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2A
18/2

The ratification of the US Constitution in 1787 represented only a partial economic and ideological victory for the traditional American political elite. While it was championed as a document that would bring ~~the~~ freedom to all the land, in reality it changed most people's lives very little. It did have some important differences between the Articles of Confederation, which had acted as the governing document for decade or so prior, ~~which~~ ^{that} increased the power of the ^{total} government and thus many of the traditional American political elite, but ideologically the American political elite were very torn, as evidenced by the debate over ratification and the inclusion of the Bill of Rights. As such, the Constitution was a victory for ^{only} some of the elite.

The Constitutional compromises that kept the nation united despite the issues of slavery and representation in congress were genius. The now notorious $\frac{3}{5}$ compromise, which allowed $\frac{3}{5}$ of the slaves to count toward the population for representation in a state enabled the north and the south to unify and thus can be viewed as a victory, even if it only lasted until the Civil War. Less ephemeral and equally important was the plan that provided for the House of Representatives with proportional representation between big and small states and ~~unlike~~ ^{Senators} with equal representation. Ideologically, this concept of compromise permeated the Constitution. The anti-federalists allowed the Bill of Rights to serve as a check to the greatly expanded federal powers -- to levy taxes, conscript an army, etc. In this way, the Con. was a victory in its ability to bring the country under 1 document although many

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of the elite did not like the whole Constitution.

On the other hand, the Constitution did not entirely change American politics. Power was still in the hands of a select few and mechanisms such as the electoral college ensured that elections were ~~as~~ insulated from the popular will. Direct election of senators did not even come until much later! And, while suffrage was somewhat expanded, women and most blacks still had no say. This served to keep the traditional elite in power, though, which was a boon to them. ~~Despite the fact that the lack of suffrage, etc. went against such ideas of democ-~~

Economically, the Constitution gave the elite more power. They could now levy taxes and regulate interstate commerce. In addition, their expanded power provided more leverage in the field of foreign policy, as they could now pass tariffs, embargoes, and other means to manipulate the global playing field.

In general, the Constitution increased ~~that~~ ~~of~~ the ^{traditional} American political elite's power. However, despite the fantastic compromises that united the nation and the promises of democracy, very little actually changed for most Americans. Economically, the elite were given more power and autonomy. While the Constitution improved some things for the elite, other things worsened or remained the same as it had in the Articles of Confederation era, and so it can only be considered a partial victory.

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2B
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The United States Constitution was created because of the incompetence of the previous legal document, the articles of Confederation. The articles of Confederation failed to regulate commerce and collect taxes. It had no power at its disposal. Thus, in 1787, a constitutional convention was held to formulate a new Constitution. The framers of the Constitution was mostly aristocratic, American political elite. Thus, the Constitution naturally represented the ideal beliefs of the American political elite. The Constitution represented the ideological and economic victory for American political elites in several ways. First, it protected them from mob rule excess, the mobocracy, the mass exploiting the minority. Second, it protected American political elites of their property.

Thomas Paine preached the values of a republican government in which the power of the government came from the people. However, the framers of the Constitution knew that such idea was not to be misinterpreted. Too much democracy, of the people holding the power to all aspects of the government could lead to the mass exploiting the minority. Thus, the Constitution had measures to ~~prevent~~ ~~such~~ prevent such insurrection.

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The Constitution was based on ~~a~~ ~~the~~ bundles of compromises. The Connecticut Compromise upheld a bicameral legislature with two branches — the Senate and the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives were voted directly by people. Thus, the people derived their power from this measure. However, the senators were indirectly voted on by state legislature, protecting the minority from the major political influence. The Constitution had a measure of checks and balances to control the power that each of the 3 branches had. The three branches were legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative checked the power of the president. Judicial checked the constitutionality of legislature. President appointed judges. Thus, each of the branches ~~was~~ had a way they can ensure that no one branch of government is too strong. The president was elected indirectly by an electoral college, thus the ~~people~~ rule of the masses ~~was~~ somewhat contained. The judicial branch was separated from the opinion of the people, another measure to protect the elites from the mobocracy of the majority.

Economic victory was gained by the American elites with the constitution. Previously, uprisings such as Shay's Rebellion was caused by farmer

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who detested all the power that the American elites had. However, under Articles of Confederation they had no power to crush the uprising. The weak central power had to rely on state militias to control uprisings. With the Constitution the federal government was strengthened. The strength of the government could control any uprising of the common folk against the economic elite. The articles of confederation also had no power to tax. For many elite Americans, the collection of taxes were crucial for revenues. With the Constitution, the federal government could enforce such collections. ~~The common folk~~ The American political elite found another victory in the Constitution when slavery was included in the Constitution. The Constitution protected slavery, which was an economic victory to many aristocratic plantation owners. For the American political elite, the protection of property that the Constitution achieved brought a sense of relief to the American elites.

The Constitution represented an ideological victory for the American elites that it protected them from the power of the ~~majority~~ majority. It also represent an economic victory because it protected the elites of losing their property to the mob of the common folk.

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The US Constitution of 1787 ~~did~~ represented an economic and political victory for the traditional American political elite. In its early stages it preserved much of America's status quo while putting the economics, which were so far at the mercy of the British, in America's hands. *(on page 3)

The traditional political scene in America had been developing in the years preceding the ratification of the Constitution. From the earlier House of Burgesses and town meetings to Franklin's Albany plan and the Continental Congress meetings, the United States had gotten accustomed to the idea of representatives from States cooperating with other States — a sort of bureaucracy on the continental level and a hierarchical structure at the state level. With the Constitution, the states generally kept this system (with the exception of the ^{creation of the} executive position) and the Bill of Rights strengthened the rights ^{and the sovereignty} of the states. Bicameral legislature

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and state representation was still in tact with many of the same leaders. The constitution was a political victory for the ~~political~~ traditional elite.

The Constitution also brought an economic victory for the traditional political elite. The Articles of Confederation had successfully moved economic power to America from Britain, but was so weak in its economic structure that no state could take advantage of it. The Constitution fixed many of the Articles' flaws, allowing states to regulate interstate commerce ~~and~~ more efficiently. There were taxes from the federal gov't now, but states were represented and the money went into improving all the states, so ~~the~~ the Constitution represented an economic victory for the traditional political elite.

The constitution reaffirmed political structure but, with checks and balances in place, gave economic power

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The federal government to be used for the states. ~~The Constitution~~ The Constitution therefore was both a victory politically and economically for the traditional political elite.

If that traditional political elite is understood as the leaders and representatives of the ^{individual} states.

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2006 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)

Question 2

Sample: 2A

Score: 9

This essay has a very strong thesis that effectively argues, with examples, how the Constitution was a partial victory for the elite, pointing out that some changes were made, yet some conditions remained the same. It notes that the electoral college and the absence of any direct election of senators demonstrated elite concerns, just as the split over the Bill of Rights reflected a “victory for only some of the elite”—that is, those who saw it as a check on federal powers. The essay has outstanding analysis as shown in the comment on regional unity under the new government because of compromises over slavery and representation. Other observations, such as the continued exclusion of women and blacks and the conclusion that “very little actually changed for most Americans,” demonstrate the superiority of this essay.

Sample: 2B

Score: 6

This essay has a good thesis that focuses on concerns about mobocracy, controls on excess democracy and the power of the majority, and the protection of (propertied) minorities. Much of the discussion on the Constitution is in economic terms but not directly linked to the question. The student notes that the response to Shays’ rebellion led to better protections and guarantees for slavery, too, as a part of property rights. The essay focuses more on reforms (such as checks and balances) than on the elite and its experiences in the 1780’s (except for the reference to the indirect election of senators and the “power to tax”).

Sample: 2C

Score: 3

This essay lacks a clear thesis and has little relevant information. Although it attempts to deal with both economics and politics, it confuses ideology with politics. It contains little analysis and demonstrates confusion about the issues.