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Chapter 1: The Social and Economic Environment of Texas Politics

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Compared to the 1940s, the population of Texas is now _____.
   a. more urbanized
   b. much smaller
   c. more concentrated in rural areas
   d. less diverse

Answer: a
Topic: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century
Learning Objective: 1.1 Assess major challenges facing Texas in the twenty-first century.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Difficulty Level: Easy

2. Systems for structuring conflict and creating a process for the expression of competing interests are called _____.
   a. businesses and the economy
   b. religious hierarchies
   c. politics and government
   d. security apparatuses

Answer: c
Topic: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century
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Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Difficulty Level: Easy

3. Political environment refers to _____.
   a. systems for structuring conflict and creating a process for the expression of competing interests
   b. the context in which political institutions operate
   c. individuals' general attitudes about the proper role of government in society
   d. a method for determining who gets what, when, and how

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Answer: b
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Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

4. _____ is the development of varied business activities.
   a. Demographic politics
   b. Economic diversification
   c. Political environment
   d. Regressive tax

Answer: b
Topic: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century
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Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

5. Regressive tax systems put a burden on which group of citizens?
   a. High-income earners
   b. Corporate businesses
   c. Low- and middle-income earners
   d. Property owners

Answer: c
Topic: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century
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Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Moderate

6. Political myths _____.
   a. are usually constructed by minority groups in society

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b. offer interpretations of alternative future paths for public policy
c. affirm the values, customs, and beliefs of a specific group of people
d. typically serve to undermine the values and beliefs held by individuals

Answer: c
Topic: The Myths of Texas's Political Culture
Learning Objective: 1.2 Describe the political myths used to define and interpret the political culture of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

7. Which best describes the role of the battle of the Alamo in Texas's political myths?
   a. It revealed the importance of government provision for the common defense.
   b. It showed the dangers of frontier settlement in areas with indigenous populations.
   c. It showed the uniqueness of a political order that included independence.
   d. It set a precedent that the federal government can never intervene in the affairs of Texas.

Answer: c
Topic: The Myths of Texas's Political Culture
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Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

8. The Texas frontier experience and the image of the cowboy's rugged individualism help perpetuate the myth of _____.
   a. dependence on governmental assistance
   b. limited government and unlimited personal opportunity
   c. communalism in the face of threats from outsiders
   d. invincibility in the face of overwhelming odds

Answer: b
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Difficulty Level: Moderate

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9. Where does sovereignty reside in a republic?.
    a. with the citizenry and representatives elected by them
    b. with the head of government
    c. with the federal departments led by the president
    d. with local business groups

Answer: a
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Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Moderate

10. Why have the Texas myths primarily been the myths of Anglos and not of other groups?
    a. Anglos were the primary writers of history; therefore, the history reflects the Anglo worldview.
    b. Other groups have refused to take part in the political, social, and economic development of Texas.
    c. In the interest of self-preservation, other groups have kept their myths to themselves.
    d. Texas law has forbidden the teaching of diverse historical perspectives.

Answer: a
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Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

11. The population growth and political and economic gains of Hispanic, African American, and other non-Anglo groups since the 1970s _____.
    a. is likely to have no enduring effects on Texas's political mythology
    b. has led to the reinforcement of dominant mythology created by the White population
    c. means that some aspects of contemporary mythology will be challenged and revised
    d. is responsible for the creation of the myth of rugged individualism

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Answer: c
Topic: The Myths of Texas's Political Culture
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Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

12. African Americans in Texas have successfully convinced the state legislature to adopt holidays that have specific meaning for their community. Which of the following is such a holiday?
    a. Cinco de Mayo
    b. Martin Luther King Day
    c. Columbus Day
    d. Juneteenth

Answer: d
Topic: The Myths of Texas's Political Culture
Learning Objective: 1.2 Describe the political myths used to define and interpret the political culture of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Easy

13. The settlers coming to Texas during western expansion primarily represented which two political subcultures?
    a. moralistic and traditionalistic
    b. moralistic and individualistic
    c. individualistic and paternalistic
    d. traditionalistic and individualistic

Answer: d
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

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14. Political culture is often defined as _____ that give order and meaning to the political process.
    a. economic beliefs and goals
    b. political party affiliations
    c. religious ideals
    d. a set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments

Answer: d
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

15. Texas political culture tends to _____.
    a. support big government interventions
    b. minimize the role of government
    c. support expanded social services
    d. minimize the role of the individual

Answer: b
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

16. Which political subculture is most supportive of widespread public participation in politics?
    a. traditionalistic
    b. moralistic
    c. conservative
    d. individualistic

Answer: b
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

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17. Why does the individualistic subculture hold that government should be limited?
    a. Government exists strictly for utilitarian reasons and to ensure stability in a society.
    b. Government should never be trusted, and accordingly its roles should be limited.
    c. Individuals can look out for themselves more effectively than the government can.
    d. Government has a corrupting influence on a population as a whole.

Answer: a
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

18. The moralistic subculture believes that public policy initiatives can come from _____.
    a. foreign officials
    b. those outside formal governmental structure
    c. officeholders only
    d. business and corporate interests

Answer: b
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

19. The traditionalistic subculture generally believes that _____.
    a. mass political participation provides the foundation for the ruling structure
    b. government exists to promote the public welfare
    c. political power should be concentrated in a few individuals or families
    d. the power structure should be completely changed every generation

Answer: c
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
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Difficulty Level: Moderate

20. Politics in Texas _____.
    a. is designed to minimize the role of government, is averse to taxes, and is manipulated by elites
    b. encourages big government and has a strong tradition of separation of church and state
    c. is progressive and supports many social programs to help the needy
    d. is moralistically based with a strong tradition of public service among its citizens

Answer: a
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

21. Compared to other states with significant Native American populations, Native Americans in Texas _____.
    a. consist of only three small groups living on reservations
    b. constitute a significantly larger percentage of the population in Texas than they do in Oklahoma or New Mexico
    c. have established hundreds of casinos on public land in Texas in the past several decades
    d. are more numerous in Texas than are Hispanics

Answer: a
Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

22. Why was there an effort to strip Hispanics of the right to vote at the Constitutional Convention of 1845?
    a. It was to counteract the Texas “independencia” movement, which sought to have Texas become part of Mexico.
    b. It was to prevent the Hispanic majority from passing laws discriminating against the Anglo population.

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c. It was an attempt to further weaken the power of Hispanics in Texas life and politics.
d. It was to prevent the official language from becoming Spanish in a referendum at the end of the year.

Answer: c
Topic: The People of Texas
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Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

23. The Hispanic proportion of the population in Texas has increased primarily as a result of _____.
a. White flight to northern states
b. intermarriage between ethnic and racial groups
c. an effort by the Anglo elites to bring Hispanic workers to Texas
d. immigration and higher birth rates among Hispanic women

Answer: d
Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

24. Texas law bars most casino gambling. Why have Native Americans sought to open casinos?
a. to gain government influence
b. to follow the policy of "peace and friendship"
c. to accelerate economic development and employment
d. to be treated as political equals by Anglos following the moralistic tradition

Answer: c
Topic: The People of Texas
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Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
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Difficulty Level: Moderate

25. How did race relations between White Americans and African Americans in East Texas through the 1960s reflect the traditionalistic political subculture that prevailed there for nearly 100 years after the Civil War?
    a. African Americans expanded into job opportunities beyond agriculture, such as into the manufacturing industry.
    b. African Americans were denied or had greatly reduced participation in the political process because of restrictive election laws and outright physical intimidation.
    c. African Americans and White Americans developed a political structure where power was shared between groups at the municipal and county levels.
    d. African Americans were not allowed to own property or live in most East Texas counties.

Answer: b
Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

26. What conclusion can be made about the Asian American population in Texas?
    a. The rapid increase of Asian Americans in Texas parallels national trends.
    b. The greatest number of Asian immigrants to Texas and the rest of the United States came before World War II.
    c. The Asian American population in Texas is mostly rural.
    d. The Asian American population in Texas is homogenous as most people from this ethnic group are exclusively Chinese and Japanese.

Answer: a
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Difficult

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27. An indication of the recent change in the political power of the African American population in Texas is the increased numbers of African American _____.
    a. elected officials at all levels of government.
    b. faculty in higher education
    c. businesses on the Fortune 500 list
    d. government services in the state

Answer: a
Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Difficulty Level: Easy

28. Why is the Anglo population of Texas decreasing as a share of the state's total population?
    a. lower birth rates
    b. White flight to coastal cities
    c. higher mortality rates
    d. other populations are increasing at a faster rate

Answer: d
Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Easy

29. The term "Anglos" refers to _____.
    a. non-Hispanic White people
    b. Irish
    c. Italians
    d. Anglo-Saxons

Answer: a
Topic: The People of Texas

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Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Difficulty Level: Easy

30. After the disasters of the 1980s, which were caused by an overreliance on energy, Texas diversified economically by shifting to _____.
    a. reliance on natural gas only
    b. high-tech industries
    c. a reduction in foreign trade
    d. manufacturing

Answer: b
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

31. Texas is now the _____ most populous state in the nation.
    a. first
    b. second
    c. third
    d. fourth

Answer: b
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Difficulty Level: Easy

32. Which explains the high population growth rate in Texas in recent decades?
    a. immigration from Europe, Mexico, and Africa
    b. a higher birth rate than other states, migration from Mexico, and in-migration from other states

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c. an unusually high per capita income, a high birth rate, and the lack of labor unions
d. low birth rates among Hispanics, the shift of population from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt, and immigration from Mexico

Answer: b
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
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Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

33. How has the increased population of Texas affected the state's public services?
a. The rise in demand for services cannot be met by current supply.
b. The rising population makes it easier to provide public services.
c. Increased use of public services makes them more affordable.
d. Increased use of public services requires lower rates of taxation.

Answer: a
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Moderate

34. Which of the following three cities are among the ten largest cities in the United States?
a. Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio
b. Dallas, El Paso, and Houston
c. Austin, Houston, and San Antonio
d. El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio

Answer: a
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
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Difficulty Level: Easy

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35. Why has conflict in Texas politics been heavily influenced by the urban and rural divide?
    a. Wealth in Texas is localized in rural rather than urban areas, resulting in conflict over taxes.
    b. Rural regions are dominated by minority groups, while rich Anglos live in urban centers.
    c. Until recently, the legislature was dominated by rural lawmakers insensitive to urban needs.
    d. Constitutionally, rural districts have a far greater say in affairs than urban districts.

Answer: c
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

36. Personal income levels in Texas _____.
    a. are substantially higher than the national average
    b. are virtually identical across all racial and ethnic groups
    c. have become much closer to one another across geographic areas of the state in the last decade
    d. tend to be lower than in most other states

Answer: d
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

37. Poverty in Texas _____.
    a. is concentrated among Anglos in the Dallas suburbs
    b. is more pronounced in the counties along the border with Mexico
    c. is defined differently than it is elsewhere in the country
    d. is something that tends not to affect children

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Answer: b
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
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Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

38. Why do financial resources matter in politics?
    a. because income determines ability to vote in elections
    b financial resources do not matter; politics treats all individuals equally
    c. because public policies aiding low-income individuals require that those individuals participate in politics
    d. because money can be translated into political power and influence through campaign contributions.

Answer: d
Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
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Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

39. The image of Texas Rangers as heroes is ironic because _____.
    a. many of them participated in the lynchings of African Americans
    b. cattle ranchers experienced great losses resulting from rustling by Texas Rangers
    c. Hispanics have perceived them as a symbol of ruthless suppression
    d. most of them failed to protect the settlers from Indian attacks on the frontier

Answer: c
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40. The idea that politics is perceived by the general public as a dirty business that should be left to those willing to soil their hands in the political arena is most closely associated with the _____ subculture.
    a. individualistic
    b. moralistic
    c. traditionalistic
    d. nationalistic

Answer: a
Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

Essay Questions

41. Briefly describe the myth of individualism in Texas. What types of individuals have contributed to the myth of individualism in Texas? How has this myth contributed to Texas political culture?

    Answer: An ideal response will:
    1. Explain what is meant by individualism, including its intellectual roots and attitudes toward the proper role of government.
    2. Explain how cowboys, wildcatters, and the Texas Rangers play a role in Texas's myth of individualism.
    3. Explain that the concept of rugged individualism, with strong connotations of self-help and independence, symbolizes a political culture in Texas that does not like to look to government as a solution to many of its problems.

Topic: The Myths of Texas's Political Culture
Learning Objective: 1.2 Describe the political myths used to define and interpret the political culture of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

42. What is political culture and how does it matter to politics?

    Answer: An ideal response will:

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1. Provide a definition and explanation of political culture.
2. Explain how political culture provides guidelines for things such as public participation and input in politics, the distribution of power, acceptance of government corruption, and governmental policy.

Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Difficulty Level: Moderate

43. Identify two political and/or policy issues in Texas and explain how they illustrate the role of race and ethnicity, including similarities and/or differences between them.

Answer: An ideal response will:
1. Identify two relevant examples, such as voting rights, school finance, redistricting, poverty among minorities, college admissions policies, and others referenced in the text.
2. Explain how race and ethnicity continue to be important even in the aftermath of formal discriminatory laws.

Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

44. Describe the rural–urban relationship in Texas, including its historical roots of power for rural Texas. How has urbanization and the increasing growth of suburbs impacted this relationship?

Answer: An ideal response will:
1. Identify what is meant by *rural* and *urban*.
2. Explain the process of urbanization and its effects.
3. Explain the historical roots of power for rural areas in Texas.

Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
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Difficulty Level: Difficult

45. Describe the age profile of Texas citizens as discussed in the text, comparing the growth of young and aging demographics and the demands these populations put on public services and Texas businesses?

    Answer: An ideal response will:
    1. Identify the reasons for the state's high youth and aging populations.
    2. Explain the demand the aging put on health care services.
    3. Describe the higher taxes required by younger Texans to support aging Texans.

Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

46. Compare and contrast two of the more significant public policy issues facing Texans at the start of the twenty-first century. Which issue do you find more important? Defend your choice.

    Answer: An ideal response will:
    1. Identify at least two of the issues mentioned in the textbook. Examples include the regressive tax system, expenditures for public education and public services, and water conservation.
    2. Explain dimensions of the issues, comparing them and contrasting them.
    3. Present and defend a choice about the most compelling policy issue.

Topic: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century
Learning Objective: 1.1 Assess major challenges facing Texas in the twenty-first century.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

47. Compare and contrast Daniel Elazar's three political subcultures. Which of these most accurately describes the Texas political culture? What explanations can you provide for the prevalence of these views and attitudes among Texans?

    Answer: An ideal response will:

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1. Identify the major features of each of the three subcultures—individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalistic—and explain how they differ from one another.
2. Identify individualistic and traditionalistic as the two dominant subcultures of Texas and explain how they have combined to produce a conservative culture.
3. Explain the patterns of settlement of Texas by Anglo populations and the subcultures brought by Anglos.

Topic: The Political Culture of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Moderate

48. Compare and contrast the Hispanic, African American, and Anglo populations in Texas. What has happened to the percentages of each in recent decades and how are they expected to change in coming decades? Where is each of the populations concentrated? What has historically been their influence in politics and how, if at all, has it changed?

Answer: An ideal response will:
1. Explain the growth of the Hispanic population as a result of high birth rates and immigration.
2. Identify predicted patterns in demographic change with continued growth of Hispanics, possibly becoming a majority by about 2030, and the decline in the percentage of the population represented by Anglos.
3. Identify East Texas and major cities as population centers for African Americans and South Texas and along the Mexican border (and, more recently, cities) as population centers for Hispanics.
4. Explain the lack of historical influence of minority groups in Texas, largely as a result of the traditionalistic subculture dominant in the regions where most African Americans and Hispanics were located. Explain the growing political influence of Hispanics and African Americans, including growing numbers of elected officials.

Topic: The People of Texas
Learning Objective: 1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

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49. Describe and analyze patterns in income, poverty, education, and literacy in Texas. How does Texas compare to other states and the United States as a whole? What types of differences exist within Texas as a function of geography and race/ethnicity? Do these patterns matter in terms of political participation and influence?

Answer: An ideal response will:

1. Explain that Texas has lower levels of income and education than most other states and higher levels of poverty, including among children.
2. Explain that there are significant differences across ethnic/racial groups, with Anglos having higher income and education levels. Poverty is related to income and education, so some of the poorest counties in the country are in largely Hispanic counties along the border with Mexico.
3. Identify financial resources as a source for political voice through ability to finance political campaigns, purchase media access, etc.
4. Identify education as a major determinant of interest in, understanding of, and participation in politics.

Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Analyze It
Difficulty Level: Difficult

50. Explain the causes of the economic problems in Texas in the 1980s. What did state leaders do in response, and how has the nature of the Texas economy changed as a result?

Answer: An ideal response will:

1. Explain the historic dependence of the Texas economy on the oil and gas industry and identify a drop in oil prices as a major cause for economic downturn.
2. Identify Mexican currency rates and weather (freeze and drought) as additional causes of economic downturn.
3. Explain the concept of diversification and identify growth in new sectors as ways in which diversification occurred.

Topic: Growth and Changing Demographics
Learning Objective: 1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.
Texas Government Learning Outcome: Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
Difficulty Level: Moderate

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CHAPTER 1

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT OF TEXAS POLITICS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1 Assess major challenges facing Texas in the twenty-first century.

1.2 Describe the political myths used to define and interpret the political culture of Texas.

1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.

1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.

1.5 Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

1.2 The Myths of Texas's Political Culture
- 1.2.1 The Sources of Texas's Political Myths
- 1.2.2 Changing Political Myths

1.3 The Political Culture of Texas
- 1.3.1 The Individualistic Subculture
- 1.3.2 The Moralistic Subculture
- 1.3.3 The Traditionalistic Subculture

1.4 The People of Texas
- 1.4.1 Native Americans
- 1.4.2 Hispanics
- 1.4.3 Black Americans
- 1.4.4 Whites
- 1.4.5 Asian Americans
- 1.4.6 Politics, Race, and Ethnicity

1.5 Growth and Changing Demographics
- 1.5.1 Population Growth
- 1.5.2 The Aging Population
- 1.5.3 Urban Texas
- 1.5.4 Wealth and Income Distribution
- 1.5.5 Education and Literacy
- 1.5.6 The Size and Geographic Diversity of Texas
- 1.5.7 The Economy of Texas

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1.5.8 Economic Regions of Texas
    1. High Plains Region
    2. South Texas Border Region
    3. Upper East Texas Region

Conclusion

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The demographic composition of the state has undergone significant changes over the past four decades and will continue to change. Demographic and economic changes are related to political changes, which have consequences for the distribution of political resources and power and for public policy. Texas is a large, diverse state, and this diversity, both in economic and demographic terms, is a central dimension of the state's politics. This diversity has presented Texas with a multitude of challenges in the twenty-first century, including an outdated **regressive tax** system, unequal per capita expenditures for education and public services, water conservation, transportation, and pollution. Business leaders, economists, and government officials also continue to promote **economic diversification** so as to not rely completely on the oil and gas industry.

Political myths are common views that people have of their historical experiences, and Texans have a distinguishable myth tradition rooted in the state's period as an independent **republic**, its large landmass, and its frontier experience. Some of these myths, including the cowboy and Texas Ranger, continue to be popular reminders of the state's independence and rugged **individualism**. The prevailing Texas myths were rooted in the earlier Anglo history of the state, however, and some critics argue they neglect the contributions of Native Americans, Black Americans, and Hispanics. As the share of these groups in the state's population grows, their experiences will likely be incorporated into Texas's political myths.

Utilizing the theories of **political culture**, Daniel Elazar and a number of other scholars who have directed their interests to state and regional politics have produced a rich body of theoretical and descriptive literature that attempts to explain differences and similarities in the politics and public policies of state and local governments. The utility of Elazar's three political subcultures—the **moralistic**, the **individualistic**, and the **traditionalistic**—has been challenged by a number of scholars who have attempted to test the concepts empirically. The distinctive pattern of settlements of different populations provides insight into the development of the regional patterns of the state's political culture. As settlers spread over the state, they carried with them the core values of their political cultures, producing a mosaic of local variations that have blended into a dominant conservative political culture in Texas that is rooted in its individualistic and traditionalistic subcultures. The moralistic subculture has had limited impact on Texans' value system. The beliefs Texans hold about the role of governments, what they should do or not do, who should govern, expectations of leaders, and what constitutes good public policy are rooted in these cultural patterns that vary across the state.

Understanding the demographic characteristics of Texas is key to understanding how the state is run and to understanding the development of the state's political culture, political behavior, and

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policy choices. Native Americans, who now comprise a very small part of the state's population, were the prevailing population prior to the period of European conquest of Texas, but their influence on contemporary politics in Texas is negligible. Hispanics were part of Texas's population at independence but were marginalized through most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With the dramatic increase of the Hispanic population, however, they have played an ever-increasing role in the state's politics over the past four decades. Black Americans arrived in Texas enslaved; although their enslavement ended with the Civil War, they experienced a long history of political and economic discrimination. In the post–Civil Rights era, Black Americans have played a significant role in state politics and in regions of the state where they reside in greatest numbers. Throughout the formative period and through the modern era, Texas was dominated by highly diverse Anglo national origin groups. With expanded immigration from other states and European countries, distinguishable patterns of settlement spread across the state. Politics and public policy were shaped primarily by these conservative populations. Asian Americans, who tend to locate in urban areas, are now showing evidence of political influence as well.

The dominant demographic themes and trends that run through Texas's political history and culture center on population growth, **urbanization**, inequities in wealth and income, disparities in education and literacy, and geopolitical diversity. The state's population now exceeds 29 million and is projected to continue to increase at a fast clip. The state is now 90 percent urban with more than 70 percent concentrated in the 66 counties that make up the Texas Urban Triangle, where the major counties are characterized by a high **population density**.

Despite the size of the state's economy and the impressive gains in personal income and wealth for many, there are significant disparities among ethnic and racial groups. Black Americans and Hispanics are more likely to have lower incomes than White or Asian Americans. And Asian Americans are among the most educated of the state's residents. The disparities in education have spawned an extensive debate about the state's educational system and its ability to sustain future economic growth that is dependent on a highly educated population. The state's economy also had a direct impact on governmental policies. The gross domestic product of Texas exceeds one trillion dollars. With some exceptions during recessionary periods, the state's economy has outstripped the national economy and the economies of most other states in its rate of growth. Key economic sectors of the state have been radically transformed over the past twenty years, resulting in a highly diversified economy, and Texas plays a major role in the **globalization of the economy**.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

1. Census data provide a rich source of information about Texas and its subdivisions. Detailed data down to the county and city levels are readily available for each of the decennial censuses and using the annually updated American Community Survey. Have students develop and report a detailed profile of their home county or city. In addition to describing current attributes, key variables over a range of years can be used to trace the development of the specific geographic area over time.

2. Economic censuses and trade data for local governments are also easily accessible. Students

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can be introduced to these data sources by acquiring a brief economic profile of their city or county.

3. Assign each student responsibility for selecting five states and five foreign nations and relating those states and nations to their apparent political subcultures using the chapter's discussion on Daniel Elazar's themes. Justification for the subculture identified with each state or nation must be included in the paper.

INTERNET ACTIVITIES

1. From the state of Texas's website, do a search for your county. Use the county you were born in (if in Texas) or the one in which you are currently living. See what information the state keeps on your county; identify what economic region you are in, and find out what the state has to say about your region. You may need to visit the website of the Texas comptroller of public accounts for some of this information. Write a paragraph summarizing your findings.

2. Go to the U.S. Census Bureau's website. Search for the city you were born in, or, if you are not from Texas, the city in which you currently live. What are the most recent population figures for this city? What is the ethnic breakdown of the city? What about the economic breakdown for the city? You may be able to get some of this information from other sites as well. Write a paragraph summarizing your findings.

3. Go to the comptroller's site and find the TexIndex. Explore Texas's ratings compared to other states on a number of dimensions in such areas as population and demographics, the workforce, economic and social characteristics, and state and local finances. Write a paragraph explaining what you have found, including an assessment of Texas's comparative strengths and weaknesses.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

An excellent source of current economic data for Texas is *Fiscal Notes*, published several times most months by the Texas comptroller of public accounts and also available online. https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/.

The state's website provides links to state agencies, local and county governments, special districts, and councils of governments, where a wide array of data for the state can be found. http://www.texas.gov.

Population and economic data for the state are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, which conducts decennial censuses and a wide range of population studies between censuses. http://www.census.gov.

REVEL FEATURES FOR THIS CHAPTER:

Introduction:

Scrolling Window: Current Events Bulletin

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Chapter-related current events articles

What's Happening Now in Texas?

See weekly article updates from *The Texas Tribune* during semesters.

Videos:

Video excerpts from *The Texas Tribune,* as well as other videos featuring Texas politicians, judges, lobbyists, political activists, bureaucrats, and journalists, introduce students to current issues and larger debates that address key topics found in each chapter.

- Governor Rick Perry: "Accomplishments"
- *Texplainer*: "What Happens When We Rethink History That's Been Set in Stone?"
- Eva DeLuna Castro: "Rejection of Federal Money for Medicaid"
- Gina Hinojosa: "Latinos and Education"
- Gary Bledsoe: "Impact of Race in Politics"
- *The Texas Tribune*: "Lawmakers, Education Leaders Discuss School Finance in Texas"

Interactive Maps, Tables, and Figures:

Interactive maps, tables, and figures featuring Social Explorer technology allow updates to the latest data, toggles to illustrate movement over time, and clickable hot spots with pop-ups of images and captions.

- Figure 1-1: Ethnic and Racial Composition of Texas, 1860–2018
- Figure 1-2: Urban-Rural Population of Texas, 1850–2019
- Figure 1-4: Ten Largest Texas Cities, 1920–2016
- Table 1-1: U.S. and Texas Income Figures, 2018
- Table 1-2: Educational Attainment in the United States and Texas by Race and Ethnicity, 2018 (Persons 25 Years of Age and Older)

"Think about" Questions:

"Think about" questions that feature hide/reveal answers accompany some figures and tables, so students can further explore important chapter illustrations.

- Think about Table 1-1: U.S. and Texas Income Figures, 2018: Income figures for the different racial and ethnic groups in Texas show some rather significant differences. What are some conclusions that can be drawn from the table on income?

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Answer: Asian Americans in Texas have achieved considerable economic success compared to other groups. Per capita, or individual, income is lower than that of the White population, but Asian American households and families report higher median incomes than other groups in Texas.

Hispanic and Black populations have experienced much less economic success than White and Asian Americans. Poverty levels for both those groups are more than double those for White and Asian Americans, and child poverty rates are more than three (for Black Americans) or four (Hispanic) times the rates for Whites. While the median household income of Hispanics slightly exceeds that of Black Americans, per capita income is about 20 percent lower. Low income is often related to low levels of education, and when the data in this table are compared to the data on educational attainment in Texas (in Table 1-2), it is not surprising that Hispanics fall into the lower income categories.

There is poverty among segments of the White population, but it is lower than that found among the other racial or ethnic groups of the state. White per capita income is the highest among all groups, while median household income is significantly higher than that of Hispanics or African Americans, though per capita income lags behind that of Asian Americans.

Journal Prompt Questions:

Journal prompts are based on in-chapter videos featuring interviews with notable Texans and are designed to draw students further into the videos. They introduce students to current issues and larger debates that address key topics found in each chapter.

- **Journal 1.4:** What innovations or changes would help increase the graduation rates of Latino students in Texas?

Shared Writing Questions:

Shared writing prompts, related to specific *Texas Tribune* articles found at the end of every chapter, encourage students to address multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to each other's viewpoints, encouraging all to interpret current events in Texas communities.

- **Shared Writing 1.5: Growth and Changing Demographics:**
  Think about the article "The Census doesn't count Arab Americans. That leaves some Texans feeling invisible." Although the research staff of the Bureau of the Census recommended to the federal Office of Management and Budget that a distinct Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) classification be added to

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the 2020 Census, the recommendation was denied. Why do you think it is important to American residents of Middle Eastern or North African origins to be counted as a distinct population in the Census?

Assessments:

Each main section ends with a three- to five-question multiple-choice quiz, and each chapter ends with a fifteen-question chapter quiz.

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