



Politics: Who Gets What, and How?

Chapter 1

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In this chapter we will learn about

- The meaning of “politics”
- The varieties of political systems and the roles they endorse for the individuals who live in them
- The historical origins of American democracy
- The goals and concerns of the founders as they created the American system
- The components of critical thinking and how the themes of power and citizenship will serve as our framework for understanding American politics

What is politics?

- Politics: who gets what, when, and how; a process of determining how power and resources are distributed in a society without recourse to violence
- Power: the ability to get others to do what you want

What is politics?, cont'd.

- Politics arranges our lives into some kind of social order
- How power is managed must be legitimate or there will be violence

Politics and government

- Government: a system or organization for exercising authority over a body of people
 - Authority: power that people recognize as legitimate
- Rules: directives that specify how resources will be distributed or what procedures govern collective activity
 - The “how” of who gets what, and how?
- Institutions: organizations in which government power is exercised
 - The “where” of the political struggle

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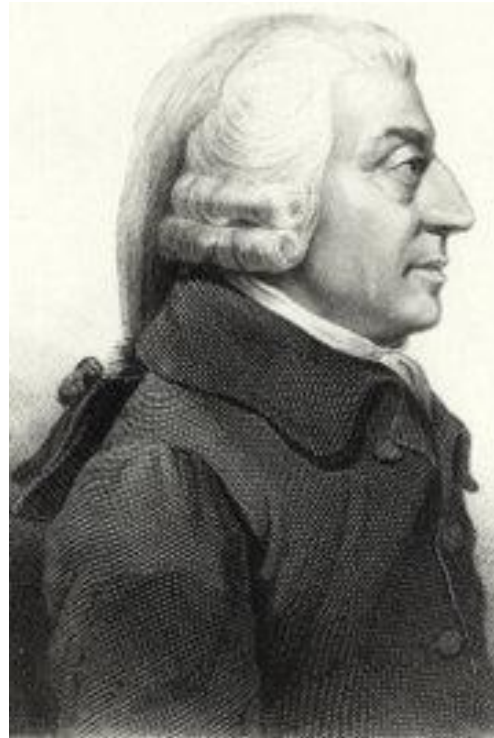
Politics and economics

- Economics: production and distribution of a society's material resources and services
- Both politics and economics focus on distribution of society's resources
- Economics was meant to be private, whereas politics was meant to be public

Economic systems

- Capitalism: market determines production, distribution, and price decisions
 - Regulated capitalism has government procedural guarantees, whereas laissez-faire capitalism doesn't
- Socialist economy: the state determines production, distribution, and price decisions; property is government owned
 - Few nations still claim allegiance to socialism
- Social democracy is a hybrid of capitalism and socialism

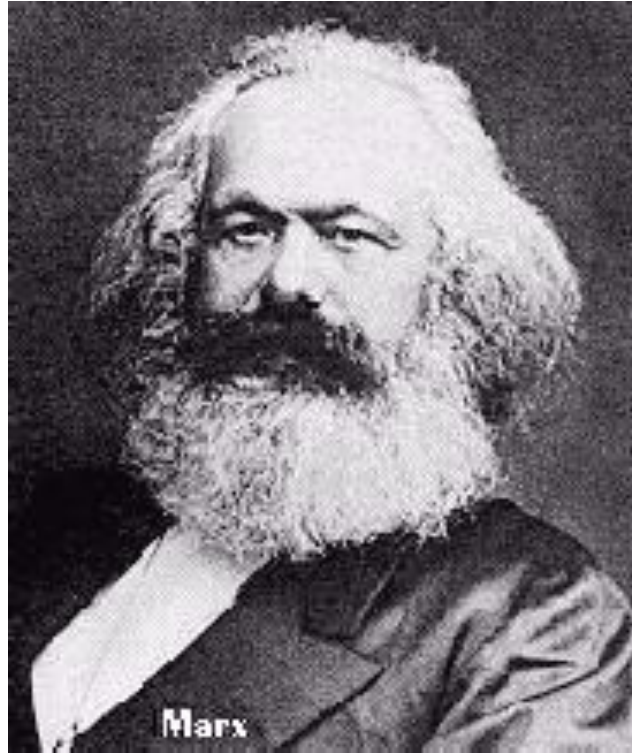
Adam Smith



A portrait of Adam Smith, one of the foremost developers of capitalist economic theory.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Smith

Karl Marx



Karl Marx, the principal philosopher of socialist economics.

Source: academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/virtual/portrait/marx.jpg

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Authoritarian systems

- The state holds all power
- Several types:
 - Monarchy: government power vested in a king or queen (Saudi Arabia)
 - Theocracy: government claims to draw its power from divine or religious authority (Iran)

Authoritarian systems, cont'd.

- Types of authoritarian systems, cont'd.
 - Fascist government: policy is made for the ultimate glory of the state (Nazi Germany)
 - Oligarchy: rule by a small group of elites
 - Totalitarian government: a system in which absolute control is exercised over every aspect of life (North Korea)

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Nonauthoritarian systems

- Anarchy: the absence of government and laws
- Democracy: government that vests power in the people; based on popular sovereignty
 - Popular sovereignty: the concept that the citizens are the ultimate source of political power

Theories of democracy

- Elite democracy: limits the citizens' role to choosing among competing leaders
- Pluralist democracy: citizen membership in groups is the key to political power
- Participatory democracy: citizens should actively and directly control all aspects of their lives

The role of the people

- Authoritarian systems: individuals are subjects of their state government
 - Subjects: individuals who are obliged to submit to a government authority against which they have no rights
- Democratic systems: people are citizens
 - Citizens: members of a political community having both rights and responsibilities, which include obeying laws, paying taxes, owning businesses, participating in government

Origins of American democracy

- Ancient Greek experience: Athenian democracy
- Politics in the Middle Ages
 - The divine right of kings: the principle that earthly rulers receive their authority from God
- Enlightenment theories discredited the divine right of kings

Origins of American democracy, cont'd.

- Social contract theory: the notion that society is based on an agreement between government and the governed in which people agree to give up some rights in exchange for the protection of others
- Hobbes: government not due to divine right; instead people agree to be governed for protection

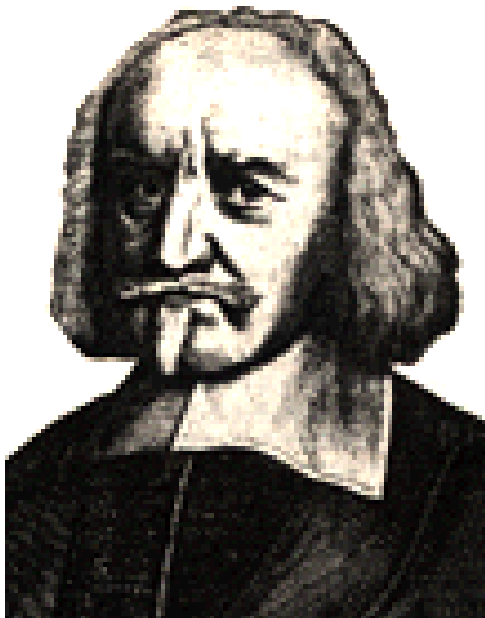
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Origins of American democracy, cont'd.

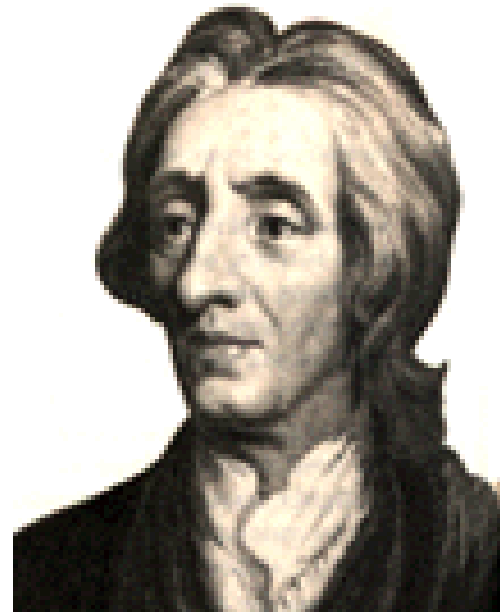
- Locke: people agree to give up some rights in exchange for the protection of other rights by the government
- Legitimate government requires that people consent to it and if government breaks contract, people may form a new one

Founders of social contract theory

Thomas Hobbes



John Locke



Source: www.trincoll.edu/depts/phil/philo/philosophers.html

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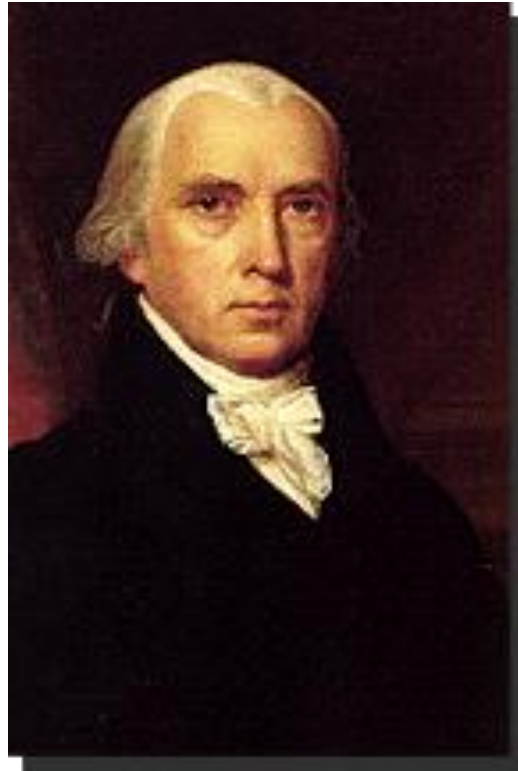
Citizenship in America

- Madison feared “pure democracy” because people may create “factions”
 - Factions: groups that might pursue only their self-interest
- Madison preferred a republic
 - Republic: a government in which decisions are made through representatives of the people

Citizenship in America, cont'd.

- Madison did not trust average Americans to act beyond their own interests
- Madison's view contrasted with the idea of "republican virtue" (citizens can put interests of community ahead of their own)
- American citizenship today illustrates elements of both views of citizenship

James Madison



A portrait of James Madison, our fourth president, coauthor of *The Federalist Papers*, and democratic theorist.

Source: www.americanrevwar.homestead.com/files/madison.htm

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Themes of *Keeping the Republic*, 3rd edition

- Think critically about American politics: analyze and evaluate ideas and arguments based on reason and evidence
 - Analysis: understanding how something works by breaking it down into its component parts; see *how it works*
 - Evaluation: assessing *how well* something works or performs according to a particular standard or yardstick

Themes of *Keeping the Republic*, cont'd.

- Citizenship and power
- Analyze American politics by asking three questions:
 - Who are the parties involved?
 - What do they have at stake?
 - How do the rules shape the outcome?
- Evaluate politics