geographically limited—the Dutch in New York, the French in backwoods outposts and Louisiana, the Spanish in Florida and the Southwest—and none could seriously claim to provide a second language for American society as a whole. The first large ethnically distinctive immigrant group was the Roman Catholic Irish, who spoke English (Gaelic was a romantic revival, not the actual language of Irish immigrants). As non-English-speaking Roman Catholic elements arrived, the Irish pressed for their assimilation into the English-speaking community, notably by opposing foreign-language parochial schools. Indeed, it is difficult to see how common Roman Catholic interests could have been promoted had the Roman Catholic population been split into language groups.

The Protestant immigrants (for example, the Scandinavians) were generally assimilated relatively easily, without language becoming a major issue. Jewish groups arrived in considerable numbers only quite late and did not represent any one major European language. Furthermore, they never exceeded 5 percent of the total population. The United States has thus retained English as the common language of the total societal community without a widespread feeling that it represents the "imposition" of Anglo-Saxon hegemony.

A relatively well-integrated societal community has thus been successfully established in the United States on bases that are not primarily ethnic or religious. Despite diversity within the population, it has largely escaped pressure by ethnic-linguistic or religious communities for political independence or "equal rights" in respect that would undermine the solidarity of the more inclusive community.

Important and somewhat parallel developments occurred in American patterns of ascriptive stratification, especially as compared to European patterns typified by aristocracy. The American population was overwhelmingly nonaristocratic in origin and did not develop an indigenous aristocracy.[10] Furthermore, a considerable proportion of the originally upper-class elements left the country during the American Revolution. Granting of titles came to be forbidden by the Constitution, and factors like landed proprietorship and wealth have no legal recognition as criteria for government office and authority. Although American society has always been differentiated internally by class, it has never suffered the aftermath of aristocracy and serfdom that persisted so long in Europe; the nearest approximation appeared in the South. The participation of the wealthier and more educated groups in government has been disproportionate, but there has also been a persistent populist strain and relative political mobility, advancement coming first through wealth and more recently through education.

[10] Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt, 1953).

American society thus abandoned the tradition of aristocracy with only a mild revolutionary disturbance. It also lacked the heritage of Europe's peasant classes. As an industrial working class developed, the typical European level of "class consciousness" never emerged, largely because of the absence of aristocratic and peasant elements.[11]

The American system has also carried differentiation between government and societal community very far. For government and societal community to become highly differentiated, the right to hold office must be dissociated from ascription, from attachment to monarchy and aristocracy, and associated with achievement. Furthermore, authority must be limited to the legally defined powers of office, so that private prerogatives, property interests, and the like are strictly separated from those of office. Finally, the elective principle requires that holding office be contingent upon constituent support; loss of office through electoral defeat is an inherent risk. The independence of the legal system from the executive and legislative branches of government has been one primary mechanism for generating and maintaining this kind of differentiation.

Another mechanism has expressed the connection between the government and community stratification. The newly independent nation opted for a republican form of government (with elaborate precautions against absolutism) [12] linked with the societal community through the franchise. Although the franchise was originally restricted, especially by property qualifications, it was extended rapidly, and universal manhood suffrage, except for Negroes, was attained relatively early in the nineteenth century. The highest government authority was universally vested in elected officials: the President and members of the Congress, the state governors and members of state legislatures. The sole exception has been the appointment of Federal (and increasingly state) judges, with the expectation or formal requirement that they be professional lawyers.

A distinctive competitive party system based upon the engagement in politics of broad segments of the societal community soon emerged.[13] It has been relatively fluid, oriented toward a pluralistic structure of "interest groups," rather than toward the regional, religious, ethnic, or class solidarities more typical of Europe.

The societal community must be articulated not only with the religious and political systems but also with the economy. In the United States the factors of production, including land and labor, have been rela-

[11] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, 1955).

[12] Rossiter, *op. cit.*; and Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940).

[13] William N. Chambers, *Political Parties in a New Nation, 1776–1809* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963); and Richard P. McCormick, *The Second American Party System* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966).