

# ESSAY

## Who Runs America?

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“Americans may be equal, but some are more equal than others,” said economist Paul Krugman and rightly so. Power and influence in American society are exercised by groups of people, whether Democrats or Republicans, who control the wealth of the nation. They include career politicians, top government officials, and prominent political families. They can be found at various levels of the government, from local and regional to national, and often have significant influence over policy decisions and the direction of the country. This group includes CEOs, board members, and major shareholders who shape economic policies, control vast resources, and influence government

decisions through lobbying and campaign contributions. Investment bankers, hedge funds managers, financial institutions, along with prominent figures such as Warren Buffett have significant influence over economic policies, that can shape the direction of global markets. Since the beginning of the Internet revolution, the technological elites, a new class of influential individuals in Silicon Valley, tech executives, entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists now have substantial influence over the direction of technology, innovation, and digital policies. Recently they shook us up by unleashing the large language AI model Chat-GPT that might one day turn us

into intellectual slaves. Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, Tim Cook, Sundar Pichai, and Satya Nadella, for example, exercise extraordinary global influence and they can shape our future.

It's also the media conglomerates, news organizations, and powerful figures in the entertainment industry, people such as Rupert Murdoch, who have a significant impact on public opinion.

They influence political discourse by shaping national narratives. They exert influence over policy decisions through their universal reach and ability to shape public opinion. Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Donald Trump, for example, sprang up from the media and entertainment establishment controlled by the corporate wealthy. They know who to promote and who to neglect.

The patronage of political families and access to networks can significantly impact an individual's ability to join the ruling classes. Furthermore, associations with influential politicians, party members, or top government officials can provide access to important political positions and lucrative appointments that create opportunities for influence within the political establishment. Several top universities in the United States, Ivy League plus especially Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Columbia, MIT, University of Chicago, Dartmouth College, and others have historically produced a significant number of members of America's ruling classes, including leaders in politics, law, business, finance, technology, entrepreneurship, and academia. With multibillion-dollar endowments perpetually replenished by America's wealthiest, who send their children there, merit or no merit, these

universities are financially untouchables, and politically important.

Many alumni of these prestigious schools not only run 500 Fortune companies, US embassies, think tanks, global charities, academia, major news organizations, and media and entertainment establishments; but also, they educate the elites and the ruling class members of many foreign nations including the Arab Muslim nations, India, China, South Africa, and others. It's the students from these nations who protested that Affirmative Action was cheating them of their merits and thus depriving them of the opportunities to join the ruling classes.

Affirmative Action had opened the doors for Blacks and other left-behind groups, as well as white women, to join the American ruling classes through the portals of elite universities - people such as General Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense General Lloyd Austin III, Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, and not least Justice Clarence Thomas, to name a few. The nullification of Affirmative Action would lead to a decline in the enrollment of these groups into elite universities, resulting in reduced diversity among graduates who go on to become part of the ruling classes. So, if you think that your vote counts and thus shapes the direction of this nation, you may be in for a shock.