by James Madison
4 sets forth the more general
5 concern about all government as
6 the possible abuser of power.
7 Constitutionalism is a set of rules
8 that restricts the lawful uses of
9 power. In a constitutional
10 system, officials govern
11 according to law and citizens
12 have basic rights that government
13 cannot take away or deny.

14 Patterson suggests the
15 constitutional tradition in the US
16 is at least as strong as the
17 democratic tradition. In fact, a
18 defining characteristic of the
19 American political system is its
20 extraordinary emphasis on
21 individual rights. Free speech is
22 an example. However, no right
23 is absolute.

24 Just as democracy and
25 constitutionalism are systems of
26 rules for allocating society's
27 costs and benefits in American
28 society, so is capitalism.
29 Capitalism holds that the
30 government should interfere with
31 the economy as little as possible.
32 Free enterprise and self-reliance
33 are the principles of capitalism.
34 In a capitalist system firms are
35 allowed to operate in a free and

36 open marketplace, and
37 individuals are expected to rely
38 on their own initiative to
39 establish their economic security.

40 Capitalism responds to
41 wealth. Economic power is
42 largely a function of accumulated
43 wealth, in the hands of either the
44 individual or the firm. Money
45 talks in a capitalist system, which
46 means, among other things, that
47 wealthier people will have by far
48 the greater say in the distribution
49 of costs and benefits through the
50 economic system.

51 The U. S. does not have a
52 purely capitalist system, in that
53 the government plays a role in
54 regulating and stimulating the
55 economy. The term "mixed
56 economy" is used to define this
57 hybrid form of economic system,
58 with its combination of socialist
59 and capitalist elements. Because
60 of their strong tradition of
61 individualism, Americans tend to
62 restrict the scope of
63 governmental action in the area
64 of the economy. The U. S. has
65 more elements of the capitalist
66 model and fewer elements of the
67 socialist model than do the
68 countries of Europe. Although
69 Americans complain that their
70 taxes are too high, they actually

1 pay few taxes compared with
2 Europeans: Average amount of
3 income taxes paid – U. S.=18%,
4 Germany=22%,
5 Netherlands=35%, and
6 Denmark=38%. Americans
7 believe that wealth is more
8 properly allocated through the
9 economic marketplace than
10 through government policy.

11

12 **Theories of Power**

13 The ultimate question about
14 any political system is the issue
15 of who governs. Is power widely
16 shared and used for the benefit of
17 the many? Or is power narrowly
18 held and used to the advantage of
19 the few? Analysts have
20 concluded three broad theories
21 predominate, although none of
22 them describes every aspect of
23 American politics, each has some
24 validity.

25

26 **Rule by the People:**

27 **Majoritarianism** - This is the
28 notion that the majority prevails
29 in the determination of public
30 policy. Patterson writes the
31 power of majorities is most
32 evident in those states that offer
33 voters the opportunity to decide
34 directly on policy initiatives,
35 which then become law if they

36 receive a majority vote.

37 Michigan is such a state. The
38 majority's influence is also felt
39 indirectly through the decisions
40 of elected representatives. When
41 Congress in 1996 passed a
42 welfare reform bill that included
43 provisions requiring able-bodied
44 welfare recipients to accept a job
45 or job training after a two-year
46 period or face a loss of their
47 welfare benefits, it was acting in
48 accord with the thinking of the
49 majority of Americans who
50 believe that employable
51 individuals should be self-reliant.

52

53 **Rule by Groups:**

54 **Pluralism** - focuses on group
55 activity and holds that many
56 policies are effectively decided
57 through power wielded by
58 diverse (plural) interests.
59 Patterson asserts that agricultural
60 subsidies, broadcast regulations,
61 and corporate tax incentives are
62 examples of policies that are
63 more responsive to the interests
64 of particular groups than to
65 majority opinion. In many cases,
66 the general public has no real
67 knowledge or opinion of issues
68 that concern particular groups.
69 Pluralists contend that it is
70 misleading to view society only

1 in terms of majorities that may or
2 may not form around given
3 issues. They see society as
4 primarily a collection of separate
5 interests. Farmers, broadcasters,
6 and multinational corporations
7 have different needs and desires
8 and, according to the pluralist
9 view, should have a
10 disproportionate say in policies
11 directly affecting them. Thus, as
12 long as many groups have
13 influence in their own area of
14 interest, government is
15 responding to the interests of
16 most Americans. Some critics
17 argue that pluralists wrongly
18 assume that nearly all of
19 society's interests are able to
20 compete effectively through
21 group policies. They see a
22 system biased toward a small
23 number of powerful groups.
24 These critics are proponents of
25 elite theory.

26
27 **Rule by a Few: Elitism** -
28 holds that power in America is
29 held by a small number of well-
30 positioned, highly influential
31 individuals who control policy
32 for their own purposes. The
33 sociologist C. Wright Mills was a
34 leading proponent of elite theory.

35 He argued that key policies are
36 decided by an overlapping
37 coalition of select leaders,
38 including corporate executives,
39 top military officers, and
40 centrally placed public officials.

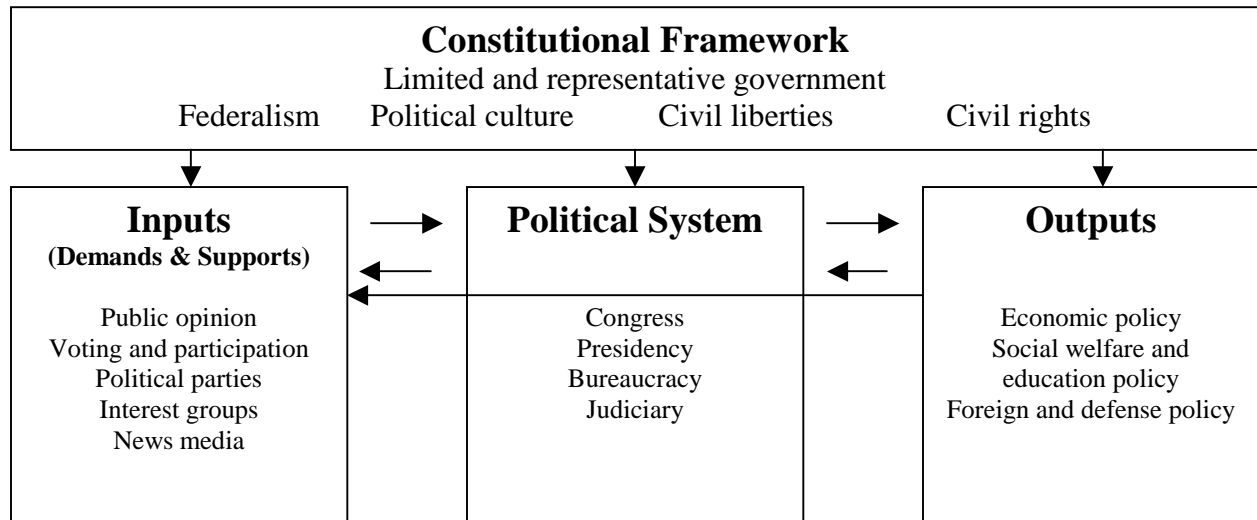
41 Some theorists hold a
42 conspiratorial view of elites,
43 contending that they consciously
44 operate behind the scenes in
45 order to manipulate government
46 for their selfish purposes.

47 It is clearly the case that a
48 tiny circle of influential people
49 effectively controls certain
50 policies and governing processes.
51 The nation's monetary policy, for
52 example, is set by the decision of
53 the Federal Reserve Board,
54 which meets in secrecy and is
55 highly responsive to the concerns
56 of bankers and financiers.

57

58 **Who Does Govern?**

59 Patterson believes that each of
60 the three theories –
61 majoritarianism, pluralism, and
62 elitism – must be taken into
63 account in any full explanation of
64 politics and power in America.
65 The challenge is to distinguish
66 the situations where each of these
67 influence patterns predominates.



1 According to Patterson, the
 2 political system operates against
 3 the backdrop of a constitutional
 4 framework that defines how
 5 power is to be obtained and
 6 exercised. Inputs are another
 7 part of the political system; these
 8 are the demands that people and
 9 groups place on government and
 10 the supports they provide for its
 11 institutions, leaders, and policies.
 12 Some analysts refer to political
 13 parties, interest groups and the
 14 media as linkage institutions.
 15 Inputs act on the political system
 16 within the confines of the
 17 constitutional framework. In
 18 addition, the Political System
 19 consists of governing officials
 20 and policy-making institutions.
 21 Outputs consist of major public

22 policy decisions that are binding
 23 on society in the following major
 24 public policy areas: the economy
 25 and environment, social welfare
 26 and education, and foreign affairs
 27 and national defense.

28 Patterson suggests the
 29 following five encompassing
 30 tendencies of American politics:

31 1. Enduring cultural ideals
 32 that are Americans common
 33 bond and a source of American
 34 political goals.

35 2. Extreme fragmentation
 36 of governing authority that is
 37 based on an elaborate system of
 38 checks and balances.

39 3. Many competing
 40 interests, which are the result of
 41 the nation's great size,

FEQ 2

1 population diversity, and
2 economic complexity.
3 4. Strong emphasis on
4 individual rights, which is a
5 consequence of the nation's
6 political traditions.
7 5. A relatively sharp
8 separation of the political and
9 economic spheres, which has the
10 effect of placing many economic
11 issues outside the reach of
12 political majorities.
13 As we proceed with our
14 study of American government,
15 we should keep in mind the
16 following questions:
17 What is the public interest?
18 Who determines the
19 parameters of what the public
20 wants?
21 How much influence
22 should government have on the
23 lives of its citizens?
24 How big should
25 government be?
26 How much money should
27 government spend?
28 What is the best way to
29 raise money for government
30 spending?
31 How should government
32 and its elected officials deal with
33 serious ethical issues such as
34 abortion, euthanasia, birth
35 control, and genetic engineering?

36 How should government
37 balance individual liberty and
38 public safety?
39 Should candidates
40 campaign negatively in order to
41 get elected?
42 What campaign finance
43 reforms should government
44 enact?
45 How should government
46 and politicians restore the
47 public's confidence in their
48 elected officials and
49 government?
50 What is the relationship of
51 the people to their government?
52 Patterson believes
53 responsible citizenship depends
54 on an informed perspective, on
55 recognition of how difficult it is
56 to govern effectively and how
57 important it is to try. Governing,
58 according to Patterson, is a quest
59 and a search, not a resolved
60 issue.

62 **Major Concepts**

63 **Authority** – The recognized
64 right of an individual or
65 institution to exercise power.

1 **Capitalism** – An economic
2 system based on the idea that
3 government should interfere with
4 economic transactions as little as
5 possible. Free enterprise and
6 self-reliance are the collective
7 and individual principles that
8 underpin this economic system.

9
10 **Constitutionalism** – The idea
11 that there are definable limits on
12 the rightful power of a
13 government over its citizens.

14
15 **Democracy** – A form of
16 government in which the people
17 govern, either directly or through
18 elected representatives.

19
20 **Diversity** – A principle that
21 individual differences should be
22 respected, are a legitimate basis
23 of self-interest, and are a source
24 of strength for the American
25 nation.

26
27 **Elitism** – The view that the
28 United States is essentially run
29 by a tiny group (composed of
30 wealthy or well-connected
31 individuals) who control public
32 policy through both direct and
33 indirect means.

34

35 **Equality** – The principle that all
36 individuals have moral worth and
37 are entitled to fair treatment
38 under the law.

39
40 **Government** – The institutions,
41 processes, and rules that facilitate
42 control of a particular area and its
43 inhabitants.

44
45 **Individualism** – A philosophical
46 belief that stresses the values of
47 hard work and self-reliance and
48 holds that the individual should
49 be left to succeed or fail on his or
50 her own.

51
52 **Liberty** – The principle that the
53 people should be free to act and
54 think as they choose, provided
55 they do not infringe unreasonably
56 on others' freedom.

57
58 **Majoritarianism** – The idea that
59 the majority prevails not only in
60 elections but also in determining
61 policy.

62
63 **Pluralism** – A theory of
64 American politics that holds that
65 society's interests are
66 substantially represented through
67 the activities of groups.

68

1 **Policy** – Policy is generally, any
2 broad course of governmental
3 action; more narrowly, a specific
4 government program or
5 initiative.

6
7 **Political Culture** – The
8 characteristic and deep-seated
9 beliefs of a particular people.

10
11 **Political System** – The various
12 components of American
13 government. The parts are
14 separate, but they connect with
15 each other, affecting how each
16 performs.

17
18 **Politics** – The process through
19 which society makes its
20 governing decisions.

21
22 **Power** – The ability of persons
23 or institutions to control policy.

24
25 **Self-government** – The principle
26 that the people are the ultimate
27 source and proper beneficiary of
28 governing authority; in practice,
29 a government based on majority
30 rule.

31
32 **Unity** – The principle that
33 Americans are one people who
34 form an indivisible union.