

UNDERSTANDING POLITICS

Ideas, Institutions, and Issues

THOMAS M. MAGSTADT, PH.D.



13e

POWER LEARN
on the move
with the
Cengage
Mobile App

UNDERSTANDING POLITICS

Ideas, Institutions, and Issues

iStock.com/Ildo Frazao

13e

Thomas M. Magstadt, Ph.D.

The Johns Hopkins School
of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)



Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

Copyright 2021 Cengage Learning. All Rights Reserved. May not be copied, scanned, or duplicated, in whole or in part. WCN 02-200-203

Copyright 2021 Cengage Learning. All Rights Reserved. May not be copied, scanned, or duplicated, in whole or in part. Due to electronic rights, some third party content may be suppressed from the eBook and/or eChapter(s). Editorial review has deemed that any suppressed content does not materially affect the overall learning experience. Cengage Learning reserves the right to remove additional content at any time if subsequent rights restrictions require it.

This is an electronic version of the print textbook. Due to electronic rights restrictions, some third party content may be suppressed. Editorial review has deemed that any suppressed content does not materially affect the overall learning experience. The publisher reserves the right to remove content from this title at any time if subsequent rights restrictions require it. For valuable information on pricing, previous editions, changes to current editions, and alternate formats, please visit www.cengage.com/highered to search by ISBN#, author, title, or keyword for materials in your areas of interest.

Important Notice: Media content referenced within the product description or the product text may not be available in the eBook version.

***Understanding Politics:
Ideas, Institutions, and Issues,
Thirteenth Edition***
Thomas M. Magstadt

Product Manager: Richard Lena

Senior Marketing Manager: Valerie Hartman

Content Manager: David Martinson

Product Assistant: Haley Gaudreau

Senior In-House Subject Matter Expert:
Emily Hickey

Learning Designer: Erika Hayden

IP Analyst: Deanna Ettinger

IP Project Manager: Kelli Besse

Manufacturing Planner: Julio Esperas

Senior Designer: Sarah Cole

Cover Designer: Sarah Cole

Text Designer: Sarah Cole

Production Service and Compositor:
SPI Global

Design Images: iStock.com/Ildo Frazao;
frees/Shutterstock.com; iStock.com/
FoxysGraphic; iStock.com/serazetdinov;
iStock.com/scottdunlap

© 2021, 2017, 2015 Cengage Learning, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

For product information and technology assistance, contact us at
Cengage Learning Customer & Sales Support, 1-800-354-9706
or **support.cengage.com**.

For permission to use material from this text or product, submit
all requests online at **www.cengage.com/permissions**.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019911560

Student Edition:

ISBN: 978-0-357-13735-2

Loose-leaf Edition:

ISBN: 978-0-357-13742-0

Cengage

200 Pier 4 Boulevard
Boston, MA 02210
USA

Cengage is a leading provider of customized learning solutions with employees residing in nearly 40 different countries and sales in more than 125 countries around the world. Find your local representative at **www.cengage.com**.

Cengage products are represented in Canada by Nelson Education-Ltd.

To learn more about Cengage platforms and services, register or access your online learning solution, or purchase materials for your course, visit **www.cengage.com**.

Printed in the United States of America
Print Number: 01 Print Year: 2019

CONTENTS

PREFACE	IX		
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	XVI		
1 Introduction: The Study of Politics	1	PART 1	
WHY STUDY POLITICS?	3	Comparative Political Systems: Models and Theories 51	
Self-Interest	4		
The Public Interest	4		
BASIC CONCEPTS OF POLITICS	4	3 Utopias: Model States	52
Power	5	PLATO'S <i>REPUBLIC</i> : PHILOSOPHY IS THE ANSWER	54
Order	7	The Perfect Polity	55
Justice	11	The Noble Lie	57
THE PROBLEM OF DIRTY HANDS	12	FRANCIS BACON'S <i>NEW ATLANTIS</i> : SCIENCE IS THE ANSWER	57
HOW TO STUDY POLITICS	14	KARL MARX'S CLASSLESS SOCIETY: ECONOMICS IS THE ANSWER	58
For What Purposes?	15	The Centrality of Economics	59
By What Methods?	15	The Road to Paradise	59
The Political (Science) Puzzle	18	The Classless Society	60
The Power of Ideas	21	B. F. SKINNER'S <i>WALDEN TWO</i> : PSYCHOLOGY IS THE ANSWER	61
SUMMARY	22	The Good Life	61
KEY TERMS	23	The Science of Behavioral Engineering	62
REVIEW QUESTIONS	23	The Behavioral Scientist as God	63
WEBSITES AND READINGS	24	UTOPIA REVISITED	64
		Utopia and Human Nature	65
		Utopia and the Rejection of Politics	66
2 The Idea of the Public Good: Ideologies and Isms	25	DYSTOPIA: FROM DREAM TO NIGHTMARE	67
POLITICAL ENDS AND MEANS	26	A Right to Be Frightened	67
IDEOLOGIES AND THE PUBLIC GOOD	26	Orwell's World	68
Antigovernment Ideologies	29	Robots Rule	68
Ideologies of the Right	29	Utopia and Terrorism	69
Ideologies of the Left	34	SUMMARY	70
IDEOLOGIES AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES	39	KEY TERMS	70
The Uses and Abuses of Labels	39	REVIEW QUESTIONS	71
Common Themes	40	WEBSITES AND READINGS	71
Conservatives: Economic Rights and Free Enterprise	40		
Liberals: Civil Rights and Social Justice	43	4 Constitutional Democracy: Models of Representation	73
Differences Essential and Exaggerated	43	LIBERAL DEMOCRACY: MODELS AND THEORIES	74
The "Values Divide" and the War on Terror	44	REPUBLICS AND CONSTITUTIONS	75
Choosing Sides Versus Making Choices	46	BOTTOMS UP: THE IDEA OF AMERICA	77
SUMMARY	47	FOUR MODELS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY	78
KEY TERMS	48	Alexander Hamilton: Federalism	79
REVIEW QUESTIONS	48	Thomas Jefferson: Anti-Federalism	81
WEBSITES AND READINGS	48	James Madison: Balanced Government	82

John C. Calhoun: Brokered Government	85	Leadership	141
Back to Basics: Federalism and the Separation of Powers	86	Ideology	142
TOCQUEVILLE: THE TYRANNY OF THE MAJORITY	92	Organization	144
JOHN LOCKE: THE RULE OF LAW	94	Propaganda	146
CONSTITUTIONALISM AND DUE PROCESS	95	Violence	147
REMODELING DEMOCRACY: HAVE IT YOUR WAY	96	THE CONSOLIDATION OF POWER	148
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: BROKEN AND BEYOND REPAIR?	98	Eliminating Opposition Parties	148
THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY	100	Purging Real or Imagined Rivals Within the Party	148
SUMMARY	100	Creating a Monolithic Society	149
KEY TERMS	101	THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY	150
REVIEW QUESTIONS	101	The Soviet Union Under Stalin	150
WEBSITES AND READINGS	102	Germany Under Hitler	153
5 The Authoritarian Model: Myth and Reality	104	China Under Mao	155
THE VIRTUES OF AUTHORITARIAN STATES	106	THE HUMAN COST OF TOTALITARIANISM	157
THE VICES OF AUTHORITARIAN RULERS	108	THE SANGUINARY IMITATORS	159
THE BENEVOLENT DICTATOR—FACT OR FANTASY?	112	TWILIGHT OF TOTALITARIANISM?	162
CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHORITARIAN STATES	114	SUMMARY	162
THE POLITICS OF AUTHORITARIANISM	115	KEY TERMS	163
AUTHORITARIANISM IN PRACTICE: A TALE OF TWO STATES	116	REVIEW QUESTIONS	163
China: Police-State Capitalism	116	WEBSITES AND READINGS	164
Iran: Petropariah in the Persian Gulf	126		
AUTHORITARIANISM IN THEORY: MYTH VERSUS REALITY	128		
Myth 1: Authoritarianism Is a Sign of the Times	128		
Myth 2: Authoritarian Rulers Are Always Tyrannical	129		
Myth 3: Authoritarian Rulers Are Never Legitimate	129		
Myth 4: Authoritarian Rulers Are Always Unpopular	130		
Myth 5: Authoritarianism Has No Redeeming Qualities	130		
Myth 6: Authoritarianism Is the Worst Possible Government	132		
THE FUTURE OF AUTHORITARIANISM	132		
AUTHORITARIANISM AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY	133		
SUMMARY	135		
KEY TERMS	136		
REVIEW QUESTIONS	136		
WEBSITES AND READINGS	136		
6 The Totalitarian Model: A False Utopia	139		
THE ESSENCE OF TOTALITARIANISM	140		
THE REVOLUTIONARY STAGE OF TOTALITARIANISM	141		

PART 2
Established and Emerging Democracies 167

7 Parliamentary Democracy: Pros and Cons of Perishable Governments	168
GREAT BRITAIN: MOTHER OF ALL PARLIAMENTS	169
A Mixed Regime	170
Fusion of Powers	171
Disciplined Parties	174
Are Two Heads Better than One?	175
A Model With Legs	175
Are All Parliamentary Systems Alike?	178
FRANCE: PRESIDENT VERSUS PARLIAMENT	178
The Fifth Republic: A Hybrid System	178
France's Dual Executive	180
Reduced Role of the National Assembly	181
Rival Parties and Seesaw Elections	181
Constitution Under Pressure: Testing the Balance	184
Justice à la Française	184
The Balance Sheet	185
GERMANY: FEDERALISM AGAINST MILITARISM	186
The Weimar Republic	187
Divided Germany: The Cold War in Microcosm	187
The Great Merger: Democracy Triumphant	188
German Federalism	188
The Executive	190

SOCIALIZATION AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR	321	Rómulo Betancourt (1908–81)	377
Political Behavior	321	Winston Churchill (1874–1965)	380
Civil Disobedience	321	Abraham Lincoln (1809–65)	381
WHEN POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION FAILS	323	Anwar al-Sadat (1918–81)	382
SUMMARY	324	Benazir Bhutto (1953–2007)	384
KEY TERMS	324	Aung San Suu Kyi (b. 1945)	386
REVIEW QUESTIONS	324	WHERE HAVE ALL THE LEADERS GONE?	386
WEBSITES AND READINGS	324	DEMAGOGUES IN AMERICAN HISTORY	387
11 Political Participation: The Limits of Democracy	327	Aaron Burr (1756–1836)	387
DEFINING PARTICIPATION	328	Theodore Bilbo (1877–1947)	388
Public Opinion	329	Huey Long (1893–1935)	389
Polls	330	Joseph McCarthy (1906–57)	391
Elections	332	Tom DeLay (b. 1947)	392
Electoral Systems	332	ORDINARY POLITICIANS	393
Direct Democracy	335	LEGISLATORS	393
WHO VOTES FOR WHAT, WHEN, AND WHY?	338	Legislators as Delegates	394
Voting in the United States	338	Legislators as Trustees	394
Patterns of Participation	341	CITIZEN-LEADERS	395
Political Literacy: How Low Can You Go, America?	342	Václav Havel (1936–2011)	395
Private Pursuits and the Public Good	342	Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–68)	396
Affluence and Apathy	343	Rosa Parks (1913–2005)	396
PARTICIPATING AS A SPECTATOR: OUTSIDERS	345	Nelson Mandela (1918–2013)	397
PARTICIPATING AS A PLAYER: INSIDERS	346	SUMMARY	398
Elitist Theories: Iron Laws and Ironies	347	KEY TERMS	398
Pluralists Versus Elitists	347	REVIEW QUESTIONS	398
PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL PARTIES	349	WEBSITES AND READINGS	399
American Democracy: No Place for a Party?	349	13 Issues in Public Policy: Politics, Principles, Priorities, and Practices	401
General Aims	350	THE PURSUIT OF SECURITY	402
Political Party Systems	351	Security From Foreign Enemies	402
Designing Democracy: Electoral Systems	351	Security From Enemies Within	404
Is the Party Over?	353	Why Not Pot?	409
PARTICIPATION AND INTEREST GROUPS	353	Guns “R” Us	410
Sources and Methods of Influence	354	Social Security	413
The Great Race: Getting Ahead of the PAC	357	Security and the Environment	414
<i>Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission</i>	360	Security From Ourselves (?)	417
Birth of the Super PAC: Death of Democracy?	360	THE PURSUIT OF PROSPERITY	417
THE INTERNET: POWER TO THE PEOPLE?	362	Budget Deficits and the National Debt	418
THE PUBLIC INTEREST: PUSHOVER OR PUSHBACK?	364	Educational Malaise	424
SUMMARY	364	Health Care: A Sick System?	426
KEY TERMS	365	THE PURSUIT OF EQUALITY	428
REVIEW QUESTIONS	365	Income Distribution: Who Gets What, When, and How?	428
WEBSITES AND READINGS	366	Racial Discrimination	431
12 Political Leadership: The Many Faces of Power	369	Affirmative Action or Reverse Discrimination?	434
THE IDEAL LEADER	371	Who Deserves Preferential Treatment?	435
Statesmanship	373	THE PURSUIT OF LIBERTY	436
WORLD CLASS LEADERS IN HISTORY	377	Liberty and the First Amendment	436
		Privacy and the Right to Life	440

THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE	441
Crime and Punishment	441
Justice as Fair Procedure	442
The Limits of Legal Protection	442
GOALS IN CONFLICT	446
SUMMARY	446
KEY TERMS	447
REVIEW QUESTIONS	447
WEBSITES AND READINGS	448

PART 4

Politics by Violent Means: Revolution, War, and Terrorism 451

14 Revolution: In the Name of Justice 452

THE FREQUENCY OF REVOLUTIONS	455
MODERN REVOLUTIONS: TWO TRADITIONS	456
The American Revolution	456
The French Revolution	460
The Two Revolutions Compared	463
REVOLUTION—A RIGHT OR ALL WRONG?	463
Burke’s “Reflections”	464
Paine’s Rebuttal	465
Locke’s Right to Revolt	466
THE CAUSES OF REVOLUTION	467
The Classical View	467
Modern Theories	468
Some Tentative Conclusions	470
SUMMARY	474
KEY TERMS	475
REVIEW QUESTIONS	475
WEBSITES AND READINGS	476

15 War: Politics by Other Means 478

THE CAUSES OF WAR	480
Human Nature	483
Society	484
The Environment	488
IN SEARCH OF A DEFINITIVE THEORY	491
Beyond Politics	491
Beyond Economics	493
The Danger of Oversimplification	494
TOTAL WAR: WARS EVERYBODY FIGHTS	495
ACCIDENTAL WAR: WARS NOBODY WANTS	496
NUCLEAR WAR: WARS NOBODY WINS	497
PROXY WARS: WARS OTHERS FIGHT	498
JUST WARS: WARS OTHERS START	498
The Just War Doctrine	498

Evaluating the Just War Doctrine	500
A WAR ON WHAT? THE POLITICS OF HYPERBOLE	503
WEAPONS OF MASS DISRUPTION: CYBERWAR	506
WAR AND DEMOCRACY	508
Why Democracies Fight	509
Superpower or “Chickenhawk Nation”?	509
WAR AND DIPLOMACY	510
SUMMARY	510
KEY TERMS	511
REVIEW QUESTIONS	511
WEBSITES AND READINGS	512

16 Terrorism: War or Crimes or War Crimes? 515

WHAT IS TERRORISM?	520
THE ORIGINS OF TERRORISM	524
The Logic of Terrorism	525
Terrorist Tactics	526
Acts of Terrorism Versus Acts of War	527
Illegal Enemy Combatants	527
Characteristics of Terrorist Groups	528
Algeria in the 1990s: Nightmare and Prelude	530
TERRORIST OR FREEDOM FIGHTER?	532
TERRORISM AND SOCIETY	533
Youthful Recruits	534
The Psychology of Terrorism	535
Terrorism and the Media	536
COUNTERING TERRORISM	537
Domestic Legislation	537
International Cooperation	539
Unilateral Counterterrorist Measures	540
Private Measures	542
THE TERRORISTS AMONG US	543
CAN TERRORISM BE DEFEATED?	543
SUMMARY	544
KEY TERMS	544
REVIEW QUESTIONS	545
WEBSITES AND READINGS	545

PART 5

Politics without Government 549

17 World Politics: The Struggle for Power 550

GET REAL! MACHIAVELLI AND MORGENTHAU	551
BIRTH OF THE MODERN WORLD ORDER	553

Nation-States and the Balance of Power: 1648–1945	553	18 International Law and Organization(s): The Quest for World Order	582
THE COLD WAR BIPOLAR SYSTEM: 1945–1991	556	NONSTATE ACTORS ON THE WORLD STAGE	584
The Dawn of Bipolarity	556	Multinational Corporations	584
The Primacy of Ideology	556	International Organizations: INGOs and IGOs	586
The Danger of Nuclear War	557	THE EUROPEAN UNION	591
Mutual Deterrence: A Lasting Legacy?	557	Origins and Evolution	591
AFTER THE COLD WAR: RETURN TO MULTIPOLARITY	559	Major Institutions	591
New World, Old Ideas	559	The Single Market Economy	592
Globalization	560	The EU on the World Stage	594
The IT Revolution	560	The End of “Europe”?	594
The Rebirth of Europe	561	THE UNITED NATIONS: OUR MIRROR IN A MIRROR	596
Weapons of Mass Destruction	562	Historical Background	596
The End of the World as We Know It?	565	The Founding of the United Nations	597
A More Level Playing Field	566	The United Nations in the Cold War: 1945 to 1991	598
U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: FROM TRUMAN TO TRUMP	567	The United Nations After the Cold War: 1991 to the Present	599
Power and the National Interest	567	UNCONVENTIONAL NONSTATE ACTORS	604
Blowback: The Curse of Unintended Consequences	571	Terrorist Organizations	604
The Bush Doctrine	572	Privatized Military Firms (“Mercenaries”)	604
The Obama Interlude	573	INTERNATIONAL LAW	606
Trump Kicks Over the Traces	573	Usefulness	606
STATECRAFT: BEYOND REALISM	574	Compliance and Enforcement	606
Ideals and Self-Interest: The Power of Morality	574	International Law in the Modern Era	607
Aggression: In the Eyes of the Beholder?	575	The Limitations of International Law	609
Hard Facts About Soft Power	577	THE QUEST FOR WORLD PEACE	611
THE MORE THINGS CHANGE . . .	577	SUMMARY	611
SUMMARY	578	KEY TERMS	612
KEY TERMS	579	REVIEW QUESTIONS	612
REVIEW QUESTIONS	579	WEBSITES AND READINGS	613
WEBSITES AND READINGS	580	AFTERWORD: THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE	615
		ENDNOTES	616
		GLOSSARY	638
		INDEX	653



PREFACE

We live in a global age. Events anywhere in the world affect people everywhere. Terrorist acts, wars, natural disasters, economic downturns, banking crises, and volatile stock markets are everyday occurrences. Signs of entropy are all around. Climate change and rapidly disappearing biodiversity threaten the planet and raise questions that cross over into a dark region where eschatology trumps science. Seismic events and violent storms in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, western Sumatra, or northern Japan may be localized, but if they disrupt the global economy, their indirect effects can be far-reaching.

The same applies to political events. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks happened in New York City—they were local—but they led to costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The “war on terror” is now a global phenomenon. Fortunately, nothing on the scale of 9/11 has happened in the United States recently; unfortunately, major calamities occur in other parts of the world with dismal frequency and tragic consequences.

Things change with blinding speed. We now have smart weapons that make it possible to use unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), called “drones,” armed with guns and bombs to kill from a safe distance, one of the recent developments explored in Chapter 15. Remote-controlled warplanes take the risk out of flying combat missions—a big change in the art and science of war fighting. In essence, the World Wide Web has been weaponized.

The same technological revolution is also changing the way we make things—all kinds of things. For example, we can now use a 3D laser printer to produce everything from medical implants to high-quality musical instruments, to racing-car parts, and, yes, guns.

Another big change is the rise of a global elite. The world had more millionaires than Australians in 2017—more than 36 million according to Credit Suisse’s Global Wealth Report. Together, they make up 1 percent of the population but hold as much wealth as the bottom 46 percent. This global trend toward greater economic inequality and concentration of wealth is also evident in the United States, where the top 1 percent control 40 to 45 percent of the nation’s wealth.¹

The rise of a new global meritocracy is driven by brain power. In today’s world, more than ever before, the wealth of nations and individuals is based on entrepreneurial science and engineering—that is, ideas converted into products for a global marketplace.

Technology is revolutionizing politics as well as business, but the basic nature of the decision makers—the people who run things—remains unchanged. Conflict in the world—the struggle for power—continues unabated, as does the search for peace, order, and justice.

Paradoxically, the limits of power, even in its most concentrated forms, are everywhere apparent—from ancient places, such as Palestine and Iraq in the Middle East and Afghanistan in Central Asia; to Europe, where the “euro crisis” threatens to undermine a supranational project six decades in the making; and to the United States with its relatively short history and even shorter memory. The cost of failed policies and corrupt, incompetent leadership is also apparent in our world—and our nation’s capital.

But when it comes to the quality of citizenship, the implications of recent advances in telecommunications, Internet access, and social networking are not so clear. In our wired world, it’s easier than ever before to learn more about what’s happening in the world, to be more attuned to the news, and to vote more

intelligently. Despite this ease of learning, studies show a *decline* in civic knowledge and education in the United States.

This double deficiency—both at the top and at the bottom of political society—is a kind of stealth crisis: Much like a stealth bomber, it gives ample evidence of its existence but goes largely unnoticed. Meanwhile, there is no absence of injustice, intolerance, misguided idealism, zealotry, and human suffering—proof enough that the ever-more polluted and crowded planet we inhabit has not changed for the better, even though the West's fortunate few are far more secure and comfortable than the vast majority who live in the developing regions of the globe.

Since *Understanding Politics* made its debut in 1984, nothing has shaken my conviction that politics matters. Representative democracy is only as good as the quality of the electorate. Education, an independent press, and an attentive public are three keys to good government.

At a minimum, voters need a working knowledge of the political and economic forces that shape our world to make wise choices at the polls. In an unhappy twist, as news and information have become more readily accessible—thanks in no small part to the Internet—interest in public affairs and a willingness to get involved have declined. Indeed, many Americans are not engaged in the political process except perhaps to vote.

The study of politics is a gateway to a broader and better understanding of human nature, society, and the world. This idea is what originally inspired the writing of *Understanding Politics*. It is also what has sustained my own interest through multiple revisions—that, plus a sense that the book was, is, and always will be essentially a work in progress.

A successful introduction to politics must balance two key objectives: (1) dispel anxieties associated with the attempt to understand political science, especially for the uninitiated; and (2) provide the intellectual stimulation necessary to challenge today's college students. This book is testimony to the fact that the science and philosophy of politics fall squarely within the liberal arts tradition.

Mention of the science and philosophy of politics points to one of the deepest cleavages within the discipline: Analysts who approach politics from the standpoint of science often stress the importance of power, whereas those who view it through the wide-angle lens of philosophy often emphasize the importance of justice. But the distinction between power and justice—like that between science and philosophy—is too often exaggerated.

Moral and political questions are ultimately inseparable in the real world. The exercise of power, in itself, is not what makes an action political; rather, what makes power *political* is the debate about its proper or improper uses and who benefits or suffers as a result. Thus, whenever questions of fairness are raised in the realm of public policy (for example, questions concerning abortion, capital punishment, or the use of force by police or the military), the essential ingredients of politics are present. Excessive attention to either the concept of power or the notion of morality is likely to confound our efforts in making sense of politics or, for that matter, in finding lasting solutions to the problems that afflict and divide us. It is necessary to balance the equation, tempering political realism with a penchant for justice.

Similarly, the dichotomy so often drawn between facts and values is misleading. Rational judgments—in the sense of reasoned opinions about what is good and just—are sometimes more definitive (or less elusive) than facts. For example, the proposition that “genocide is evil” is true. (Its opposite—“genocide is good”—is morally indefensible.) It is a well-known fact that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis committed genocide. We can therefore say that Hitler was evil *as a matter of fact* and not “simply” because mass murder is abhorrent to our *personal* values.

Other value-laden propositions can be stated with a high degree of probability but not absolute certainty—for example, “If you want to reduce violent crime, first reduce poverty.” Still other questions of this kind may be too difficult or too close to call: In the abortion controversy, for example, does the right of a woman to biological self-determination outweigh the right to

life? It makes no sense to ignore the most important questions in life just because the answers are not easy. Even when the right answers are unclear, it is often possible to recognize wrong answers—a moderating force in itself.

This book gives due attention to contemporary political issues without ignoring the more enduring questions that often underlie them. For example, a voter's choice regarding who would make the best mayor, governor, or president raises deeper questions: What qualifications are necessary for public office? What is wrong with a system that all too often fails to produce distinguished—or distinctive—choices? Similarly, conflicts between nation-states or social groups raise philosophical as well as empirical questions about why human beings continue to fight and kill one another on a mass scale.

Although I have tried to minimize the use of names and dates, political ideas cannot be fruitfully discussed in a historical vacuum. The choice of examples throughout the text is dictated by a particular understanding of the relationship between politics and history. The consequences of certain events in the first half of the twentieth century—World Wars I and II, the October Revolution in Lenin's Russia, the Holocaust in Hitler's Germany—are still present today. We too seldom think or talk about “living history”—about all the ways antecedents (decisions and actions in the past) influence the present and constrain the future.

Inevitably, some themes and events are discussed in more than one chapter: The world of politics is more like a seamless web than a chest of drawers. In politics, as in nature, a given event or phenomenon often has many meanings and is connected to other events and phenomena in ways that are not immediately apparent. Emphasizing the common threads among major political ideas, institutions, and issues helps beginning students make sense of seemingly unrelated bits and pieces of the political puzzle. Seeing how the various parts fit together is a necessary step toward understanding politics.

Understanding Politics employs a foundation-building approach to the study of politics and government. It begins by identifying political

phenomena, such as war and terrorism, that students find interesting and then seeks to describe and explain them. In an effort to build on students' natural curiosity, I try to avoid much of the jargon and many of the technical or arcane disputes that too often characterize the more advanced literature in the field of political science.

Rather than probe the deepest recesses of a single discipline, the book unapologetically borrows insights from various disciplines, including history, economics, psychology, and sociology, as well as philosophy. It is intended to be a true liberal arts approach to the study of government and politics. The goal is ambitious: to challenge students to begin the lifelong learning process that can lead to a generation of citizens who are well informed, actively engaged, self-confident, and thoughtful, and who have a capacity for indignation in the face of public hypocrisy, dishonesty, stupidity, or gross ineptitude.

Chapter 1, “Introduction: The Study of Politics,” defines the basic concepts of politics and centers on how and why it is studied. This chapter lays the groundwork for the remainder of the text and stands alone as its introduction. Chapter 2, “The Idea of the Public Good: Ideologies and Isms,” deals with basic belief systems, including ideologies of the Right and Left, such as communism and fascism, and “isms” of the Right and Left, such as liberalism and conservatism.

Part 1, “Comparative Political Systems: Models and Theories,” analyzes utopian, democratic, and authoritarian forms of government, as well as political systems caught in the difficult transition from authoritarian to democratic institutions. This part, which comprises Chapters 3 through 6, looks at different kinds of political regimes in a theoretical light.

Part 2, “Established and Emerging Democracies,” consists of three chapters that examine parliamentary democracies (Chapter 7), transitional states (Chapter 8), and developing countries (Chapter 9). Almost all governments in today's world either aspire to some form of democracy or claim to be “democratic.” This amazing fact is itself irrefutable evidence of the power of an idea. Though often abused, the idea

of democracy has fired the imaginations of people everywhere for more than two centuries. In an age when bad news is written in blood and body counts are more likely to refer to innocent civilians than armed combatants, we would do well to remember that democratic ideals have never before been so warmly embraced or so widely (if imperfectly) institutionalized.

In Part 3, “Politics by Civil Means: Citizens, Leaders, and Policies,” four chapters (10 through 13) focus on the political process and public policy. The United States is featured in this section, which examines citizenship and political socialization, political participation (including opinion polling and voting behavior), political organization (parties and interest groups), political leadership, political ideologies (or divergent “approaches to the public good”), and contemporary public policy issues.

Part 4, “Politics by Violent Means: Revolution, War, and Terrorism,” examines conflict as a special and universal problem in politics. It divides the problem into three categories: revolution, terrorism, and war (corresponding to Chapters 14, 15, and 16, respectively). Viewed from the aftermath of 9/11, when the president of the United States declared international terrorism to be the preeminent threat in the world and blurred the distinction between counterterrorist policy and all-out war, Part 4 is guaranteed to stimulate the curiosity of students and provoke spirited class discussions. Invading and occupying a country—namely, Iraq—that had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks, did not possess “weapons of mass destruction,” and did not pose a threat to the United States was a curious response to the problem posed by the existence of a malevolent terrorist network (al-Qaeda) harbored by a fundamentalist regime (the Taliban) in a land (Afghanistan) virtually impossible to subdue by conquest and notoriously impervious to outside influence. Indeed, this response affords ample opportunity for contemplation about the motives, causes, and consequences of war at the beginning of a new millennium.

Finally, Part 5, “Politics Without Government,” introduces students to key concepts in the study of international relations, describes key patterns, and discusses perennial problems.

Chapter 17 examines the basic principles and concepts in international relations, the evolving structure and context of world politics, certain key global issues, international law, and the role of the United Nations. Chapter 18 explores the role of international law and organizations—including the European Union and the United Nations—in a world riven by rivalries and facing environmental challenges on a scale of biblical proportions. The Afterword, “The Power of Knowledge,” is a single paragraph. Students are encouraged to read it first and then to reread it at the end of the semester. My hope is that some will remember and apply it.

In this new edition, I have retained the pedagogical features found in previous editions with one exception: A short list of learning objectives replaces chapter outlines in this edition. Each chapter ends with a summary, review questions, and websites and readings resources. As with last edition, the glossary is posted on the book’s website, which you can find at www.cengage.com/login. Endnotes for each chapter precede the index at the back of the book. In addition, the text contains a wide variety of photos, figures, maps, tables, and features, many of which have been revised or replaced with updated materials.

NEW IN THE THIRTEENTH EDITION

In the thirteenth edition, the popular features found in the twelfth edition are updated and enhanced. The “Politics and Pop Culture” features are designed to stimulate class discussion and demonstrate how movies and music play an important role in reflecting or challenging our ideas and opinions, shaping our perceptions, and heightening our awareness of the issues. Key events and major achievements of enduring importance are highlighted in “Landmarks in History.” The feature “Politics and Ideas” give students a bird’s-eye view of perennial questions and key issues in political theory and philosophy.

Change is a constant, and politics drives change. Much has happened in the United States and the world since the last edition went to press. The previous edition covered the 2014 midterm elections, the war in Ukraine, the rise

of the Islamic State (ISIS) in the Middle East, and various recent events at home and abroad. This edition covers the surprising election of Donald Trump and the 2018 midterm elections, which no less dramatically changed the balance of power in the U.S. Congress. It also covers the investigation led by Robert Mueller into Russian interference in the 2016 election and the possibility of collusion involving key members of the Trump campaign organization; the controversy over immigration and President Trump's demand for funding to build "the wall"; the historic government shutdown over this issue; and the constitutional power-of-the-purse questions raised after the president declared a state of emergency in an effort to bypass Congress and obtain funding for "the wall" through another avenue.

Meanwhile, many of the issues that plagued Barack Obama's presidency continued to divide Congress and the nation as Donald Trump entered the last year of his turbulent first term: the battle of the budget and acrimonious partisan politics surrounding the so-called fiscal cliff; the use of the filibuster to block votes in the U.S. Senate; and the deep divisions in U.S. society over such issues as gun control, income inequality, abortion, health care, tax fairness, gay rights, and gender equality. The new edition covers all of these issues, as well as immigration and the rise of right-wing nativist activism expressed in white nationalism, anti-immigrant rallies, racially motivated mass shootings and televised pro-Trump rallies where xenophobic, flag-waving crowds remind the nation and the world that populism and liberalism have parted ways.

This edition also covers major recent events on the world stage, including the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, the "yellow vest" political protest movement in France, and Russia's military intervention in the eastern Ukraine. Coverage of the aftermath of euro crisis is updated. The "agenda" samplers for the four liberal democracies featured in Chapter 7 (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan) reflect recent developments. The material covering India and Israel, two of the world's most challenged representative democracies, has been updated as well.

This edition includes a wealth of other revisions, text enhancements, and new features too numerous to mention. I personally selected much of the artwork appearing in recent editions—a lot of work, but worth the effort, and fun to boot. Many of the photographers featured in these pages are amateurs with a good camera, a great eye, and a generous spirit.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

MindTap

As a student, the benefits of using MindTap with this book are endless. With automatically graded practice quizzes and activities, an easily navigated learning path, and an interactive eBook, you will be able to test yourself inside and outside of the classroom with ease. On your computer, phone, or tablet, MindTap is there when you need it, giving you easy access to flashcards, quizzes, readings, and assignments.

Cengage Unlimited

Cengage Unlimited is the first-of-its-kind digital subscription that empowers students to learn more for less. One student subscription includes total access to every Cengage online textbook, platform, career and college success centers, and more—in one place. Learn across courses and disciplines with confidence that you won't pay more to access more. Available now in bookstores and online.

Available only in select markets. Details at www.cengage.com/unlimited.

MindTap

AUTHOR: Thomas M. Magstadt
ISBN: 9780357137383

With this 13th edition, we've also introduced an exciting digital learning experience in MindTap. MindTap is a fully online learning experience built upon Cengage Learning content and correlating to a core set of learning outcomes. MindTap guides students through the course curriculum via an innovative Learning Path Navigator where they will complete reading assignments and opportunities to check and

articulate their learning—and identify where they need extra help. MindTap for *Understanding Politics* includes Wrap It Up Chapter Quiz concept comprehension questions; critical thinking Focus Questions, which combine the richness of primary source materials with a learn-by-doing approach to ensure students internalize the material; and Reflection activities, which can be used by an instructor as an individual written assignment or as part of a classroom discussion activity. A suite of skills tutorials that covers research and thesis development, data literacy, and source analysis supports students as they hone their critical analysis skills and prepare and compose their research and writing deliverables for the course.

The product can be used fully online with its interactive eBook or in conjunction with the printed text. As an instructor, MindTap can help you simplify your workload, organize and immediately grade your students' assignments, and allow you to customize your course as you see fit. Through deep-seated integration with your Learning Management System, grades are easily exported and analytics are pulled with just the click of a button. MindTap provides you with a platform to easily add in current events videos and articles from national or local news sources.

MindTap Resource Center

Thousands of primary and secondary sources at your fingertips! Access to Gale's authoritative library reference content is now available in every Political Science MindTap. Gale, part of Cengage, has been providing research and education resources for libraries for over 60 years.

As an instructor, you have the option to choose from thousands of primary and secondary sources, images, and videos to enhance your MindTap course with the click of a button. This capability can replace a separate reader and conveniently keeps all course materials in one place. The selections are curated by experts, designed specifically for introductory courses, and can be accessed through MindTap's Activity Builder feature.

Resources for Instructors

AUTHOR: Thomas M. Magstadt

ISBN: 9780357137369

TITLE: **Instructor Companion Website for Magstadt, *Understanding Politics*, thirteenth edition**

This Instructor Companion Website is an all-in-one multimedia online resource for class preparation, presentation, and testing. Accessible through Cengage.com/login with your faculty account, you will find the following ancillaries available for download: book-specific Microsoft PowerPoint presentations; a Test Bank compatible with multiple learning management systems; and an Instructor's Manual.

The Test Bank, offered in Blackboard, Moodle, Desire2Learn, Canvas, and Angel formats, contains multiple-choice and essay questions for each chapter. Import the test bank into your learning management system (LMS) to edit and manage questions, and to create tests.

The Instructor's Manual contains chapter-specific learning objectives, an outline, key terms with definitions, and a chapter summary. Additionally, the Instructor's Manual features a critical thinking question, lecture launching suggestion, and an in-class activity for each learning objective.

The Microsoft PowerPoint presentations are ready-to-use, visual outlines of each chapter. These presentations are easily customized for your lectures. Access the Instructor Companion Website at www.cengage.com/login.

AUTHOR: Thomas M. Magstadt

ISBN: 9780357137413

TITLE: **IAC Cognero for Magstadt, *Understanding Politics*, thirteenth edition**

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero is a flexible, online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions, create multiple test versions in an instant, and deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want. The test bank for the thirteenth edition of *Understanding Politics* contains multiple-choice and essay questions for each chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Through twelve editions and more than two decades, many individuals associated with several different publishing houses and universities have helped make this book a success. Among the scholars and teachers who reviewed the work for previous editions in manuscript, offering helpful criticisms and suggestions, were the following:

Donald G. Baker, Southampton College, Long Island University
 Peter Longo, University of Nebraska at Kearney
 Iraj Paydar, Bellevue Community College
 Ruth Ann Strickland, Appalachian State University
 Sean K. Anderson, Idaho State University
 Daniel Aseltine, Chaffey College
 Thomas A. Kolsky, Montgomery County Community College
 Linda Valenty, California Polytechnic State University—San Luis Obispo
 Andrei Korobkov, Middle Tennessee University
 Ethan Fishman, University of South Alabama
 Mack Murray, Seattle Community College
 Lawrence Okere, University of Arkansas
 Keith Milks, Nash Community College
 Frank Bean, Garden City Community College
 Jean-Gabriel Jolivet, South-Western College
 Jose Lopez-Gonzalez, Towson University
 Naomi Robertson, Macon State College
 Julian Westerhous, Illinois State University
 Abdalla Battah, Minnesota State University, Mankato
 Kwame Dankwa, Albany State University
 Darlene Budd, University of Central Missouri
 Daniel K Gibran, Tennessee State University
 Aart Holtslag, Shepherd University
 Anthony Schumacher, Thomas More University
 Phil Kelly, Emporia State University
 Tom Caiazzo, East Georgia State College

For the current edition, that vital role fell to the following reviewers: Daniel K Gibran, Tennessee State University; Charles Goulding, Florida Keys Community College; Aart Holtslag, Shepherd University; Phil Kelly, Emporia State University;

Andrei Korobkov, Middle Tennessee State University; Anthony Schumacher, Thomas More University; Andrei Korobkov, Middle Tennessee State University; Tom Caiazzo, East Georgia State College; Charles Goulding, Florida Keys Community College.

I wish to express my appreciation to Amy Bither, my editor for this edition. Good editors are priceless, and Amy is one of the very best I've had the pleasure to work with over a span of more than three decades. Thanks are also due to Richard Lena, Product Manager at Cengage, and to David Martinson for managing the process of moving the book from manuscript to market. Thanks to the entire Cengage team for getting this new edition out in a timely fashion.

During a long career in academia and public service, I've been fortunate to have a supportive family and good friends: Mary Jo (who died in 1990), Becky, David, Amy, Alexa, Michael, and Barbara, as well as good friends I can count on to challenge and enlighten me, including a special group of guys known in the neighborhood as the Coffee Boys of Westwood Hills: Dr. Stan Nelson (1928–2013), Glion Curtis, Michael Fox, Grant Mallet, Hugh Brown, Dr. George Pagels, Howard Martin, Dr. Gary Ripple, Harris Rayl, and Professor G. Ross Stephens (1926–2015). To all of you wherever you are: Thank you.

I also want to acknowledge two other distinguished friends: Kent Harrington and Daniel Kritenbrink. Kent is a former senior CIA analyst and wordsmith *par excellence* who served as national intelligence officer for East Asia, chief of station, and CIA's director of public affairs. Daniel is a former student of mine at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Following his graduate studies at the University of Virginia, Dan joined the Foreign Service, rose rapidly to become the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in Beijing, a senior advisor on the National Security Council (NSC) in the Obama administration, and is currently U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam. Dan is living proof that you can grow up in a small town in Nebraska and one day find yourself flying high above the Pacific Ocean—on Air Force One.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas M. Magstadt earned his doctorate at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He has taught at the Graduate School of International Management, Augustana College (Sioux Falls), the University of Nebraska at Kearney, the Air War College, and the University of Missouri–Kansas City, and, most recently, the University of Kansas. He has also chaired two political science departments, worked as a foreign intelligence analyst, served as Director of the Midwest Conference on World Affairs, and lectured as a Fulbright Scholar in the Czech Republic. In addition to publishing articles in newspapers, magazines, and professional journals, Dr. Magstadt is the author of *An Empire If You Can Keep It* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2004); *Nations and Governments: Comparative Politics in Regional Perspective*, fifth edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2005); *Contemporary European Politics* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2007); and *The European Union on the World Stage: Sovereignty, Soft Power, and the Search for Consensus* (BookSurge, 2010).

CHAPTER 1



Introduction

The Study of Politics

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- LO1-1** Discuss the value of studying politics.
- LO1-2** Identify the three basic elements of politics, as well as the dynamics of each.
- LO1-3** Analyze the methods, models, and approaches for studying politics.
- LO1-4** Evaluate whether politics brings out the best or the worst in human nature—or both.

Merio Tama/Getty Images News/Getty Images

Politics is not for the faint-hearted. Almost never a day goes by without a crisis at home or abroad. Whenever we catch the news on our radio, TV, or computer, we are reminded that we live in a dangerous world. The rise of social media as a source of global news and networking has also transformed modern communications, for better or worse.

Today, it is all but forgotten that back in 2008, the spectacle of the world's only superpower paralyzed by extreme partisanship and teetering on the brink of a "fiscal cliff" loomed like a gathering storm. The politically charged atmosphere and the pervasive sense of an impending crisis was nothing new, but two events dominated the news. First, a financial meltdown and plummeting stock market wiped out fortunes and rocked the global economy to its very foundations. Second, Barack Obama became the first African American elected to the nation's highest office.

The partisanship only deepened in the years that followed President Obama's reelection in 2012. Republicans kept control of the U.S. House of Representatives, and 2014 they won big majorities in both the House and Senate. A new threat had emerged in the Middle East in the form of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In Washington, D.C., the federal government was crippled as Republicans and Democrats remained bitterly divided over everything from foreign policy to health care.

In 2016, Hillary Clinton was poised to become the first woman ever to be elected president of the United States in what close observers and pollsters predicted would be a landslide victory against a real-estate tycoon and reality TV star no one expected to win the Republican nomination, let alone the election. The polls were not wrong: Clinton received several million more votes than Trump, but Trump prevailed where it counts in the peculiar American system: the Electoral College (see Chapter 4, Constitutional Democracy).

Political culture plays a big role in shaping public policy, and optimism is part of America's political DNA. Despite a deepening recession in 2008, there was a new sense of hope. Indeed, hope was the key theme of Barack Obama's successful bid to become America's first African American president in 2008—many voters longed for the end of two costly wars and the dawn of a new era in America. But by 2012, hope had given way to anger and disappointment.

Obama's economic stimulus package was widely viewed as a Wall Street "bailout"—a massive multibillion-dollar gift to the very financial institutions that had caused the problem. It was also criticized as a "jobless recovery": Unemployment rose to nearly 10 percent, and youth unemployment (among 16- to 19-year-olds) rose about 25 percent in 2010. Nearly half of young people aged 16 to 24 did not have jobs, the highest number since World War II.

Obama also spearheaded a controversial health care reform that satisfied few, confused everyone, and angered many voters on both sides of the acrimonious debate. His decision to order a "surge" in Afghanistan, committing 30,000 more U.S. troops to an unpopular and unwinnable war, did not placate Congress or greatly improve his standing in the opinion polls, nor did his decision to withdraw the last U.S. combat troops from Iraq at the end of 2011.

Despite a constant chorus of criticism and a barrage of attack ads from the right, Obama won reelection in 2012. The embattled president's troubles in dealing with a recalcitrant Republican majority in Congress, however, continued unabated. His decision in the fall of 2014 to launch a major bombing campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria—in effect, resuming a war that had officially ended three years earlier—did not appease the opposition or boost his popularity, which fell to new lows in 2014.

The president's declining popularity was a major factor in setting the stage for the Republican victory in the 2014 midterm elections when voters gave the GOP a majority in the Senate. Republicans also gained seats in the House, where they had won back control in 2010 and whittled the Democrats' majority in the Senate (see especially Chapter 11, Political Participation, and Chapter 13, Issues in Public Policy).

Donald Trump's election in 2016 radically changed the landscape of American politics. On the campaign trail, Trump vowed to ban Muslims and build a wall to stop illegal immigration. He promised to lower the tax rate, give tax cuts to working Americans, and repeal and replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”).

As a candidate, Trump declared climate change to be a hoax and claimed the Paris climate accord was a severe drag on the U.S. economy. He called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a disaster and inveighed against the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). He vowed to bring U.S. troops home, called the Middle East a “total and complete mess,” and tweeted, “Our troops are being killed by the Afghans we train and we waste billions there. Nonsense!”

In Chapter 13, we revisit these issues and explore how the attempt to implement them has played out. As Donald Trump's first term wore on, Washington was facing total gridlock: A government shutdown at the end of 2018—the upshot of President Trump's demand for \$5 billion to build the wall—left no doubt about the state of chaos. The public was bitterly divided over the president's fitness for high office, and the Special Counsel's investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election, possible collusion, and obstruction of justice sullied the Trump presidency.

In this charged atmosphere of anger and uncertainty, Americans were questioning the survival of the political system itself. Was it on the verge of collapse? Is the world's oldest and richest democracy immune to a catastrophic system failure? If you were desperate for an answer, who would you ask?

LO1-1 WHY STUDY POLITICS?

The belief that anyone with a college education will have a basic understanding of political ideas, institutions, and issues is wishful thinking. There is a mountain of evidence showing that contention is simply not true; moreover, there is a mountain of empirical evidence to prove it beyond any doubt. To begin to understand the power of politics—and the politics of power—we have to make a careful study and, above all, keep an open mind.

Self-Interest

Because personal happiness depends in no small degree on what government does or does not do, we all have a considerable stake in understanding how government works (or why it is not working). Federal work-study programs, state subsidies to public education, low-interest loans, federal grants, and court decisions that protect students' rights are but a few examples of politics and public policy that directly affect college students. For farmers, crop subsidies, price supports, and water rights are crucial policy issues. Environmental regulations are often the target of intense lobbying on the part of power companies, the oil and gas industry, and mining interests.

Taxes are a hot-button issue for nearly everyone. Most people think they pay too much and others pay too little. Do you know *anyone* who wants to pay *more* in taxes? Actually, at least one super-rich guy argues that people in his income bracket ought to pay more—Warren Buffet.

Politics is a pervasive fact of life. Like it or not, no one can escape its products—rules, laws, and policies—or its effects. We often think of politics as something that happens only in Washington, D.C., or maybe our state capital. A former Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, is often quoted as saying, “All politics is local.” Is it? When you have the answer and can explain it, you will be one giant step closer to understanding the drama—the possibilities and limitations—of political life in modern society.

Through the study of politics, we become more aware of our dependence on the political system and better equipped to determine when to favor and when to oppose change. At the same time, such study helps to reveal the limits of politics and the obstacles to bringing about any major change in a society. It is sobering to consider that each of us is only one person in a nation of millions (and a world of billions), most of whom have opinions and prejudices no less firmly held than our own.

The Public Interest

What could be more vital to the public interest in any society than the moral character and conduct of its citizens? Civil society is defined by and reflected in the kinds of everyday decisions and choices made by ordinary people leading ordinary lives. At the same time, people are greatly influenced by civil society and the prevailing culture and climate of politics. We are all products of our circumstances to a greater extent than most of us realize (or care to admit). Politics plays a vital role in shaping these circumstances, and it is fair to say the public interest hangs in the balance.

politics

The process by which a community selects rulers and empowers them to make decisions, takes action to attain common goals, and reconciles conflicts within the community.

LO1-2 BASIC CONCEPTS OF POLITICS

What is **politics**? It has been defined in various ways. For Aristotle (384–22 BC), it was “the art of the possible.” For students of Harold Lasswell (1902–78), political science is the study of “who gets what, when, how.” For political scientist David Easton (1917–2014), it was the “authoritative allocation of values.” The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines politics as “the art or science of government or governing.”

Governing is all about making rules, which in turn involves making decisions about rules—and rulers. Who makes the rules? Who decides? In states founded on a constitution, who decides depends on the language in the charter itself; as such, it is an intrinsically political question. If the answer is “We the People” (as in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution), does that mean all the people or only certain favored people? The attempt to resolve this question in an ever-changing society is a major theme in American history.

Many people tend to view politics as inherently corrupt and corrupting—hence the term “dirty politics.” Is this true? Are there notable exceptions? Can you think of any?

We may not agree on how to define politics, but we know what it is when we see it—and we often dislike what we see. We are quick to see politics as the main cause of society’s ills.

English historian Sir John Seeley once wrote a clever little couplet that goes like this: “History without Political Science has no fruit, Political Science without History has no root.” By the same token, try to imagine society without government; now try to imagine government without politics. When things go awry, it is all too easy to blame “politics” and give the politicians responsible for creating the mess a pass. In a properly ordered society, this book argues, politics is the solution to the problem of bad politicians and uninformed voters.

Like other disciplines, political science has a lexicon and language all its own. We start our language lesson with three words that carry a great deal of political freight: *power*, *order*, and *justice*.

Power

Power is the currency of all politics. Without power, no government can make and enforce laws, provide security, regulate the economy, conduct foreign policy, or wage war. Although many kinds of power exist, in this book we are interested in *political* power. Coercion plays an important role in politics, but political power cannot be equated with force. Indeed, the sources of power are many and varied. A large population, a booming economy, a cohesive society, and wise leadership—all are examples of quite different power sources.

We often define power in terms of national wealth or military spending. We once called the most formidable states Great Powers; now we call them “superpowers.” Power defined in this way is tangible and measurable. Critics of this classical view make a useful distinction between “hard power” and “soft power.” Hard power refers to the means and instruments of brute force or coercion, primarily military and economic clout. Soft power is “attractive” rather than coercive: The essence of soft power is “the important ability to get others to want what you want.”¹

Power is never equally distributed. Yet the need to concentrate power in the hands of a few inevitably raises three big questions: Who wields power? In whose interests? And to what ends?

The most basic question of all is “Who rules?” Sometimes we have only to look at a nation’s constitution and observe the workings of its government to find the answer. At the same time, it may be difficult to determine who really rules when the government is cloaked in secrecy or when, as is often the case, informal patterns of power are very different from the textbook diagrams.

power

The capacity to influence or control the behavior of persons and institutions, whether by persuasion or coercion.

authority

Command of the obedience of society's members by a government.

legitimacy

The exercise of political power in a community in a way that is voluntarily accepted by the members of that community.

legitimate authority

The legal and moral right of a government to rule over a specific population and control a specific territory; the term *legitimacy* usually implies a widely recognized claim of governmental authority and voluntary acceptance on the part of the population(s) directly affected.

The terms *power* and *authority* are often confused and even used interchangeably. In reality, they denote two distinct dimensions of politics. According to Mao Zedong, the late Chinese Communist leader, “Political power flows from the barrel of a gun.” Political power is clearly associated with the means of coercion (the regular police, secret police, and the army), but power can also flow from wealth, personal charisma, ideology, religion, and many other sources, including the moral standing of a particular individual or group in society.

Authority, by definition, flows not only (or even mainly) from the barrel of a gun but also from the *norms* that society accepts and even cherishes. These norms are moral, spiritual, and legal codes of behavior, or good conduct. Thus, authority implies **legitimacy**—a condition in which power is exercised by common consensus through established institutions. Note this definition does not mean, nor is it meant to imply, that democracy is the only legitimate form of government possible. Any government that enjoys the consent of the governed is legitimate—including a monarchy, military dictatorship, or theocracy.

The acid test of **legitimate authority** is not whether people have the right to vote or to strike or dissent openly, but how much *value* people attach to these rights. If a majority of the people are content with the existing political order as it stands (with or without voting rights), the legitimacy of the ruler(s) is simply not in question. But, as history amply demonstrates, it is possible to seize power and to rule without a popular mandate or public approval, without moral, spiritual, or legal justification—in other words, without true (legitimate) authority.

A military power seizure—also known as a *coup d'état*—typically involves a plot by senior army officers to overthrow a corrupt, incompetent, or unpopular civilian ruler. One well-known example happened in Egypt in July 2013, following many months of turmoil and the outcome of a presidential election that became unacceptable to the military.

Power seizures also occurred in Mauritania and Guinea in 2008 and in Thailand as recently as 2014; many contemporary rulers, especially in Africa, have come to power in this manner. Adolf Hitler's failed “Beer Hall Putsch” in 1923 is another famous example of an attempt to seize power. Although such attempts often fail, they are usually evidence of political instability—as the case of Weimar Germany illustrates.

Claiming authority is useless without the means to enforce it. The right to rule—a condition that minimizes the need for repression—hinges in large part on legitimacy or popularity.

Legitimacy and popularity go hand in hand. Illegitimate rulers are inevitably unpopular rulers. Such rulers are faced with a hard choice: relinquish power or repress opposition. Whether repression works depends, in turn, on the answer to three questions. First, how widespread and determined is the opposition? Second, does the government have adequate financial resources and coercive capabilities to defeat its opponents and deter future challenges? Third, does the government have the will to use all means necessary to defeat the rebellion?

If the opposition is broadly based and the government waivers for whatever reason, repression is likely to fail. Regimes changed in Russia in 1917 and 1992 following failed attempts to crush the opposition. Two other examples include

Cuba in 1958, where Fidel Castro led a successful revolution, and Iran in 1978, where a mass uprising led to the overthrow of the Shah. A similar pattern was evident in many Eastern European states in 1989, when repressive communist regimes collapsed like so many falling dominoes.

If people respect the ruler(s) and play by the rules without being forced to do so (or being threatened with the consequences), the task of maintaining order and stability in society becomes much easier. It stands to reason that people who feel exploited and oppressed make poorly motivated workers. The perverse work ethic of Soviet-style dictatorships, where it was frequently said, “We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us,” helps explain the decline and fall of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, dramatized by the spontaneous tearing down of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Order

Order exists on several levels. First, it denotes the structures, rules, rituals, procedures, and practices that make up the political system embedded in every **society**. But what, exactly, is society? In essence, society is an aggregation of individuals who share a common identity. Usually that identity is at least partially defined by geography, because people who live in close proximity often know each other, enjoy shared experiences, speak the same language, and have similar values and interests. The process of instilling a sense of common purpose or creating a single political allegiance among diverse groups of people is complex and works better from the bottom up than from the top down. The breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, after more than seven decades as multinational states, suggests new communities are often fragile and tend to fall apart quickly if there are not strong cultural and psychological bonds under the political structures.

The Russian-backed secessionist movement that threatened to break up Ukraine in 2014–15 also illustrates the obstacles to maintaining order in a newly independent country where a national minority group is geographically concentrated. Russian speakers in parts of eastern Ukraine bordering on Russia constitute a solid majority and remain fiercely loyal to Moscow. The same is true in Crimea (previously part of Ukraine), where most people welcomed Russia’s armed intervention. Russia annexed this strategically important region (the whole of the Crimean Peninsula) in March 2014.

The idea that individuals become a cohesive community through an unwritten **social contract** has been fundamental to Western political thought since the seventeenth century. Basic to social contract theory is the notion that the right to rule is based on the consent of the governed. Civil liberties in this type of community are a matter of natural law and natural rights—that is, they do not depend on written laws but rather are inherent in Nature. Nature with a capital *N* is a set of self-evident truths that, in the eyes of social contract theorists, can be known through a combination of reason and observation. A corollary of this theory is that whenever government turns oppressive—for example, when it arbitrarily takes away such natural rights as life, liberty, and (perhaps) property—the people have a right to revolt (see Chapter 14, Revolution).

order

In a political context, refers to an existing or desired arrangement of institutions based on certain principles, such as liberty, equality, prosperity, and security. Also often associated with the rule of law (as in the phrase “law and order”) and with conservative values such as stability, obedience, and respect for legitimate authority.

society

An aggregation of individuals who share a common identity. Usually that identity is at least partially defined by geography, because people who live in close proximity often know each other, enjoy shared experiences, speak the same language, and have similar values and interests.

social contract

A concept in political theory most often associated with Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, and John Locke; the social contract is an implicit agreement among individuals to form a civil society and to accept certain moral and political obligations essential to its preservation.

government

The persons and institutions that make and enforce rules or laws for the larger community.

republic

A form of government in which sovereignty resides in the people of that country, rather than with the rulers. The vast majority of republics today are democratic or representative republics, meaning that the sovereign power is exercised by elected representatives who are responsible to the citizenry.

state

In its sovereign form, an independent political-administrative unit that successfully claims the allegiance of a given population, exercises a monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force, and controls the territory inhabited by its citizens or subjects; in its other common form, the major political-administrative subdivision of a federal system, which is not sovereign but rather depends on the central authority (often called the “national government”) for resource allocations (tax transfers and grants), defense (military protection and emergency relief), and regulation of economic relations with other federal subdivisions (nonsovereign states) and external entities (sovereign states).

Government is a human invention by which societies are ruled and binding rules are made. Given the rich variety of governments in the world, how might we categorize them all? Traditionally, political scientists have distinguished between **republics**, in which sovereignty (discussed later in this section) ultimately resides in the people, and governments such as monarchies or tyrannies, in which sovereignty rests with the rulers. Today, almost all republics are democratic (or representative) republics, meaning they have political systems wherein elected representatives responsible to the people exercise sovereign power.²

Some political scientists draw a simple distinction between democracies, which hold free elections, and dictatorships, which do not. Others emphasize the type of political economy in a country, distinguishing between governments enmeshed in capitalist or market-based systems and governments based on socialist or state-regulated systems. Finally, governments in developing countries face different kinds of challenges than do governments in developed countries. Not surprisingly, more economically developed countries often have markedly more well-established political institutions—including political parties, regular elections, civil and criminal courts—than most less developed countries, and more stable political systems.

In the modern world, the **state** is the sole repository of **sovereignty**. A sovereign state is a community with well-defined territorial boundaries administered by a single government capable of making and enforcing laws. In addition, it typically claims a monopoly on the legitimate use of force; raises armies for the defense of its territory and population; levies and collects taxes; regulates trade and commerce; establishes courts, judges, and magistrates to settle disputes and punish lawbreakers; and sends envoys (ambassadors) to represent its interests abroad, negotiate treaties, and gather useful information. Entities that share *some* but not all of the characteristics of states include fiefdoms and chiefdoms, bands and tribes, universal international organizations (such as the United Nations), and regional supranational organizations (such as the European Union).

In the language of politics, state usually means **country**. France, for instance, may be called either a state or a country. (In certain federal systems of government, a state is an administrative subdivision, such as New York, Florida, Texas, or California in the United States; however, such states within a state are not sovereign.)

The term *nation* is also a synonym for *state* or *country*. Thus, the only way to know for certain whether *state* means part of a country (for example, the United States) or a whole country (say, France or China) is to consider the context. By the same token, context is the key to understanding what we mean by the word *nation*.

A **nation** is made up of a distinct group of people who share a common background, including geographic location, history, racial or ethnic characteristics, religion, language, culture, or belief in common political ideas. Geography heads this list because members of a nation typically exhibit a strong collective sense of belonging associated with a particular territory for which they are willing to fight and die if necessary.

Countries with relatively homogeneous populations (with great similarity among members) were most common in old Europe, but this once-defining characteristic of European nation-states is no longer true. The recent influx of newcomers from former colonial areas (in particular, the Muslim-majority countries of North Africa, the Arab world, and South Asia) and post-Cold War east-west population movements in Europe have brought the issue of immigration to the forefront of politics in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and even the Scandinavian countries. Belgium, in contrast, provides a rare example of a European state divided culturally and linguistically (French-speaking Walloons and Dutch-speaking Flemish) from the start.

India, Russia, and Nigeria are three highly diverse states. India's constitution officially recognizes no fewer than eighteen native tongues! The actual number spoken, however, is far larger. As a nation of immigrants, the United States is also very diverse, but the process of assimilation eventually brings the children of newcomers, if not the newcomers themselves, into the mainstream.³

The **nation-state** is a state encompassing a single nation in which the overwhelming majority of the people form a dominant in-group who share common cultural, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics; all others are part of a distinct out-group or minority. This concept is rooted in a specific time and place—that is, in modern Western Europe. (See Landmarks in History: The Peace of Westphalia for the story of the first nation-state.) The concept of the nation-state fits less comfortably in other regions of the world, where the political boundaries of sovereign states—many of which were European colonies before World War II—often do not coincide with ethnic or cultural geography. In some instances, ethnic, religious, or tribal groups that were bitter traditional enemies were thrown together in new “states,” resulting in societies prone to great instability or even civil war.

Decolonization after World War II gave rise to polyglot states in which various ethnic or tribal groups were not assimilated into the new social order. Many decades later, the all-important task of **nation-building** in these new states remains far from finished. Thus, in 1967, Nigeria plunged into a vicious civil war when one large ethnic group, the Igbo, tried unsuccessfully to secede and form an independent state called Biafra. In 1994, Rwanda witnessed one of the bloodiest massacres in modern times when the numerically superior Hutus slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Tutsis, including women and children. In 2018, nine of the ten most violent countries in the world were located in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, including Syria (1), Afghanistan (2), South Sudan (3), Iraq (4), Somalia (5), Sudan (6), the Central African Republic (7), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (8), and Pakistan (9). Number ten on the list was North Korea.⁴

In India, where Hindus and Muslims frequently clash and sporadic violence breaks out among militant Sikhs in Punjab, and where hundreds of languages and dialects are spoken, characterizing the country as a nation-state misses the point altogether. In Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), Hindu Tamils have long waged a terrorist guerrilla war against the majority Sinhalese, who are Buddhist.

Even in the Slavic-speaking parts of Europe, age-old ethnic rivalries have caused the breakup of preexisting states. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia are multinational states that self-destructed in the 1990s. More recently, in 2014–15, centrifugal tendencies threatened to split Ukraine in half.

sovereignty

A government's capacity to assert supreme power successfully in a political state.

country

As a political term, it refers loosely to a sovereign state and is roughly equivalent to “nation” or “nation-state”; *country* is often used as a term of endearment—for example, in the phrase “my *country* ’tis of thee, sweet land of liberty” in the patriotic song every U.S. child learns in elementary school; country has an emotional dimension not present in the word *state*.

nation

Often interchangeable with *state* or *country*; in common usage, this term actually denotes a specific people with a distinct language and culture or a major ethnic group—for example, the French, Dutch, Chinese, and Japanese people each constitute a nation as well as a state, hence the term nation-state; not all nations are fortunate enough to have a state of their own—modern examples include the Kurds (Turkey, Iraq, and Iran), Palestinians (West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan), Pashtuns (Afghanistan), and Uighurs and Tibetans (China).

nation-state

A geographically defined community administered by a government.