**CHAPTER 21 The Social, Economic and Political Cultures of Texas**

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to

* Define the key terms at the end of the chapter.
* Differentiate between the dominant set of core values in Texas.
* Explain the roots of Texas Culture and list the various ethnic backgrounds.
* Analyze and explain the strengths and weaknesses of the Texas economy.
* Differentiate between the various economies of the thirteen regions of Texas.
* Explain why the Texas economy is diversified today.
* Discuss the changing population culturally and numerically and explain how those changes will affect Texas in the future.

# The POlitical culture of texas and the Challenge of Democracy

The opening vignette discusses the difficulties of the illegal immigrant problem in America, but especially in Texas. Texas has been seeing a massive influx of illegal immigrants in recent years. In a response for calls to reform immigration, President Bush tried to push through new proposals, but they were blocked and no reforms have taken place. Governor Perry and other state officials have been slow to respond also, since the demographics of Texas have been changing.

Texans have a long history of taking matters into their own hands, which has a lot to do with their individualistic spirit. At the same time, Texans take pride in their history and traditions. Years of immigration, and a high birth rate among minorities, have slowly changed the demographics of Texas. Within the next decade, the Hispanic population will become the new majority in Texas. These changes in population will have a profound impact on the nature of Texas society, culture, economy and political environment.

Chapter Overview

Texas society changes everyday. Immigration and natural population are already affecting Texas’ society and economy, and will eventually change its political environment. The core values of Texans has been shaped and molded from Texas’ history, which include Spanish, Mexican and American traditions. Although much of Texas’ history has been tied to Mexico’s history and the acts of early settlers, more recent history has been tied to the three major industries of Texas; cotton, cattle and oil. Currently, Texas has diversified its economy, but it is still struggling to make sure that all Texans have equal access to all the opportunities the state can offer.

## The Political Culture of Texas

Based on the political culture theories of Daniel Elazar, Texas’ political culture embraces the values of both traditionalistic and individualistic cultures. Texans are traditional in expecting government to maintain the status quo, and expect it to limit itself to very specific tasks. Texans are also individualistic in that we distrust government and rely on citizen initiatives to get things done. The Political Culture of Texas is a reflection of the deep and rich history of the state and its strong ties to Mexico.

## Who We Are: The Changing Demographic Profile of Texas

Texan continues to change and grow even as you are reading this passage. Two major changes for Texas will occur in the next few decades. The Anglo population, which has always been in the majority, will be supplanted by a rising number of Hispanic Texans. Also, the population of Texas will recognize that it is an urban population, since 80% of Texas’ 23+ million citizens live in an urban area. Both these changes are already affecting Texas’ politics, economy and society.

## The Texas Economy

The third largest economy in the United States, Texas generates an amazing amount of production and wealth. Although the Texas economy used to revolve around cotton, cattle and oil, it has diversified over the last 20 years. Today, Texas is a big producer of high tech equipment and has profited handsomely from NAFTA. Most of these economic forces in Texas are located in the Texas Triangle, a region centering on Houston, San Antonio and Dallas/Fort Worth. While it may be a great place to relocate a business, Texas can be a challenging environment for finding educated workers. Texas will need to do better, if it wants to attract more businesses to the region.

Key Terms

political culture

traditionalistic political subculture

individualistic political subculture

moralistic political subculture

patrón politics

gross state product

maquiladoras

tax abatement

colonias

# Research and Resources

One rich source of commonly asked questions and links is the *TexasOnline* website, created by Governor Perry. <<http://www.texasonline.com/>> This portal was ranked as the best e-government website in America by Brown University. There are links to agencies and helpful information that most people want to know.

Another helpful site for information and to get a better feel for the political and economic culture of Texas is the Secretary of State’s website. <<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/about/newsreleases/index.shtml>> This site contains information on election results and procedures, state rules, corporate and uniform commercial codes, statutory documents and a section on the Texas Border and Mexican Affairs.

A great way to get a real “feel” for Texas culture, especially if you haven’t been there, is to visit the Travel Texas website. This site has information about all the different regions of Texas, including history, attractions, major cities and links to many of the places and sites mentioned. <<http://www.traveltex.com/Index.aspx>>

# Using Your Knowledge

1. Using the resources suggested above, try to find out how your county voted in the 2006 state elections and the 2008 Presidential election. After perusing the data on who your county voted for, can you get a sense of the politics of your county? Make sure to look at the major races, like governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general, but also look at the race for your President, US representative, state representative and state senator. Are you surprised by the results of these elections? Can you discern a general pattern?

2. The Travel Texas website allows individuals thinking of visiting Texas to look at where they are going and what they can do when they get there. It is also a good resource for history about specific towns, cities and regions. This site divides up Texas into seven different regions, go look at three of these regions and read about how different they are. How are the three regions that you looked at different, and how are they the same?

# Getting Involved

Traditionally, Texas politics has been the playground of the upper class, but it’s not that hard to play. You could start by attending a local City Council or County Commissioners meeting. Find out what they are doing and let them know what you think about it. You can easily e-mail your mayor or City Council, or you could address them at their next meeting. If you have the time, volunteer to serve on a City Advisory Committee, where your input would be valued and acted upon.

Sample Exam Questions

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. What vital element(s) of our political culture must be produced in order for it to be perceived as legitimate?

a. colonias

b. inherent power

c. goodwill and public trust

d. public policy consistent with culture

e. stability, economic health and strategic vision

2. Which political subculture of Texas distrusts government, expects corruption, downplays citizen participation and stresses individual economic prosperity?

a. pragmatic subculture

b. traditionalistic subculture

c. moralistic subculture

d. individualistic subculture

e. none of these

3. What Mexican state did Texas use to be a part of back in the early 1800’s?

a. Nuevo Leon

b. Sonora

c. Zacatecas

d. Veracruz

e. Coahuila

4. According to T.R. Fehrenbach which two adjectives would be describe the early Texas settlers?

a. rash and headstrong

b. self-motivated and self-reliant

c. self-absorbed and militaristic

d. proper, yet productive

e. productive and visionary

5. What term refers to the traditionalistic border culture where political outcomes are controlled by a sponsor?

a. Hispanic politics

b. Mexican politics

c. Patrón politics

d. Texas politics

e. Maquiladora politics

6. The “Texas Triangle” consists of the region in between the cities of Dallas/Fort Worth, San Antonio and what other city?

a. Austin

b. Brownsville

c. Corpus Christi

d. Houston

e. El Paso

7. Most of the recent growth in Texas’ population is due to which of the following?

a. immigration

b. natural population growth

c. adoptions

d. disaster relief efforts

e. naturalization

8. Which of the following is one of the main reasons corporations are willing to move their businesses/headquarters to Texas??

a. Government price controls

b. lower oil prices

c. uneducated labor pool

d. NAFTA

e. tax abatements

9. Which of the following describes the current status of average Hispanic American in the United States today?

a. Almost 40% of Hispanic child live below the poverty line.

b. Almost one-third of Hispanic children dropout of high school.

c. Hispanic homeownership lags behind white homeowners by almost 30%.

d. Over one-quarter of all Hispanics are without health insurance.

e. all of these are correct.

10. Which of the following is LULAC’s top concern for the Hispanic Community?

a. political access

b. education

c. civil rights

d. health

e. economic power

11. What is the major industry of southeast Texas?

a. oil and gas

b. timber

c. high tech

d. cotton

e. agriculture

12. What economic term describes the production of raw materials exported to other markets?

a. patrón economy

b. colonias economy

c. perpetual economy

d. colonial economy

e. material economy

13. Approximately how much did the Texas Gross State Product (GSP) produce in 2006?

a. A bit over $250 billion

b. Just under $500 billion

c. Right at $750 billion

d. A bit over $1 trillion

e. Just under $1.5 trillion

14. Which sector of the current Texas economy generates over three-quarters of the wealth?

a. construction sector

b. education sector

c. technology sector

d. health sector

e. service sector

15. Although many businesses consider Texas a good place to do business, what is their one area of major concern?

a. governmental regulation

b. lower quality education

c. environmental regulations

d. state income tax

e. generous labor benefits

16. In her past, Texas played a major role in the nation’s energy policies. Which of the following are affected by the Texas economy today?

a. high tech development

b. health

c. education

d. cattle

e. all of these

17. Which region is the largest in Texas, encompassing 41 counties still centered around producing oil, gas, cotton and cattle?

a. High Plains

b. Northwest Texas

c. West Texas

d. Upper Rio Grande

e. South Texas Border

18. Which county has doubled in population over the last 30 years and accounts for 20% of the state’s employment and over 25% of its GSP?

a. Metroplex

b. Alamo/San Antonio

c. Coastal Bend

d. Gulf Coast

e. High Plains

19. Which regions is composed of 20 counties and centers its economy around a large military base, state universities and a number of high-tech research and manufacturing interests?

a. Gulf Coast

b. Upper East Texas

c. Metroplex

d. Alamo/San Antonio

e. Central Texas

20. Which region encompasses 16 counties and is the major financial and banking center of Texas?

a. Metroplex

b. Alamo/San Antonio

c. Gulf Coast

d. Capital

e. Coastal Bend

21. How does income of Texas teachers compare to the rest of the nation?

a. In the top 10% of the US.

b. Ranked 24th out of the 50 states.

c. Ranked 31st out of the 50 states.

d. Ranked 39th out of the 50 states.

e. In the bottom 10% of the US.

22. Although Suburban Texas is quite wealthy, how does that compare to the state’s border regions?

a. Just about the same.

b. Way above the suburban areas.

c. Just above the suburban areas.

d. Way below the suburban areas.

e. Just below the suburban areas.

23. What political term do we use to describe the subdivisions along the Texas-Mexico border and lack basics services, like water and electricity?

a. patrón communities

b. colonias

c. meagervilles

d. haciendas

e. waypoints

24. What is the main cause of the growing income inequality in Texas?

a. economic stagnation in the entire state

b. stagnant wages of the low-skilled workers

c. stagnant wages of the highly-skilled workers

d. high property taxes and insurance rates

e. low average income of Texas’ main workforce

25. When you compare Hispanic and African-American populations to the white population, which of the following is true?

a. The incomes of African-Americans and Hispanics are roughly one-fourth that of whites.

b. The incomes of African-Americans and Hispanics are roughly one-third that of whites.

c. The incomes of African-Americans and Hispanics are roughly one-half that of whites.

d. The incomes of African-Americans and Hispanics are roughly two-thirds that of whites.

e. None of the above

Essay Questions

1. What are the core values of Texans and what does this mean in real terms?

2. What is going to happen to the Texas population over the next 30 years and how is that going to affect the social and political landscape of Texas?

3. Explain what the Texas economy used to be based upon and what the Texas economy is based upon today.

4. Explain the regional variations throughout Texas and how this helps or hurts the Texas economy.

5. Discuss the differences between the lifestyle of low-skilled Texas and those who are highly-skilled. How will this situation affect Texas if it continues?

Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions

1. d

2. d

3. e

4. b

5. c

6. d

7. a

8. e

9. e

10. b

11. b

12. d

13. d

14. e

15. b

16. a

17. a

18. d

19. e

20. a

21. c

22. d

23. b

24. b

25. d