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The Elitism of Pursuing Sustainability for Humanity and the Biosphere in America

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I. Is America a Personality, Category, and Status Driven Society?

Reportedly, “(p)olitical psychology has identified six basic personality types that are typically found in the world of public affairs”: The Narcissist, Obsessive Compulsive, Machiavellian, Authoritarian, Paranoid, and Totalitarian.¹ Were the thought not so inherently implausible, many Americans would likely attribute ALL the dynamics of their country’s local, state, and federal government to an interplay of these personality types among public officials and the respective, political impact of average citizens, economic elites, and organized interest groups. Of course, the complexities of U.S. government transcend these relatively simple considerations. But the further America perceivably shifts from a government of, by, and for the people, the more the nation seems driven by the personalities of public officials and the status or category of their constituents.

Reasonable minds likely differ about the extent societal emphasis and power have shifted in America from “the governed” to “the governing”. After all, ostensibly the country is a republic operated as a democracy. Ergo, the governed need only harness their collective power and wield it to elect/retain public officials, who are appropriately submitted to large voter blocs and majority rule. Naturally this process, or realizing the democracy it promises, hinges on the ability of Americans to stay reasonably informed and organize themselves to act on political preferences

¹ Rosen, David (2013, October). [The 6 political personality types](#). *Campaigns & Elections*. Accessible as of February 20, 2018 at [campaignsandelections.com](#)

that emerge given the information of which they become aware. But a country is hardly a republic or committed to democracy when the political preferences of its citizens are regularly thwarted by election rigging, substantially shaped by unduly manipulative major media coverage, or largely induced through fascist-like government and resulting fear.

II. Funny How Americans' Shared Interests Beget Disconnected Activism

Arguably more threatening for Americans than science-fiction-like encroachments on their government, are direct impingements on their ability to openly entertain the prospect of such developments. Yet activist camps respectively embodying the dominant political preferences of average Americans, are largely disconnected from advocates combatting related misconduct/corruption and those intent on preserving America as a republic, the country's democracy, and U.S. First Amendment rights. Each of these advocacy groups is relatively disconnected from the others of them despite their many overlapping concerns. In fact, republican government, democracy, politics, societal interests, social causes, free speech, and First Amendment activities in America are interdependent concepts. It is difficult to sustain one without the others, and practices attendant to each are likely to wane should any one of the concepts falter.

The oddity or irony of addressing in mutual isolation America's form of government, dominant political preferences among Americans, misconduct, corruption, and U.S. First Amendment rights is especially clear when the sustainability of humans and our biosphere is at issue. Everything hindering translation of any or all related concerns into top priorities of appropriate public officials, impedes (perceptibly or not) the sustainability of humans and our biosphere. Ponder the implications of that reality in light of this finding:

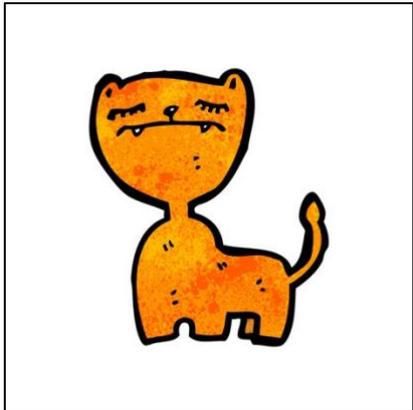
“ . . . economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence.”²

III. Sustainability as a Matter of Blind Faith

Fortunately, the sustainability of humans and our biosphere is not a status-dependent concern. So, while the situation would reflect poorly on the state of democracy in America, economic elites and business or professional types might

² Gilens, M., & Page, B. (2014). [Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714001595). *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3), 564-581. p 565. doi:10.1017/S1537592714001595. Available at scholar.princeton.edu

suffice as the only effective stewards of mankind and the biosphere. Keep in mind, however, that “mass-based interest groups and average citizens” would “have little or no” impact on debates about the quality of



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stewardship in this paternalistic arrangement; or so it seems as of the above quoted, 2014 findings by Princeton University professor Martin Gilens and Northwestern University professor Benjamin I. Page.³

Potential class conflict aside, no matter their respective role as benefactor or beneficiary, blind trust is rather imprudent for “average” **and** more privileged Americans, vying for sustainability and that of the biosphere with their supposedly narcissistic, obsessive compulsive, Machiavellian, authoritarian, paranoid, and totalitarian government

leaders. Insisting on the privileges and immunities of their citizenship is the far better policy for **all** Americans . . . which brings us back to our increasingly elusive “government of, by, and for the people”.

IV. Why Can't We All Just Get Along?

As noted [in an earlier post to the MAHB Forum](#), The Law Project (TLP) has long attested to the lack of capacity among usually “disadvantaged groups of citizens to gain access to courts (or alternative resolution mechanisms)” in America.⁴ The myriad of related factors is hopefully apparent from [the latest report of Opt IN USA](#), a TLP sponsored U.S. foreign policy reform, judicial accountability, and human rights campaign. Admittedly, and the referenced post concedes, anyone not particularly “concerned about democracy, U.S. legal system corruption, justice in America, disadvantaged citizen groups, and access to U.S. courts . . . may not notice, let alone focus on The Law Project’s [node](#) or [forum](#) on MAHB”, linked to Opt IN USA’s most recent publication.⁵ And true, prominent voices of sustainability do not seem significantly burdened by such considerations or the most troubling aspects of those considerations.

Online campaigns and reported case law make clear that high or higher-profile humanity and biosphere advocates “win some” perhaps more than they lose in U.S. courts with conspicuous, improper judicial bias rarely if ever raising its proverbial

³ *Id.*

⁴ National Judicial Conduct and Disability Law Project, Inc. a/k/a The Law Project (2018, February 5). [MAHB forum post](#).

⁵ *Id.*

ugly head. But does not the sheer cost and burden of their often esoteric, protracted court wrangling render a hollow victory out of the process seeming otherwise fair? At least in theory, the cost of ensuring the sustainability of mankind and our biosphere should be borne collectively by entire societies of people — the proverbial masses — primarily through their respective national government. Resort to private sector dollars should involve individuals and for-profit entities giving by choice, almost if not totally to the exclusion of nonprofit donors.

Surely nonprofits, even the wealthiest of them, should be spared having to fund legal battles with U.S. local, state, and/or federal government(s) to establish mankind's best interests as well as that of the biosphere and/or to compel appropriate officials to heed them. In the context of sustainability, resorting to court at least arguably, to some extent signals a lack of republican government and failure of democracy. If at no other time or place, that reality is clear with regard to America's more obscure sustainability advocates. TLP's direct and indirect findings strongly suggest a disturbingly good chance that their worthwhile efforts will be unduly thwarted no matter the U.S. branch of government they petition for relief and/or reform.

V. To Be Continued

And so we move forward in considering whether justice is in fact the lynchpin of mankind's and the biosphere's sustainability. Thank you for joining us. Stay tuned for more.

The MAHB Blog is a venture of the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. Questions should be directed to joan@mahbonline.org

MAHB Blog: mahb.stanford.edu/blog/elitism-justice/