
1. Wedel argues that elite power has changed. In assessing this claim, recall the article by C. Wright Mills which we read (she also cites Mills).
2. How is elite power connected with democracy in this article?
3. What is a “post-democracy”?
4. How are “influence elites” characterized?
5. When/how did influence elites rise to power?
6. How and where did these new, flexible, elite intermediaries find a space to influence government? Under what conditions? (Think of the relationship between the state and the private sector.)
7. Instead of “command posts” what do these new elites occupy?
8. What is the author’s basic methodology and types of sources used? (Note that this type of study is an example of “studying up”.)
9. How does the example of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) prove the author’s points?
10. Why should the military-industrial complex be reconceptualized?
11. Concerning Promontory FG, note: outsourcing, subcontracting, the revolving door, inside–outside, “flex organization”.
12. Note “quangos” and GSEs.
13. What are the characteristics of a “flex net”? 
14. Note the six characteristics of influence elites.
15. Why are the media particularly significant to today’s elites?
16. Why are think-tanks so numerous and influential?


1. Why is the author critical of the application of the “populist” label to politics, and political leadership, in contemporary Venezuela? (She is speaking specifically of Hugo Chávez.)
2. “Populism” implies what kind of political subjects? How are the masses described by those who speak of “populism”?
3. In the Latin American context, what has been the meaning of “populism”? What are said to be the chief traits of “populism”?
4. What is “neo-populism”?
5. Note: elite fear and “denigration of the masses”.
6. How have some Western academics negatively assessed Hugo Chávez?
7. Why is it a problem to believe in an “ideal democratic type”?
8. What is the root of widespread mistrust of liberal party systems in Venezuela?
9. Is there evidence that a “top-down” and “bottom-up” process of political transformation can happen together, or in phases?
10. Note where agency is emphasized in this article.
11. How do Venezuelan “popular politics” challenge established models?
12. What do we miss by focusing on leaders and leadership?


1. What is “post-liberal democracy”? What does the “post” mean? How might this be a useful and productive approach?
2. How are Latin Americans putting liberal democracy to the test?
3. What aims does Wolff share in common with Motta?
4. In the West, according to the author, how is democracy usually conceived, and with what is it equated?
5. Note the “five pillars of liberal democracy” and how each one can be (or is) challenged, expanded, modified, etc.
6. With reference to liberal democracy, what does Bolivia’s current political system look like? How is it different from liberal democracy?
7. What is “participatory democracy”?
8. What is “communitarian democracy”?
9. How does Indigenous self-determination challenge or otherwise alter liberal democracy?
10. Does Wolff use the “populism” label? How does he define the term?
11. What are the problems with a notion of a “real” democracy?
12. What accounts for the strong trend toward post-liberal democracy in Bolivia?
13. Note “repoliticization” and what it involves.