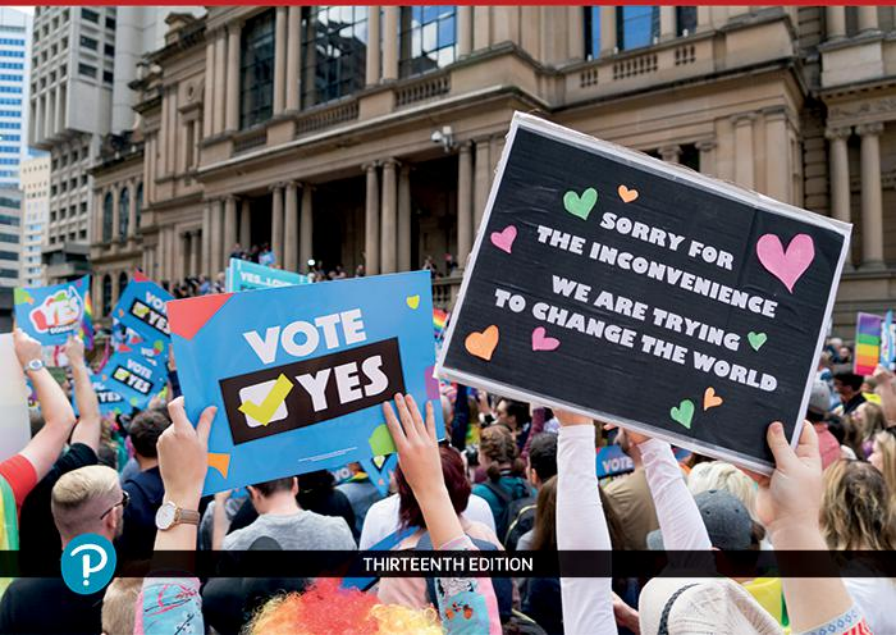
UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL WORLD

A COMPARATIVE INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

JAMES N. DANZIGER · LINDSEY LUPO



THIRTEENTH EDITION

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A Comparative Introduction to Political Science

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Brief Contents

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Preface

Farida Nabourema is a 28-year-old self-described freedom fighter and human rights activist. She was born and raised in Togo, a small French-speaking country in West Africa that has been ruled by one family since 1963. The current president, who was installed by the military after his father's death, governs the country with a strong reliance on violent force, centralized power, limited freedom of speech, and ethnic discrimination. However, Nabourema has not been deterred by the threatening nature of her government. Instead, she has risked her life to speak out against the government's repression:

She has an active social media presence (in Togo, she is known as the "WhatsApp Girl"); she organizes anti-government petitions, protests, and street demonstrations; and she speaks around the world about her push to bring democratic reform to Togo. A few years ago, she posted the personal phone numbers of all the members of parliament and asked her fellow Togolese citizens to call and complain—and they did. Nabourema's political actions are quite dangerous, and she moves around every two or three weeks to avoid being detained by the government.

The opposition movement is getting bolder and gaining power. Street protests occurred almost weekly in 2018, at one point swelling to one-eighth of the population. The government has responded with force, but also offered some concessions, including reinstating presidential term limits and releasing political prisoners. The many opposition groups are preparing a challenge in the 2020 election.

Our theories and research findings in political science cannot predict the behavior of Farida Nabourema or the outcome of events such as these, but that does not frustrate or embarrass us as political scientists. One endlessly fascinating aspect of the study of politics is that there are always new challenges to our explanations. This makes politics intriguing. Albert Einstein commented that politics is more difficult than physics. The political phenomena that we attempt to study and explain include many variables and can spin in unexpected directions, especially while unpredictable humans try to control them. Yet all is not chaos. There are patterns, and some actions and outcomes are much more likely than others.

A central goal of political scientists is to identify and communicate what happens and why it happens and then to offer generalizations that capture the broad processes and underlying dynamics of politics. This is how political science attempts to enhance our understanding of the political world. This book provides you with some of the tools—key concepts, research findings, explanations—to help you better understand both politics and how political science approaches its subject matter. It offers you a path.

After a brief consideration of how we decide what we know, the book explores what we do know about the political beliefs and actions of individuals. It then advances to the country level of analysis, examining political institutions and political processes. This is followed by a consideration of politics at the level of the global system. The final chapters draw together all the themes of the book and examine the politics of three broad clusters of countries around the world.

You are living in extremely turbulent political times. We hope the events that are unfolding in the political world have persuaded you that it is essential to understand it and to act sensibly within it because politics is arguably the most critical domain in which our futures are being shaped. In this book, you will be encouraged to consider whether the information, insights, and concepts of political science are useful. Can they help you understand the political world? Can they inform our value choices and normative

judgments about public policies? Can they guide our policies and actions in ways that improve the quality of our lives, individually and collectively?

New to the Thirteenth Edition

This thirteenth edition of *Understanding the Political World* provides substantial new contributions, building on the highly regarded twelfth edition, with the following new elements, among many others:

- New examples, new data, and extensive revision of topics throughout the text illustrate the underlying concepts, generalizations, and theories that are at the heart of understanding the political world.
- Among the new recurring themes across many chapters are the global decline in democracy, the rise of nationalism, the emergence of populist-authoritarian leaders in many countries, and the increasing challenges to globalization.
- A Current Events Bulletin now opens each chapter in Revel. These bulletins, which are revised or replaced every six months, provide timely and relevant examples from around the political world that link to the chapter themes and stimulate interest and discussion.
- The quantitative and qualitative data in every table and figure have been updated, using the most current information available. These are valuable indicators during a period of substantial global change. Every discussion has been revised to reflect the most up-to-date issues, situations, and evidence.
- New figures and tables have been created on topics such as the average annual growth in GDP over the periods 2000–2009 and 2010–2018 and the year-to-year changes in growth for selected countries. New data sources have been added to many topics, including Freedom House's Aggregate Democracy measure, individual political belief data from Pew, and individual political action data from the World Values Survey. The majority of figures have also been transformed into Social Explorers.
- The quizzes in every chapter have been revised, linked more directly with the content, and improved.
- The chapter-opening vignettes have been updated. For example, one explores the political decay in Honduras, which has led to severe political instability and a major flow of refugees. Another examines Venezuela, describing how "Chavismo" politics and the conflict between groups on the right and left have compounded problems with a political economy in free fall and led to widespread rioting and harsh repression.
- Many chapters' Debate features have been revised, including a major revision of the debate on globalization. This edition also has new debates, such as one on whether China will and should democratize.
- New Focus features include one describing the rise (and decline) of president Macron and his En Marche party in France and one that analyzes the deterioration of democracy in Greece.
- The For Further Reading suggestions at the end of each chapter have been updated and expanded.
- On the Web, a list of useful and relevant Internet sites, has been updated and consolidated as a separate section at the end of the book.

Chapter 15 has been completely reformulated. This chapter now focuses on a group of countries (based on the updated development-level taxonomy in Chapter 10) we refer to as *partly developed countries*. The chapter analyzes the distinctive strategies and challenges facing these countries in their pursuit of prosperity, stability, and security. Chapter 15 includes a new section that examines the countries that fall outside the taxonomy, exploring aspects of these "outliers," and includes specific studies

of Argentina, Georgia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia. The discussion of the BRICS in Chapter 15 has been completely rewritten to reflect the current status of this group.

Features

The thirteenth edition of *Understanding the Political World* retains the conceptual framework of previous editions, focusing on politics at every level, from the individual person to the global system. To enrich the reader's understanding, it employs a comparative perspective, considering evidence and examples from many countries in all regions of the world. This approach is guided both by Aristotle's wise observation that all thinking begins in comparison and by a recognition that the political world is now truly global.

As noted here, the book is organized to provide the reader with a brief characterization of how political scientists study politics in a comparative framework. It then uses such a framework to focus on how to understand politics at the levels of the individual and of the group, the different ways in which political institutions are organized, the dynamics of important political processes, and the key patterns of politics in major clusters of countries.

Chapter 1 and the Appendix introduce the logic of political science and the methods of comparative political analysis.

Chapters 2–4 examine both normative political theory and the empirical study of political behavior at the individual and group levels, describing and explaining the causes of political beliefs and actions.

Chapters 5–8 emphasize the structural and institutional elements of political systems, offering concepts and examples that characterize the different ways in which people organize themselves politically.

Chapters 9–12 analyze crucial political processes, such as public policymaking and the exercise of power, political and economic development, politics across national borders, and political violence.

Chapters 13–15 explain in detail how important groups of countries try to achieve their broad goals of prosperity, stability, and security within the complex international environment. These chapters provide specific analyses of the developed countries, the developing countries, and three sets of transitional developed countries—the postcommunist developed countries, the newly industrializing countries in Latin America, and the BRICS countries.

In addition, the thirteenth edition retains most key features of the previous edition:

- Many discussions and debates provide memorable applications of key concepts—such as power, democracy, political violence, equality, and globalization—and key issues, such as whether terrorism is ever justifiable and whether interest groups are good for democracy.
- Continual use of country-based examples grounds every topic in relevant, specific realities.
- Numerous presentations of current data, often in graphical form, facilitate analysis and comparisons on many topics.
- Captioned photographs illuminate themes in a way that complements the textual discussions.
- A recurring focus on political economy emphasizes the significance of linkages between the political system and the economic system.
- Eight excellent, full-color maps display the geographic relations of countries in all areas of the world.
- An engaging, readable style draws in the reader.

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- Chapter-opening Current Events Bulletins feature author-written articles that put breaking news and current events into the context of international relations.
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- Assessments tied to primary chapter sections, as well as full chapter exams, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.
- Integrated Writing Opportunities, which help students reason and write more clearly, are offered in three formats of writing prompts:
    - Journal prompts ask students to think critically and apply what they have learned after each special feature.
    - Shared writing prompts encourage students to consider how to address challenges described in the chapter. Through these prompts, instructors and students can deal with multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to other viewpoints.
    - Essay prompts are from Pearson's Writing Space, where instructors can assign both automatically graded and instructor-graded prompts. Writing Space helps develop and assess concept mastery and critical thinking through writing. Writing Space provides a single place within Revel to create, track, and grade writing assignments; access writing resources; and exchange meaningful, personalized feedback quickly and easily to improve results.

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resources to qualified adopters of International Relations, several of which are available for instant download on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC; please visit the IRC at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access):

- **Test Bank** Evaluate learning at every level. Reviewed for clarity and accuracy, the Test Bank measures this material's learning objectives with multiple-choice and essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word, Blackboard, and WebCT versions are available on the IRC, and Respondus versions are available on request from www.respondus.com.
- **Pearson MyTest** This powerful assessment generation program includes all of the questions in the Test Bank. Quizzes and exams can be easily authored and saved online and then printed for classroom use, which gives you ultimate flexibility to manage assessments anytime and anywhere. To learn more, visit www.pearsonhighered.com/mytest.
- **Instructor's Resource Manual** Create a comprehensive road map for teaching classroom, online, or hybrid courses. Designed for new and experienced instructors, the Instructor's Resource Manual includes learning objectives; lecture and discussion suggestions; activities for in or out of class; research activities; participation activities; and suggested readings, series, and films as well as a Revel features section. Available within Revel and on the IRC.
- **PowerPoints** In order to support varied teaching styles while making it easy to incorporate dynamic Revel features in class, two sets of PowerPoint Presentations are available for this edition: (1) A set of accessible lecture PowerPoint slides outline each chapter of the text. (2) An additional set of the lecture PowerPoint slides includes LiveSlides, which link to each Social Explorer data visualization within the Revel product. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

Acknowledgments

Many sources of ideas and information constitute the basis of my understanding about politics. Broadly, you should know that I was born and I have been educated primarily in the United States and also in the United Kingdom. I have lived and/or spent significant periods of time in more than 70 countries in Western and Eastern Europe, Central and South America, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa. I have circumnavigated the globe as part of five global voyages on Semester at Sea. The people I have met and the events I have experienced in all these places certainly have influenced my perceptions about politics.

More direct contributions to this book have come from the work of my colleagues in political science and from the many students and others in the political world with whom I have interacted. I have drawn deeply and often from the ideas of these groups. By the publication of the thirteenth edition, the layers of contributions and ideas to the construction of this book are deep, rich, and indescribable. Every edition includes a list of people who added positively to that edition, and I continue to be grateful to them all. Professor Tony Smith deserves special credit as coauthor of the twelfth edition. Professor Lindsey Lupo, who has brought great new perspectives and excellent writing to this thirteenth edition, has been a true pleasure to work with. The reviewers, who offered very thoughtful and constructive commentaries for this edition, include Darlene Budd, University of Central Missouri; Andrei Korobkov, Middle Tennessee State University; Sarah Davies Murray, Long Island University-CW Post; Eric Royer, Saint Louis University; and Katrina Taylor, Tacoma Community College. And thanks to the folks at Pearson and Ohlinger for guiding this edition to completion. I am very grateful for the help provided by all these (and many unnamed) sources, and especially to Lesley, who has supported me through thirteen editions and so much more. Regarding the roads not taken and the missteps in this book, the responsibility is mine.

—James N. Danziger

It is a great honor and joy to join Professor Danziger on this thirteenth edition of *Understanding the Political World*, as both Jim and this book have been incredibly influential in the development of my Introduction to Political Science course. I have been teaching this course for over a decade (first as a graduate student at UC, Irvine and then as a full-time professor at Point Loma Nazarene University) and am deeply grateful to the many wonderful students who have spent time with me in the classroom. The conversations in this course have involved difficult and complicated issues in the political world, and this book has helped to effectively frame those discussions. Thank you to Jim Danziger for trusting me to help shepherd this book through another edition: I feel privileged to have joined you in this process. Thank you to the team at Pearson and Ohlinger for all of your hard work: It was a pleasure working with you. And thank you to the students who have come into my life, my political science friends around the world, and my wonderfully supportive colleagues and friends at PLNU: All of you have played a role in how I view the political world, our discipline, and my work as an academic. In particular, I would like to thank Hannah Kurowski for being the type of student that makes teaching such a joy and for her wonderful work on the index for this edition of the book. Thank you also to my many friends and family members who have supported me throughout my career. It is with the deepest sense of gratitude that I say thank you for the infinite ways you have helped me turn my passion into a career. Finally, thank you to the team that most builds me up: Grant, Charlie, and Harrison. Your unwavering support and unconditional love made my work on this book possible. Charlie and Harrison, may you never stop engaging in the political world.

—Lindsey Lupo

About the Authors

James N. Danziger is a Research Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Irvine, where he also has served as Chair of the Department of Political Science, campus-wide Dean of Undergraduate Education, and Chair of the Academic Senate. He has received many honors and awards, including a Marshall Scholarship (to Great Britain), a Foreign Area Fellowship, a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, Phi Beta Kappa, and an IBM Faculty Award. He received the first UC Irvine Distinguished Faculty Lectureship Award for Teaching in 1987, the UC, Irvine Distinguished Service Award in 1997, and the highest honor on the campus, the Extraordinarius Award, in 2009. His Ph.D. is from Stanford University, and he has held visiting appointments at the universities of Aarhus (Denmark), Pittsburgh, and Virginia. His research has received awards from the American Political Science Association and the American Society for Public Administration. He has published extensively, particularly on information technology and politics, and is an active participant in local politics.

Lindsey Lupo is a professor of political science and chair of the Department of History and Political Science at Point Loma Nazarene University. She received her B.A. in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara; M.A. in Social Science from the University of California, Irvine; and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Irvine. Her fields of research are urban politics, social movements, democratization, and political violence, and she is the author of *Flak-Catchers: One Hundred Years of Riot Commission Politics,* as well as a number of academic journal articles and book chapters. She teaches classes on urban politics, protests and social movements, comparative politics, U.S. public policy, democratization, research methods, and introduction to political science. She frequently travels with students, including to South Africa, Czech Republic, and Washington, DC. She is also the director of the Institute of Politics and Public Service at PLNU, and she manages the internship program for international studies and political science students.

From the Reviews

"Danziger and Lupo have written the perfect book for an introduction to political science. Presenting a full range of domestic and international issues plus detailed scenarios that make students think critically, they balance the academic approach to political science with the practical need to be fluent in real world politics."

—Krista Wiegand,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee

"This book remains the gold standard for introduction to the breadth of topics that animate political science. Encompassing topics such as political ideology, democracy, protest, domestic and interstate politics, and newly industrializing countries as well as developed, the book takes the student on a journey through the discipline itself as well as its subject matter. Because it is accessible to beginning undergraduates and because of its explicit application of comparative methods of inquiry, this book remains the key recommendation I always offer to my colleagues."

—Matthew Shugart,
University of California–Davis, Davis, California

"Danziger and Lupo bring a fresh and exciting pedagogical approach. Their terrific book presents cutting-edge topics with current data in a compelling narrative."

—Heather Smith-Cannoy,
Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon

"Danziger and Lupo have written a current and impressive textbook. It is empirically rich, but still accessible and engaging."

—Royce Carroll,
University of Essex, Colchester, England

To The Reader

The aim of this book is revealed by its title: It is meant to help you understand the political world. It assumes that you are willing to think about politics. It does not assume that you have substantial knowledge about politics or political science or even that you know the difference between politics and political science. We hope that when you complete the book and any course in which you are reading it, you will feel that you have increased your knowledge about the contemporary political world.

The study of politics is full of fascinating questions. First are the questions about *what is*: Who exercises political power, and what values and purposes guide them? Why do people accept political authority? How do people organize themselves politically? What factors are associated with political violence? A second set of questions concerns *what ought to be*: Who should exercise political power, and what values should they pursue? Why should people accept political authority? How should political structures be organized? When is political violence justifiable?

People disagree sharply about answers to both these descriptive (what is) and normative (what ought to be) questions. In addition, the study of politics provokes a third set of questions regarding *what we can actually know* about the political world. Here also there are major disagreements about the appropriate methods for describing and understanding politics.

Although this book cannot resolve the underlying disputes, it offers you the basis for making sense of politics at all three levels. As the authors, we make some basic assumptions: that you can think systematically about politics and make general statements about how politics works; that you will learn more about politics by considering the politics of many different places; that every observer of politics (certainly including you and us) has biases, only some of which can be understood; that you need a variety of sources of ideas and information before you can make informed and sensible decisions about the value disagreements pervading politics; and that this book is one such source that can be helpful to you. Our efforts will be successful to the extent that *you* ultimately judge our assumptions to be correct (especially the last one).

It is inevitable that you will be frustrated with the treatment of politics at some (many?) points in this book. We would say: Reader, be merciful! The study of politics is very complex. Gather bits of understanding where you can find them.

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Chapter 1
Politics and Knowledge

Learning Objectives

1.1 Define politics within a public context.
1.2 Analyze three types of political knowledge.
1.3 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different sources of political knowledge.
1.4 Identify techniques and approaches used to gain political knowledge and assess whether they constitute a science.

Imagine you have a 13-year-old sister in eighth grade. She has quite the day at school: The vice principal comes into her math class unexpectedly and asks her to bring her backpack and accompany him to his office. In his office, she sees a planner, a knife, a lighter, and some white pills on his desk. The vice principal lectures her about the importance of telling the truth, then asks which of the items belong to her. She tells him that she had lent the planner to another girl a few days earlier but that the other items are not hers. The vice principal responds that the other girl had reported your sister for giving her the pills, which students are not allowed to possess at school.

The vice principal asks if he can look through your sister's backpack, and she agrees. A female secretary enters the office and searches the backpack. Your sister is then told to follow the secretary to the nurse's office, where the nurse and secretary ask your sister to remove her jacket, socks, and shoes. She follows their directions. They next ask her to take off her pants and shirt, and again she follows their directions. These clothes are searched, and when nothing incriminating is found, they order your sister to stand up, pull her bra away from her body and shake it, then pull her underwear loose and shake it. No pills drop out when she complies. She is allowed to put her clothes back on and sits outside the principal's office for several hours. Finally, she is sent back to class.

What do you think of the events just described? Is this situation *political*? Do the actions of the vice principal seem appropriate? What about the actions of the school's secretary and nurse? Did your sister do the right thing by complying with each of their requests? Did she have a choice? What would you do in a similar situation?

Cindy Charles/PhotoEdit Inc.

Search me? Are there fundamental political issues when a school searches its students? When is a search legal?

Stop and think about these questions briefly before you continue reading. You will be asked many such "reflection questions" as you read this book. Your attempts to answer them, either with quick notes on your computer or at least mental notes, will help you better grasp your own understanding of issues that are raised. As E. M. Forster commented, "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" So, what do you think about this situation?

Of course, this did not happen to your little sister (if you have one), but it did happen to 13-year-old Savana Redding of Safford, Arizona. Here are some additional facts in this case. This public school has a responsibility to ensure the safety and health of all its students. The previous year, a student nearly died from drugs taken without permission at the school. The school district has a zero-tolerance policy for all drugs: No student is allowed to possess any drugs at school, whether over-the-counter, prescription, or illegal. The vice principal acted on information from another girl, who reported that Savana had given her pills that day. It was not really a "strip search" because Savana never took off her underwear. All of these considerations seem to justify the actions that occurred.

However, there are valid points on the other side of the issue. The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution seems to protect Savana from this kind of search unless significant evidence indicates that something illegal is occurring (this is known as "probable cause"). The vice principal's actions were taken based on questionable information from another girl, who was already in trouble for possessing the pills. And the search occurred despite Savana's claim that she had no pills, without parental approval, and before any further investigation of the situation was attempted. Then there is common sense: The pills were merely extra-strength ibuprofen (pain killers). Is this really a legitimate reason for adults in authority positions to force a 13-year-old girl to submit to a humiliating strip search?

Savana's mother was outraged. With the assistance of a lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), she sued the school officials on the grounds that they had subjected her daughter to an "unreasonable search." Savana's lawyer argued that, while a search of her backpack might be reasonable, a strip search was not, given the flimsy evidence of guilt and the minimal threat associated with ibuprofen. The school district's officials responded that the vice principal's actions were justified and consistent with numerous court cases that uphold the rights and responsibilities of schools to prevent dangerous behavior among their students, including searches for drugs or weapons.

Initially, a judge in Tucson ruled in favor of the actions by the school officials; however, on appeal, the circuit court reversed the decision by the narrowest of margins (6–5). The court concluded that the strip search of an eighth grader while looking for prescription drugs was a violation of her constitutional rights, and it held that the family could sue the school officials for damages. The school's lawyers then appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2009, the court majority (8–1) held that the search of Savana was unconstitutional. The majority reasoned that the particular drugs suspected in this case were not sufficiently threatening to justify the search. However, the court did not allow the family to sue school officials, leaving open the question of how it might rule if school officials suspected a student of possessing something more dangerous than ibuprofen.

Toward a Definition of Politics

1.1 Define politics within a public context.

The first step in our journey toward a better understanding of the political world is to establish what we mean by *politics*. The Savana Redding search captures some of the crucial themes related to politics:

> Politics is the competition among individuals and groups pursuing their own interests.
>
> Politics is the exercise of power and influence to allocate things that are valued.
>
> Politics is the determination of who gets what, when, and how.
>
> Politics is the resolution of conflict.

All of these definitions share the central idea that **politics** *is the process through which power and influence are used in the promotion of certain values and interests.* (The **bold** type indicates a Key Concept; these terms are listed at the end of the chapter and are included in the Glossary.) Competing values and interests are clearly at the heart of the search of Savana Redding. The values that guide a zero-tolerance policy regarding drugs at the school are balanced against values that protect a student against an illegal search. Other groups might have a stake in this conflict, as did the ACLU, which intervened to promote its views about individual liberty, and the courts, which asserted their responsibility to interpret the laws.

As individuals, groups, and governmental actors make decisions about what is good or bad for society, and as they try to implement their decisions, politics occurs. Every individual holds an array of preferred values and interests, and that individual cares more about some of those values than others. What values is each individual willing to promote or yield on? If the values of different individuals come into conflict, whose values and rights should prevail? And, if people cannot work out their conflicting values privately through discussion and compromise, must the government intervene? How does the government exercise its power to resolve the conflict? Who benefits and who is burdened by the policies of government? These are all *political* questions.

For our purposes, politics is associated with those aspects of life that have *public* significance. Other aspects of life, in contrast, are understood to be private and thus are beyond the domain of politics. However, what is considered "private" in one country may be considered "public" in another. It is relevant that the search of Savana occurred in the United States. There are many other countries (e.g., Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran) where the kind of search conducted on Savana would be well within the standard practices of government authorities, and few, if any, citizens would publicly challenge the action.

In the political context of the United States, the school board—a political body elected by the citizens—has the right to establish policies regarding those behaviors that are unacceptable from the students (e.g., possessing drugs, using profane language) and from the school's employees (e.g., using corporal punishment, teaching creation science). The vice principal, as a public employee, exercises power when he implements those policies. The courts—another political institution—are active in the case as its judges, also public employees, attempt to resolve the conflict in values and interests between Savana's family and the school's employees. The court's judgments are based on interpretations of politically-created rules, including the U.S. Constitution, which ensures each citizen of certain rights but also grants government certain powers.

Even your choice about the job you take, the religion you practice, or what you read on the Internet can be either a private choice or one within the public domain. Can you see why a government might conclude that each of these choices has public significance and is thus political? Within each country, there is constant debate about the appropriate areas for government action and the domains of life that should remain private and unrestrained by political action. Sometimes the term *politics* is used even more broadly than in this book to refer to competition overvalues in domains that are not truly public, such as the "politics of the family" or "office politics."

In almost every contemporary society, the domains that are subject to politics are very large. Politics, usually via government, determines how much education you must have and what its content will be. Politics establishes the words you cannot utter in a public place, how much of your hard-earned income you must give to government, and how various governments spend that money to provide different groups with a vast range of benefits (e.g., education, roads, fire protection, subsidized health care, safe food, national defense, and aid to another country). Politics determines whether you are allowed to use a certain drug; the amount of pollutants that your car can emit; how secure you feel against violence by others within your neighborhood and within the global system; and whether you receive unequal treatment in the allocation of benefits because of your race, ethnicity, gender, ideology, religion, sexual orientation, or some other factor.

On Political Knowledge

1.2 Analyze three types of political knowledge.

Clearly, politics can affect your life in many ways. Yet people differ greatly in their understandings about the nature of politics, the uses of political power, and the distribution of political benefits and burdens. If you have discussed politics with your

friends, you probably have noticed that they differ, both in how much they know about politics and in their opinions about what constitutes good and bad political actions. Your understandings about politics and your decisions about whether to undertake specific political actions are grounded in your knowledge of politics. Every individual's understanding of politics is composed of three general types of political knowledge: (1) *descriptions* of political facts; (2) *explanations* of how and why politics occurs as it does; and (3) *prescriptions* of what should happen in the political world.

Description

Many bits of political knowledge offer a ***description***, which focuses on *what* questions and is usually based on one or more facts. (The **bold and italic** type indicates a Key Term; these terms are listed at the end of the chapter but are not in the Glossary at the back of the book.) Descriptive political knowledge is mostly composed of relatively straightforward political facts such as these:

> The date Hosni Mubarak resigned as president of Egypt: February 11, 2011
>
> The number of states in Nigeria: 36
>
> The country with the highest GDP (gross domestic product) per capita (PPP) in the world in 2017: Qatar, at $128,378

But on many questions about the political world, there are no indisputable answers. On some questions, it is difficult to get precise information. Suppose you want to know which countries have operational nuclear weapons and how many they each possess. Observers believe that nine states make up the world's "nuclear club": China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, the precise number of such weapons in each country is a state secret. China is clearly expanding its arsenal, but experts disagree about the pace of expansion. Experts do agree that Israel has nuclear weapons, although Israel will not confirm this. North Korea claims to have operational nuclear weapons, but there is little outside agreement about how advanced their technology is. Finally, though technically not a part of the nuclear club, Iran is suspected of having a secret nuclear weapons program. Twenty other countries, including Algeria, Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Kazakhstan, Libya, South Africa, and Ukraine, are "potential proliferators" that had or were close to having nuclear weapons but are now assumed to have backed away from nuclear ambitions (Federation of American Scientists 2019). Thus, even the experts cannot reach consensus on the straightforward issue of which countries belong to the nuclear club.

On other questions about politics, description requires assessments that raise complicated issues about power, interests, and values, making it difficult to reach agreement about the facts. Here are two examples:

> Do non-whites and whites in the United States experience equal treatment before the law?
>
> Can a country legally invade another country that has not used military force against it?

This discussion on "description" briefly refers to 21countries on five continents. Do you have a clear sense of where they are? There will be detailed discussions of many countries in this book. Knowing the location of a country and its geographic relationship to other countries in its region is sometimes extremely important for understanding its political choices and actions. When a country is discussed and you are not sure where it is, you are strongly encouraged to locate the country on a map. For this purpose, a set of maps is included in this book. Several recent studies have shown that students in the United States are more ignorant of world geography than students in most other countries. If that applies to you, help change the situation by referring frequently to the maps.

Explanation

A lot of political knowledge is more complicated than just description because it is in the form of ***explanation***, which attempts to *specify why something happens* and to *provide the reason or process by which the phenomenon occurs.*

Why is one in eight people "poor" in the wealthy United States? What causes a country (e.g., Venezuela) to have inflation higher than 4,000 percent in a single year? Why does a popular uprising rapidly overthrow the government in one country (e.g., Tunisia) but not in another (e.g., its neighbor, Syria)? Responses to these kinds of questions require explanation, not just descriptive facts. Such questions can be among the most fascinating in politics, but adequate explanation is often difficult because patterns of cause and effect can be extremely complex.

Prescription

Statements about politics often include claims or assumptions that certain choices and actions are more desirable than others. These represent a third form of political knowledge: prescription. A **prescription** is *a value judgment that indicates what* should *occur and* should *be done*. Thus, a prescription deals with answers to questions about what ought to be, not merely description and explanation of what is.

For example, there are many possible prescriptive responses to this question: What should be the government's role in the provision of health care? Answers vary from the viewpoint that government should take absolutely no action that interferes with the private provision of health care to the viewpoint that government should meet the full range of health care needs at no direct cost to patients. You can probably think of many positions between these two extremes.

The prescriptive position that you select on a political issue is an element of your **normative political knowledge**—*your value judgments about what is good or desirable.* Your normative political knowledge will have you answering political questions from a position of what you think *ought* to be happening. Notice that normative political knowledge combines three types of understanding: (1) your descriptive knowledge of certain facts (e.g., the alternative ways that health care could be provided in a particular society); (2) your explanatory knowledge about why certain outcomes occur (e.g., the reasons why people don't receive equal health care); and, most important, (3) your priorities among competing values (e.g., your preferences regarding equality, lower taxes, and limited government). In contrast, **empirical political knowledge**

is evidence based and is obtained through rigorous scientific observation. Empirical political knowledge will have you answering political questions regarding what *is* happening, regardless of what you think should be happening.

Throughout this book, you will be encouraged to clarify your own understandings about politics. You will be offered a variety of descriptive, explanatory, and prescriptive knowledge claims. It is hoped that as you absorb more of this information, you will become more knowledgeable about politics! Let's explore some of your views about politics by means of a thought experiment we term "the acid test."

Assume you were born 20 years ago in either the country of Gamma or the country of Delta. You do not know about your personal situation: whether you are male or female; your ethnicity, education level, and social class; your parents' wealth; whether you reside in a city or a rural area; your religion; your mental or physical skills; and so on. Table 1.1 provides a variety of indicators of some *current* conditions in Gamma and Delta with regard to each country's prosperity, security, and stability. Here is the "acid test" question: *Now that you know the current conditions in Gamma and Delta, into which country would you prefer to have been born 20 years ago?* The Compare in 1 box (there will be a Compare box in each chapter) considers some of the issues regarding this acid test. Make your choice from the data in Table 1.1 *before* you read the Compare in 1!

Table 1.1 The Acid Test I

	Gamma	Delta
Government type	Nondemocracy	Democracy
Democracy index (167 countries; 1 = most free)	136th	32nd
Political rights (scale of 1–7; 1 = most extensive)	7 (very low)	2 (high)
Civil liberties (scale of 1–7; 1 = most extensive)	6 (low)	3 (moderately high)
Press freedom (194 countries)	186th (not free)	72nd (partly free)
Government restrictions on religion	Very high	High
Gender equality (186 countries; 1 = most equal)	37th	125th
Income inequality (ratio of richest 20% to poorest 20%)	10.1: 1	5.0: 1
Rate of crimes against the person	Low	Medium
Life expectancy	76 years	68 years
Literacy rate: adult males adult females	98% 95%	81% 62%
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	11	48
% population with access to essential drugs	85%	35%
Access to improved sanitation	77%	40%
Internet users (per 100 people)	50	26
% below national poverty line	3.3%	21.9%
Economic freedom (178 countries)	128th (partly free)	139th (partly free)
Wealth (gross national product [GNP] per capita/PPP)	$15,535	$6,572
Annual economic growth (gross domestic product [GDP] per capita (2007–2016)	9.0%	7.4%

Compare in 1

The Acid Test I

As you examined the indicators in Table 1.1, you perhaps noticed significant differences between Gamma and Delta. The economic prosperity (indicated by measures such as the country's wealth per capita, level of poverty, and economic growth rate) is noticeably higher in one country. The probability you would be poor, uneducated, and live a shorter life is higher in one country. Your likely freedom of action in domains such as politics, religion, and access to information varies considerably. There are also significant differences in gender equality between the two countries, which would be felt in the areas of health, political representation, education, and career opportunities. What differences are most striking to you?

The acid test asks you to decide, after considering all the data provided about Gamma and Delta and without knowing about your own personal characteristics, into which country you would prefer to be born. Which one did you choose?

Gamma and Delta are pseudonyms for two real countries, and the data are recent. Both countries have a variety of broad similarities—population, climate variability, social history, period of time since independence, violent interactions with neighboring countries, and so on. Both are important players in the global political arena. Each country has a rich history, including a remarkable ancient culture; extensive colonial exploitation; a fickle climate; deep social cleavages, especially those based on religion, gender, and class/caste; and each has more than 1.3 billion people.

However, since the independence of India in 1947 and the establishment of communist rule in China in 1949, the two countries have followed very different paths. Under the long and tumultuous rule of Mao Zedong (in power 1949–1976), China (Gamma) attempted to implement a pervasive system of communism with a command political economy and totalitarian one-party government. The Chinese leadership after Mao engaged in a steady introduction of market economics, transforming China into a global economic power while still retaining tight Communist Party rule over the government. Initially, India (Delta) attempted to implement strong government control of key sectors of the economy, and it introduced democratic politics, although one party was very dominant. Eventually, both experiments evolved in India as the economy shifted much more to private firms and the political system became more competitive with multiple parties.

Some results of these two different approaches to government and policy are reflected in the measures in Table 1.1. The strong commitment under Mao to egalitarianism and providing benefits to all citizens led to public policies that reduced inequalities based on gender and social class, with broad improvements in literacy and health for most of the population. The Indian government did not provide extensive policies to address inequalities based on caste, gender, and urban–rural differences; thus, these inequalities have lessened much more slowly in India, resulting in continued disparities in domains such as literacy and health. China has sustained remarkable levels of economic growth for several decades as it has become a global power, while India's growth has been more sporadic but relatively high since 2000. India, which proudly proclaims itself the "world's largest democracy," has a rough-and-tumble political system characterized by broad political rights, government respect for civil liberties, a relatively free media, a professional apolitical military, and an independent judiciary. In contrast, China's leadership continues to use a combination of state military and security forces, political socialization, severe censorship, and rewards to those who conform to sustain its oppressive Communist Party domination of political and social life.

Despite many similarities in their resources and history, China and India have significantly different current profiles. While many explanations can be offered for these differences, it is reasonable to claim that the most powerful explanation is *politics*—the decisions and actions taken by those with political power and authority in each country. As you develop your understandings of politics in this book,

some of the key points underlying this acid test will be persistent themes.

First, a people and its government can pursue numerous desirable goals. While every country (and you) might like to have very positive scores on every indicator in Table 1.1, you will discover that the reality is starker: Most countries cannot have it all. Various trade-offs must be made due to limited resources, the incapacity of people and their institutions to control their environment fully, and other factors related to human failures and impacts of the global system.

Second, the acid test challenges you to decide what aspects of political, social, economic, and personal life are more important to you. The book will assist you in clarifying your own thinking about what you value and what role you think government should play in helping you achieve those values.

Third, your choices and your values will not be the same as everyone else's—even among your peers and certainly among people around the globe. You will gain greater awareness of the different mixes of approaches and values that are part of the debate about how government can help individuals and societies pursue a variety of desirable life conditions, such as security, prosperity, stability, freedom, equality, justice, democracy, quality of life, and well-being. Disagreements about ends and means are at the heart of politics in every country.

Further Questions

1. Which broad value seemed to most influence your choice between Gamma and Delta?
2. Did your knowledge of the real identities of Gamma and Delta change your evaluation at all?
3. What assessment(s) might cause another person to select the country that you did not select?

Sources of Political Knowledge

1.3 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different sources of political knowledge.

This chapter has already made many knowledge claims—statements about what is accurate or correct. Table 1.1 and the Compare in 1 are loaded with such claims. When you are confronted by such claims, how do you decide what you know and what you believe? That is, where does your political knowledge—your unique combination of descriptive facts, explanations, and prescriptions about politics—come from? This section describes three important sources of your knowledge: (1) authority; (2) personal thought; and (3) science.

Authority

Using **authority** as a source of political knowledge involves *the appeal to any document, tradition, or person believed to possess the controlling explanation regarding a particular issue.* Knowledge about politics can be based on three kinds of authority sources: (1) a specific authority; (2) a general authority; or (3) "everyone."

SPECIFIC AUTHORITY SOURCES A particular individual (but few others) might place great confidence in the knowledge he derives about politics from a specific authority source, such as a parent, teacher, friend, or famous person. Young people and those minimally interested in politics are especially likely to rely on specific authorities for much of their political knowledge. Chapter 4 will argue that specific authority

sources powerfully influence some important political beliefs of most individuals. Can you think of a significant piece of your own political knowledge that you derived primarily from a parent, an influential teacher, or a public figure you admire?

GENERAL AUTHORITY SOURCES A general authority source is one that has substantial influence on a large proportion of people in a society. Examples include constitutions, revered leaders, widely respected media or books, and religious teachings. General authorities are especially evident as a basis for normative political knowledge. Consider, for example, the issue of the role of women in politics. While this can be a descriptive issue, how do we determine the normative question of what the role of women should be? In some societies, there is disagreement about this question, and many look to an authority source to provide the answer.

- In the United States, the crucial source of authority for such questions is a *legal document*—the Constitution. Despite the promise of the "blessings of liberty," not every citizen was allowed to vote in 1787. Indeed, women were not granted this fundamental political right until the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1920—130 years into the American Republic. In the 1970s, advocates of women's rights argued that women still did not have full and equal political rights and proposed another constitutional amendment, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); but it was never ratified by the 38 states necessary for its passage. However, many lawmakers continue to push for the ERA's ratification or reintroduction as a constitutional amendment that would explicitly grant women "equality of rights under the law."
- In Iran, the key source of authority on women's political rights is also a document, but it is a *religious document*, the Koran. During the political regime of Shah Reza Pahlavi (1941–1979), women were encouraged to participate much more fully in politics than what Iran's religious conservatives thought was consistent with the Koran. When the Ayatollah Khomeini (in power 1979–1989) replaced the shah, he insisted on a strict interpretation of the Koran that significantly limited the political roles of women. The political rights and activities of Iranian women remain a contentious issue between those who advocate an expanded role for women and those, like the current top leader Ayatollah Khamenei, who insist on enforcing a more conservative interpretation of the Koran.
- In contemporary China, the political rights of women were established by the authoritative pronouncements of a *person*, Mao Zedong

Hulton Archive/Archive Photos/Getty Images

My Little Red Book: Young girls recite and memorize sayings from Chairman Mao Zedong during China's Cultural Revolution (circa 1968).

(in power 1949–1976). Prior to the revolution of 1949, the role of women in China was defined by the traditions of Confucianism. Most women were essentially the property of men, and they had few political rights. As part of Chairman Mao's efforts to transform Confucian tradition, he granted women full equality under the law, and women were encouraged to participate actively in all aspects of political life. (The conflict between Mao's views and those of Confucianism are explored further in the Focus in 4.)

"EVERYONE" AS AUTHORITY Sometimes we are convinced that something is true because it is a belief strongly held by many other people. If almost everyone (i.e., the reference group to which you look for information and knowledge) seems to agree on a "fact" about politics, there is little reason for you to disagree with or challenge that fact. One reason to place confidence in a belief that is strongly held by many people is the assumption that it is unlikely so many people could be incorrect. Such knowledge has stood the test of time because it could have been challenged and repudiated in the marketplace of ideas. For example, you will probably find that almost everyone you know agrees that political terrorism is bad.

PROBLEMS WITH AUTHORITY AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE There are fundamental problems with using authority as a way of knowing. This should be most obvious with *specific authorities*. You might think that your parent or best teacher or favorite celebrity has the correct view on an important political issue, but few of the other 7.6 billion people in the world have any confidence in this source of your political knowledge.

And even though "everyone knows that *X* is true," there is no guarantee that everyone is correct. First, as "Honest Abe" Lincoln observed, you can fool all of the people some of the time. Indeed, a political belief that is widely held might be particularly immune to careful assessment. Experiments in psychology have revealed that some of a person's beliefs can be altered by the beliefs of others. For example, if a subject hears several respondents (collaborating with the experimenter) all give identical wrong answers to a question, the subject can usually be persuaded to change his mind about what he knows—even when he is correct. Second, "everyone" often consists mainly of people whose cultural background we share. If you reexamine the above example about terrorism with a different "everyone," it is unlikely that almost everyone living under an oppressive political regime believes that political terrorism is bad. It is common for citizens in most political systems to believe that the citizens of rival political systems have been brainwashed. We know that some beliefs of our rivals are incorrect. Isn't it likely that they are equally convinced that some of our strongly held beliefs are wrong?

There are even problems with *general authorities*. Sometimes even the most competent general authorities might not have access to crucial information or might rely on inaccurate data, as when they list the countries with nuclear weapons. And sometimes, despite a group's acceptance of a single authority, there are still ambiguities and problems of interpretation.

Consider again the normative issue of the political role of women. In interpreting gender equality, all branches of government in the United States continually debate and interpret the rather limited framework for the principle of equality outlined in the Constitution. The appropriate role of women in Iran's politics remains a highly

Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP Images

Powerful women: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the second woman to be confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court, and Nancy Pelosi, the first (and only) woman to serve as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, are among those who have recently advanced the role of women in American politics.

contested issue, despite the Koran. Indeed, there is considerable difference of opinion within the broader Muslim world regarding how to interpret the Koran's authoritative prescriptions regarding women's roles in political life. In some Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Sudan, women's roles are greatly restricted. Yet Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey are Muslim-majority countries that have selected female heads of government (prime ministers). And in China, Mao Zedong's pronouncements on many topics, especially on economic matters, are now rejected by the leadership, even as his general views about gender equality remain a key authority source.

In short, it is common, and perhaps inevitable, for authority sources to offer inconsistent or conflicting knowledge claims about the political world. It is extremely difficult to differentiate among alternative authorities or even to establish widespread agreement on precisely what political knowledge a particular authority source provides.

Personal Thought

Have you ever insisted that some fact is correct because it seemed so obvious to you? It is possible to feel confident that you know something on the basis of personal thought—your own reason, feelings, or experiences. This second source of knowledge does not rely on outside authorities; rather, it assumes that the individual can use his own rationality, intuition, or personal experience to assess a knowledge claim.

RATIONALITY On occasion, you probably have decided that a certain claim is true because it is logical or obvious—it "just makes sense." The available information fits together in a coherent framework that, it seems, would lead to agreement among all people who think clearly. Or it is assumed that the knowledge claim is verified because it is self-evident to reasonable people and needs no further justification. For example, the Preamble to the U.S. Declaration of Independence claims that there are "self-evident" truths—that all men are created equal and that they have inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

INTUITION Another form of personal thought is intuition. Here, one's knowledge is based on feeling, on a sense of understanding or empathy, rather than on reason.

You have probably been convinced that something is correct because it *feels* right. For example, the key slogan of Barry Goldwater, the Republican candidate in the 1964 U.S. presidential election, was an explicit appeal to intuition: "In your heart, you know he's right!" Similarly, Barack Obama's 2008 campaign incantation "Change we can believe in!" and Donald Trump's 2016 slogan "Make America Great Again" were essentially appeals to feeling, personal impressions, and emotion.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE You can also be convinced that something is true because of your personal experiences. For example, you might be convinced that government bureaucracies are inefficient because a specific agency handled your inquiries ineptly. Or you might believe that different ethnic groups can live together in harmony based on your own positive experience in a multiethnic setting. Personal involvement in a dramatic event, such as witnessing a shooting or being physically harassed by the police, can have a particularly powerful impact on one's political beliefs.

PROBLEMS WITH PERSONAL THOUGHT AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE There is a major problem with all three forms of personal thought as a source of knowledge: There is no method for resolving "thoughtful" differences of opinion among individuals. This is most obvious with personal experience: Because people have different personal experiences, they are unlikely to reach the same conclusions about what is true. Similarly, there is no reason to assume that different people will share the same intuitive feelings regarding what is true. Goldwater's poor electoral showing (he received only 39 percent of the vote) suggests that many people concluded (intuitively?) that he was not right, or perhaps they decided (rationally?) that he was too far right—too conservative ideologically. And, after a few years of Washington's rough-and-tumble politics, many of Obama's supporters had lost confidence in "change you can believe in."

Even rational thought will not necessarily enable people to agree on political facts. We do not all employ the same logic, and it is rare to find a knowledge claim that everyone agrees is obviously correct. Consider again the key knowledge claim cited earlier: "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal." This seems a clear appeal to rationality, a political fact that is self-evident to all thinking people. But what exactly does this claim mean? Do all men have equal physical or mental traits at birth? Do they grow up with equal opportunities? Are they equal before the law, regardless of the quality of legal help they can purchase? We have noted the historical disagreement about how women's equality is to be interpreted. Many legal and political struggles in the United States during the more than two centuries since this "self-evident" truth was proclaimed have concerned precisely what equal rights *are* assured to every person in the U.S. political system, with particular regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, and age.

Science

In contrast to the two other sources of knowledge, science uses explicit methods that attempt to enable different people to agree about what they know—even if they don't agree on what *should* happen. The goal of any science is to describe and explain—to

answer *what*, *why*, and *how* questions. There are four essential characteristics of the **scientific method**:

1. Science is *empirical* in the sense that it is concerned with phenomena that can be measured or at least observed.
2. Science entails a *search for regularities* in the relationships among phenomena.
3. Science is *cumulative* because it tentatively accepts previously established knowledge on a subject as the foundation for development of further knowledge. One can challenge existing knowledge, but it is not necessary to reestablish the knowledge base every time.
4. The method of science is *testable.* Its practitioners, scientists, specify the assumptions, data, analytic techniques, and inference patterns that support their knowledge claim. Other scientists look for some analysis or evidence that would invalidate (falsify) the claim. They evaluate all aspects of the claim and can repeat the analysis to ensure that the claim should be part of the accumulated knowledge.

In adhering to these characteristics, science moves us away from anecdotal evidence to empirical evidence. ***Anecdotal evidence*** is based on personal experience and typically involves telling a story to prove a point, whereas ***empirical evidence*** is based on rigorous research that has utilized the scientific method, perhaps through tests, experiments, or statistical analysis. Therefore, these four characteristics are supposed to give the scientific method some major advantages over the methods of authority and personal thought in determining whether we can agree on a knowledge claim. In short, authority sources and personal thought tend to produce anecdotal evidence, and science tends to produce empirical evidence. Research-based evidence can be helpful because you are surrounded by competing claims regarding the political world.

There are many sources of statements about politics—family, friends, the Internet, television, books, newspapers, teachers, politicians. When you hear or read any claim about politics, you might take one of the following actions:

Ignore it.

Accept that it is correct.

Reject it.

Try to assess it.

If you decide to assess it, you would probably ask questions such as: Is it based on accurate and unbiased information? Is it consistent with other things I know about politics? Does it influence any political actions I might take? When you begin to ask assessment questions, and especially when you try to answer them, you are engaged in political analysis. At its core, **political analysis** is *the attempt to describe (to answer the* what *questions) and then to explain politics (to answer the* why *and* how *questions).* This book attempts to enhance your ability to engage in empirical political analysis—to impartially answer the *what*, *why*, and *how* questions about politics.

Political Science

1.4 Identify techniques and approaches used to gain political knowledge and assess whether they constitute a science.

Political science is one approach to political analysis. As you will discover in reading this book, **political science** applies *a set of techniques, concepts, and approaches whose objective is to increase the clarity and accuracy of our understandings about the political world.* That is, it is an attempt to apply the logic of the scientific method to political analysis. You will learn how some political scientists try to think systematically about political phenomena to describe "political reality" and to explain how politics works. You will also be introduced to some of the findings about politics that have emerged from the work of political scientists and other social scientists.

Doing Comparative Analysis

Aristotle observed, "All thinking begins in comparison." This book is called "a *comparative* introduction to political science" because it emphasizes how to utilize comparative thinking to enhance our understanding of politics. Comparisons will guide many of the discussions throughout the book, and each chapter will also have a specific feature called "Compare in…" to illuminate the comparative method in action. You were introduced to some aspects of the comparative method in the "acid test" that was the focus of Compare in 1.

Political Science and Political Knowledge

Not everyone agrees that it is appropriate and desirable to apply the scientific method to politics. Some insist that a "real" science must utilize strong applications of the four elements set out in Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996): (1) central ***concepts***, which *identify and name crucial phenomena* (specifically, such as "the Iraq War," or generally, such as "war"); (2) **theories**, which are *sets of systematically related generalizations that provide explanations and predictions about the linkages between certain concepts* (in the form "If A, then B under conditions C and D"); (3) *rules of interpretation*, which indicate the methods that will establish whether the explanations and predictions posited by the theory are right or wrong; and (4) a list of questions or *issues* that are worth solving within the area of inquiry.

Few would claim that political science is fully developed on any of these four elements. Thus, is it possible to engage in political science? Each chapter in this book will offer you a debate about an issue relevant to the attempt to understand the political world. Where better to start than with the Debate in 1: Is political *science* possible?

The discussion about the value of political science raises important questions that you should assess throughout this book. In general, this book will make the case that, despite the complexity of politics, generalizations are possible; each political phenomenon is not unique. If political science means the attempt to apply the scientific method to understand the political world better, it seems desirable to use such systematic and

analytic thinking. And, if we are to share *any* knowledge about the political world, we need methods to reach some interpersonal agreement about political facts. Although political science lacks precise concepts and theories, it does enable us to develop better concepts, improved methods, and sounder generalizations, and thereby it makes the study of the political world an exciting intellectual challenge.

This book assumes that understanding politics is extremely important. As Austrian philosopher of science Karl Popper (1963: 227) suggests, "We must not expect too much from reason; argument rarely settles a [political] question, although it is the only means for learning—not to see clearly, but to see more clearly than before." In the face of fundamental value conflicts and the potential for massive political violence among individuals, groups, and countries, enhanced political knowledge might reduce our misunderstandings and misconceptions. It can also be grounds for greater tolerance and wiser value judgments about normative political issues. Enhancing *what* we know about politics and what we *value* should make us more effective in knowing *how* to behave politically—as voters, political activists, and political decision makers. The study of the political world is of crucial importance to the creation of humane social life. Ultimately it is up to you, as you read this book, to decide what can be known about politics and whether you think political science is feasible.

The Debate in 1

Is Political *Science* Possible?

Science and Politics Do Not Go Together Well

- The analysis of politics cannot be objective and unbiased in the way assumed by the scientific method. The issues chosen for study and the manner in which variables are defined, measured, and analyzed are all powerfully influenced by the analyst's social reality (e.g., by the analyst's own culture, ideas, and life experiences). In this view, no person—whether Sunni Muslim or agnostic, rural Nigerian or cosmopolitan Parisian, international lawyer or migrant farm worker—can be totally objective and unbiased in the way he tries to analyze political phenomena.
- The subject matter of politics defies generalization. The political world is far too complex and unpredictable for systematic generalizations. Politics is based on the actions and interactions of many individuals, groups, and even countries. Politics occurs in the midst of many changing conditions that can influence those actions. The range of variation in what people might do and in the conditions that might exist is so vast that clear "if A, then B" statements about politics are impossible.
- Political science is not a "real" science, in comparison to natural and applied sciences (e.g., chemistry, physics, engineering). The four key elements described by Kuhn (as listed above) are well developed and widely shared within the research communities of every natural and applied science. In contrast, researchers in political science (and other social sciences) have not agreed on a coherent set of concepts, theories, and rules of interpretation. As you will discover throughout this book, many different methods are used in political science. There is disagreement regarding the important issues that ought to be solved, little consensus on what theories or generalizations have been proven, and even great difficulty in operationalizing key concepts such as "power" or "democracy."

- The "scientific" study of politics cannot adequately address the most crucial questions about politics, which are normative. Since the time of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), classical political theorists have insisted that the ultimate aim of political analysis is to discover "the highest good attainable by action." In this view, political analysis is a noble endeavor because it helps determine what government and individuals *should* do so that valued goals (e.g., democratic politics, a good life, a just society) can be achieved. Max Weber (1864–1920), an influential German social scientist, approvingly quoted Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy's assertion that science can provide no answer to the essential question "What shall we do, and how shall we arrange our lives?" (1958a: 152–153).

Political Science Is Possible and Worthwhile

- Every person, including those who study politics, has biases. But the scientific method encourages individuals to be very aware of their biases and to counteract those biases by making their assumptions as transparent as possible. The method of science requires the analyst to be extremely clear in describing his assumptions, in characterizing how evidence is gathered, in displaying the techniques used to analyze the data, and in exploring threats to the validity of the knowledge claims that are made. This transparency limits bias and exposes the analyst's thinking to scrutiny. (As authors, we have attempted to be aware of our own biases that may influence aspects of this book. As you read, try to become more conscious of *your* biases, which will affect your assessments of claims about the political world.)
- While the political world is complex, few events are truly random; there are patterns and linkages among political phenomena. The challenge for a political scientist is to specify these patterns. Rather than assume that all is chaos and nothing is related, the political scientist assumes that, by employing systematic techniques of gathering and analyzing empirical data, it is possible to present knowledge claims that help clarify that complex reality. Tendency statements—"if A, then a tendency to B"—might seem imperfect, but they can significantly increase our confidence regarding what we know to be true or untrue about politics.
- Although some sciences come closer to Kuhn's ideal than others, no science is pure. Scholars who study the way in which a scientific community operates conclude that every scientific discipline can be characterized by disagreements over concepts, methods, and theories and that the theories of every science include subjective elements. It is certainly true that political science is less scientifically pure than astronomy or chemistry, but this does not negate the value of applying the scientific method to make our thinking more precise and our knowledge claims more transparent, testable, and reliable.
- Even those who use the scientific method to study politics do not assume it can provide a compelling answer to every important normative question. However, if it does provide more reliable knowledge, it enhances our capacity to reason about the questions of what should be done. Whether at the individual level or at the national government level, decisions about what actions should be taken in the political world will be improved if they are informed by empirical evidence and sound knowledge claims that are based on the scientific method.

More questions...

1. Can you identify any of your own biases about political issues? What might be the main sources of those biases?
2. Can you think of examples where you have gained useful political knowledge from non-scientific sources such as literature, music, personal experience, or general authorities?

The Subfields of Political Science

Political science is composed of certain subfields that are usually defined by their specific subject matter rather than by their mode of analysis. While there are different ways to categorize the subfields, four are prominent:

1. **Comparative politics.** This subfield *focuses on similarities and differences in political processes and structures*. As noted above, much of empirical political science is comparative. Thus, comparative politics covers a huge domain within political analysis, and it has many sub-subfields (e.g., public administration, political parties, development, individual political behavior, public policy). Comparison might be crossnational (e.g., comparing the legal systems of Iran and Italy or comparing the voting patterns in 40 countries), or it might compare actors within a single country (e.g., comparing political beliefs about democracy among different ethnic groups in Kenya).
2. **American politics.** To the rest of the world, the study of American politics is merely a subfield of comparative politics. While this is quite sensible (and appropriate), American politics is treated as a separate subfield in the United States. In terms of issues and approaches, American politics covers the same types of topics as comparative politics.
3. **International relations.** The *focus is on the political relations among countries, the behavior of transnational actors, and the dynamics within the worldwide system of states and groups*. Subjects within international relations include war, interstate conflict resolution, international law, globalization, neocolonialism, regional alliances (e.g., the European Union), international organizations (e.g., the United Nations), and transborder political organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch). The study of foreign policy is also within this subfield.
4. **Political theory.** More precisely called political philosophy, this subfield *focuses on ideas and debates dealing with important political questions.* Some of this work attempts to characterize and interpret the writings of major political theorists (e.g., Plato, Thomas Hobbes, Karl Marx, John Rawls), whereas other work is the original exploration of the political questions themselves (e.g., What is the nature of a just society? What is the appropriate relationship between the citizen and the government?). Political *theory* is *the source of many of the normative knowledge claims made by political scientists.* Much of the work in political theory is based on the methods of rationality or authority or on an appeal to moral truths rather than on the scientific method.

BOUNDARY-SPANNING HYBRIDS Political science is an eclectic field that often links with other fields of inquiry or at least borrows and adapts ideas from other disciplines. Some work actually spans the boundary between political science and another discipline. While the subject matter of this work fits within one of the preceding four major subfields, these hybrids include political anthropology, political economy, political psychology, political sociology, and biopolitics.

Where Is This Book Going?

Just as there are different approaches to political science, there are different ways to introduce you to the political world. This book is organized to lead you along one route to understanding. It uses a comparative approach; it builds from the politics of the individual to the politics of countries and the international system and concludes with chapters that bring together all the topics for each of three large groups of countries. Fundamentally, the book aims to help you create an increasingly sophisticated analytic framework for the study and analysis of the political world that surrounds you.

The book is organized in five parts, each with its own chapters. You have nearly completed Part One, which offers an initial discussion of the nature of political knowledge and the approach political scientists take to understanding, analyzing, and evaluating that knowledge. Each chapter includes a Debate on a political topic, a Compare analyzing two or more political actors, and a Focus on a chapter-relevant topic for a single country. Since this chapter has focused on political knowledge, the Focus in 1 shows you how the scientific method has been applied to explore whether political knowledge varies across age groups within the United States.

The remaining four parts of the book build from studying the individual in the political world to analyzing countries in the global system. "Man is the measure of all things," observed ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras (ca. 490–421 B.C.E.). In that spirit, Part Two begins its exploration of the political world at the most personal and individual level. It initially examines what individual men and women think about politics and how they act politically. After Part Two, the book moves on to the politics of large collectivities of people that we call states and that are organized politically as governments. Thus, Parts Three, Four, and Five offer perspectives and explanations from political science regarding how states and governments are organized for political action, how political processes occur, and how countries are attempting to fulfill their political goals in the challenging conditions of the global system.

Part Two, "Political Behavior," begins in Chapter 2 with an assessment of the kinds of *political beliefs* that people hold and a description of normative political theories. It continues in Chapter 3 with a consideration of the *political actions* that people and groups undertake. Chapter 4 moves from description to explanation: Can we explain *why* people think and act politically in certain ways?

Part Three, "Political Systems," is about the politics of large numbers of people—in particular, how the political world is organized and how the *structures of government* function. Chapters 5 through 8 address questions such as What is a state? How are the political system and the economic system linked? What features distinguish democracies from dictatorships? What are the responsibilities of political structures such as the judiciary or the legislature?

Part Four, "Political Processes," emphasizes the *key dynamics of politics.* Chapter 9 characterizes the public policy process and details three major explanations for how political power is distributed and how policy decisions are made. Chapter 10 explores

the processes of political change and development. The vital issues of politics across borders and the manner in which states and other transnational actors cooperate and compete are central to Chapter 11. The various forms and causes of political violence are analyzed in Chapter 12.

Part Five, "Politics among States," focuses on the actions and challenges facing *countries in the contemporary political world.* Chapters 13 through 15 consider countries at different levels of development as they pursue the general goals of prosperity, security, and stability in the complicated global system. Finally, the Appendix explains some major concepts in political science, including four important frameworks for engaging in political analysis: taxonomic, formal, functional, and relational.

Our hope is that, by the time you complete reading and studying this text, you will think more like a political scientist in the sense that *you will have more confidence in your knowledge about politics, and you will have developed a more informed and systematic approach to understanding the political world*.

Focus in 1

The Political Knowledge of Different Age Groups in the United States

You might have heard the claim that younger adults are less knowledgeable about politics than older adults. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press uses sophisticated social science methods to regularly assess what people know about a host of issues. To illustrate how the scientific method is used to explore a political question, this Focus very briefly describes the steps the researchers utilize as well as a few of their results and conclusions.

1. *Examine existing evidence* that is relevant. Initially, you should look at existing research by political scientists or other social scientists that offers evidence and conclusions on the topic. Pew used the available research on age and political knowledge as the foundation for designing and conducting the study.
2. With this background, *state the issue* in a precise manner. This particular issue can be stated in the form of a *hypothesis* (i.e., a proposition about a political fact): Younger people have less political knowledge than older people.
3. *Operationalize key concepts* by specifying exactly what each concept means and how it will be measured. In this study, operationalizing the concept of political knowledge begins with the recognition that it could cover many things. Political knowledge could be defined in terms of descriptive, explanatory, and/or prescriptive information about various aspects of politics such as policies, institutions, events, or people. It could also include how-to knowledge, such as how to vote or how to circulate a petition. For simplicity, the Pew analysis focuses on a few descriptive political facts.

   Specifically, Pew examines people's knowledge of the names of key political leaders and the central facts in current political issues. While cross-national comparisons are interesting, this analysis looks only at people in the United States and only at a single point in time (2017). Another key concept in this research is age. Pew uses a simple taxonomy of four age groups among adults, as listed in Table 1.2. (If you don't know what a taxonomy is, consult the discussion of this concept in the Appendix.)

   In any scientific research, you should consider whether there might be problems with the validity of the data. In this case, for example: Was the set of individuals selected for study a reasonable one? Were the questions well constructed, minimally biased, properly asked, and accurately recorded? Were sufficient data gathered to explore the core question?

4. *Gather appropriate data.* You need a strategy for collecting evidence that is valid (i.e., it measures what it is supposed to measure) and reliable (i.e., it is accurate). You also need to decide what specific cases you are going to examine. In the empirical work by Pew, the data were collected from a U.S. national sample of 1002 adults, selected randomly and interviewed by means of a telephone survey using numbers for both cell phones and landlines. Respondents were asked multiple-choice questions about their political knowledge and about certain personal characteristics (including age). On the Pew Research website, you can also take the most recent News IQ Quiz at: http://www.pewresearch.org/quiz/the-news-iq-quiz/
5. *Analyze the evidence.* The data in Table 1.2 simply report the percentage in each age group who correctly answered the question. A more thorough analysis might use computer-based statistical techniques to assess the explanatory power of multiple variables, rather than just age (e.g., education level), or it might combine multiple responses into an index score of knowledge.
6. *Decide what, if any, inferences and conclusions can be made* about the issue on the basis of your evidence. This is where your analytic skills become especially important. The Appendix in this book discusses some of statistical techniques that can be utilized to help you judge whether the age-group differences in the data are greater than might be expected by chance. Without engaging in these statistical tests, what do you think from assessing Table 1.2? Do these data indicate differences in political knowledge across the age groups? The data do seem to suggest that the youngest group knows less about most of the questions asked. However, notice the results for the question about the president of France: The youngest group is the *most* knowledgeable here. Are there issues on which younger people may be just as aware as or even more informed than older people?

Is this evidence sufficient to conclude whether younger adults are less politically knowledgeable than older adults? Can you have confidence in a generalization about age and political knowledge in the United States based on only these questions in a single study at one point in time? Defensible conclusions often require extensive data, thorough analysis, and consideration of several alternative explanations. Sometimes the phenomena are so complicated or the evidence is so mixed that no generalization is possible. Any conclusion based only on Table 1.2 would be very tentative.

Other research on this topic contains more extensive data analyses. For example, a book-length study by Cliff Zukin and his colleagues (2006) analyzed a large database using sophisticated techniques. The researchers concluded that there is a positive relationship between higher age and greater political knowledge in the United States. Their study, like most rigorous research, attempts to address the deeper questions and the ultimate goal of the scientific method: explanation and broader generalization (theory). Does increased age cause increased political knowledge? If

Table 1.2 Political Knowledge among Adults in the United States, by Age

Age Group	18–29	30–49	50–64	65+	Old–Young Difference
Speaker of the U.S. House? (Paul Ryan)	56%	59%	69%	60%	+4%
Water in Flint Michigan is unsafe due to… (lead)	69	70	77	71	+2
U.S. DOJ Lead Russia Investigator (Robert Mueller)	37	40	57	56	+19
Neil Gorsuch is a… (Supreme Court justice)	37	43	52	49	+12
U.S. Secretary of State? (Rex Tillerson)	28	35	57	55	+27
President of France (Emmanuel Macron)	41	36	38	34	–7
Unemployment Rate (4%)	25	36	46	39	+14

Each column contains the percentage providing the correct answer in the age group identified at the top. These are abbreviated versions of the multiple-choice questions asked of respondents, with the correct answers (at the time of the survey) in parentheses after each question.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center (2017). http://www.people-press.org/2017/07/25/from-brexit-to-zika-what-do-americans-know/knowledge_02/.

so, why and how does this occur? In trying to explain the relationship between age and political knowledge, has some other important variable been overlooked?

To deal with this possibility, Zukin's group identified and analyzed factors other than age that might affect political knowledge. Among other explanatory factors that seem relevant are the individual's: income level; education level; gender; political party affiliation; the political issues that matter most to each age group; and the political climate at the time of the study. Do you understand why these types of factors might provide a better explanation than age does for the causes of variations in political knowledge? Zukin's group did conclude that age mattered, even when considering other variables.

Political phenomena are rarely straightforward, and they can change—sometimes quite rapidly. These are among the reasons that the study of politics is so fascinating (and perhaps frustrating). For a political analyst, this means that generalizations must be made with care. If you wanted to establish a broad generalization about age and political knowledge, you would want data on more measures of political knowledge, from several time periods, and probably not just from the United States. In the spirit of the scientific method, every aspect of the analysis is open to criticism by other analysts. And the conclusions stand only as long as other analysts are unable to challenge successfully any aspect of stages 1–6 in this process. In exploring political questions, further analyses are always appropriate to strengthen our knowledge claims.

Further Focus

1. What political knowledge would you measure if you did a comparative analysis across different age groups? Why? (Always assume there is an implicit "why" question when these questions are raised in the book.)
2. What do you think is the most compelling explanation for the apparent differences in political knowledge across age groups in the United States? Would this differ in another country? What countries come to mind?

Key Concepts and Terms

anecdotal evidence, p. 14
authority (as a knowledge source), p. 9
concept, p. 15
description, p. 5
empirical evidence, p. 14
empirical political knowledge, p. 6
explanation, p. 6
normative political knowledge, p. 6
political analysis, p. 14
political science, p. 15
politics, p. 3
prescription, p. 6
scientific method, p. 14
theory, p. 15

For Further Consideration

1. What do you think is the most serious obstacle to a "science" of politics?
2. Which authority have you relied on most extensively as a source of your knowledge about politics? What is the biggest shortcoming of this source?
3. What is the most important question that political science should attempt to answer? What might prevent political scientists from answering this question adequately?
4. Many people insist that most of their political knowledge is based on their own rational thought processes. What might be wrong with this claim?
5. Do you think political scientists can play an important role in government, or are they just intellectuals who should only stand on the sidelines and analyze politics?

For Further Reading

Almond, Gabriel. (1989). ***A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science.*** **Newbury Park, CA: Sage.** One of the major scholars of comparative politics assesses the diversity of approaches to political science and the possibility of a science of politics.

Goodin, Robert E., ed. (2011). ***The Oxford Handbook of Political Science.*** **New York: Oxford University Press.** Almost 70 top political scientists contribute articles summarizing the key issues, findings, and emerging developments in all the subfields of political science, selected from the 10 Oxford Handbooks focusing on each subfield of political science.

Katznelson, Ira, and Helen Miller, eds. (2004). ***Political Science: State of the Discipline.*** **Centennial ed. New York: W. W. Norton.** In only(!) 993 pages, a diverse group of political scientists offers essays (sponsored by the American Political Science Association) on the current insights and debates on central issues related to core concepts in the discipline, such as the state, democracy, political institutions, participation, and modes of political analysis.

King, Gary, Kay L. Schlozman, and Norman Nie, eds. (2009). ***The Future of Political Science: 100 Perspectives.*** **London: Routledge.** This 304-page volume presents 100 mini-essays, many by distinguished political scientists, which explore a broad array of interesting questions about politics and political science.

Kuhn, Thomas. (2012). ***The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.*** **4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.** A 50th anniversary edition of the short, understandable, and enormously influential discussion of how sciences develop and overturn paradigms; first published in 1962.

Kurian, George, James E. Alt, Simone Chambers, Geoffrey Garrett, Margaret Levi, and Paula D. McClain, eds. (2011). ***The Encyclopedia of Political Science.*** **Washington, DC: CQ Press.** This five-volume reference resource provides helpful essays on more than 1200 concepts that are significant in the study of politics as well as hundreds of valuable overview essays.

Monroe, Kristen Renwick, ed. (2005). ***Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science.*** **New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.** These essays reflect on a strong reform movement that emerged among some political scientists who demanded a broader and more methodologically diverse discipline, a democratization of the profession's governance and journals, and a broadening of graduate student education.

Pollack, Philip H. (2016). ***The Essentials of Political Analysis.*** **5th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.** Using many interesting examples, the book explains how to use empirical data and quantitative analysis (especially the Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS]) in the study of political phenomena.

Popper, Karl R. (2002). ***The Logic of Scientific Discovery.*** **London: Hutchinson.** A major and widely respected statement of the philosophy and application of the scientific method; first published in 1959.

Rich, Richard C., Craig Leonard Brians, Jarol B. Manheim, and Lars Willnat. (2018). ***Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science.*** **9th ed. New York: Routledge.** A very effective and understandable presentation of the primary methods that political scientists utilize in attempting to understand politics and develop defensible generalizations, focusing on a full range of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Chapter 2
Political Theory and Political Beliefs

Learning Objectives

2.1 Compare conservatism, classical liberalism, and socialism.
2.2 Distinguish cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientations.
2.3 Compare belief systems of the mass and the elite.
2.4 Determine the extent to which political culture explains political behavior.

On your way to campus one day, you stop by a local coffee shop. As you get your drink, you notice a group of your classmates engaged in a heated debate over the ongoing conflict in Syria, a topic that has often left you feeling overwhelmed and unsure of the complexities of the situation. You decide to join them anyway.

As you sit, Lucia says, "The involvement of the United States in Syria has been a total waste of resources. The war is never-ending, Syria's dictator is still in power, and the United States has spent $5.6 trillion on wars in the Middle East and Asia since 2001. Look at the taxes my family pays! Our government spends way too much on everything, and this problem isn't even ours!"

She looks directly at you, searching for support. As you stare at your cup of coffee, you realize you are in the hot seat. You think: Do I support U.S. involvement? Does our government spend too much on everything?

When you do not respond, Malik interjects, telling Lucia, "We had to do something. President al-Assad is a brutal dictator who is using chemical weapons and bombs to kill his own citizens—even children! We cannot sit by and watch this happen. Every government has a responsibility to protect its citizens and, if it won't, others in the world must step in."

You see Lucia's point about taxes and government spending. But you also see Malik's point; you are particularly empathetic when you think of pictures you have seen of the destruction in Syria and of refugees desperately fleeing the terrible violence.

Jayne Fincher.Photo Int / Alamy Stock Photo

What march would *you* join? These people join in a protest to express their political beliefs on issues that are important to them.

Elene joins in: "I agree with Malik that we had to get involved, but not just to help the Syrian people. The conflict allowed terrorist groups like the Islamic State to take advantage of an unstable situation and grab control of parts of the Middle East. For our own safety and security here in the United States, we need to do what we can to stop terrorism abroad."

"Well I sort of agree with Lucia," says Chris. "Many countries in the Middle East seem so fragile and unstable, and violence seems more common than peace. But none of them are democracies. What if democracy just won't work there? Who are we to tell them how to run their governments? We should just stay out of it."

Malik jumps back in. "We are one of the richest countries in the world. Our government should provide assistance to the refugees from the Middle East. We can do this while we also provide more programs to help the poor in our own country. I cannot sit back and do nothing while people suffer. We are marching on campus tonight in support of refugees and asylum seekers. Join us!"

You decide that everyone has made some reasonable arguments, although you are not sure about all the facts. You wonder if you should spend more time gathering knowledge about political issues like the conflicts in the Middle East. This discussion has prompted you to reflect on your own values: When is international intervention by the United States acceptable? What should your government spend money on? Are there problems at home that should be handled first? Do far-off conflicts impact you? Should you attend the march on campus?

How would you (the real you!) react to this conversation? What are your views on these questions?

This conversation is richly political—full of many knowledge claims. Some of the comments seem factual, while others mix fact, feeling, and evaluation. Some include strong prescriptive statements about what should be. There is a call for action. Your responses to this incident and to the questions it raises offer interesting evidence about your reactions to the political world. Some of your responses might involve what you think (your political beliefs and your political ideology), and others might involve what you do (your political actions). This combination of *an individual's political beliefs and actions* is the essence of the domain of political science called ***political behavior***. It is also sometimes called **micropolitics** because *the key object of study is the smallest political unit*—the individual as a thinker and actor in the political world. Micropolitics can also include the study of the political beliefs and actions of small groups such as families, committees, and juries.

Part Two of this book develops your understanding of the political world by examining major themes in the study of political behavior. This chapter explores individuals' political views, ranging from *core values to specific beliefs.* Initially, it examines normative political theory—the assumptions and broad beliefs that guide political ideologies. The primary focus is on three political ideologies prevalent in Western political thought: conservatism, classical liberalism, and socialism. The chapter then details what empirical analyses reveal about the basic elements of an individual's *political beliefs.* Third, the chapter considers the configuration of beliefs held by an individual—a cluster of beliefs called a *political belief system.* The final section attempts to characterize the dominant patterns of political behavior for an entire society—its *political culture.* The two other chapters in Part Two will extend our exploration of political behavior. Chapter 3 will examine the political actions taken by individuals and groups. Chapter 4 will assess alternative explanations for the sources of people's political beliefs and actions.

Normative Political Theory

2.1 Compare conservatism, classical liberalism, and socialism.

Should an individual resist a government policy on drug use with which she disagrees? Why? By what means? With what goals? Should government provide for the poor? Why? By what means? With what goals? As each of us attempts to answer such questions, we must grapple not only with the facts and realities of the situation, as we understand them, but also with our underlying beliefs about topics such as the appropriate role of government and the rights and duties of individuals in society. Political questions are often very difficult to resolve because they can be embedded in underlying values and core beliefs that are subject to deep disagreement.

Notice that the preceding questions are essentially *should* questions. The subfield of political science called ***normative political theory*** *offers explicit arguments and proposes answers to the significant "should" questions in the political world,* based on fundamental claims about the individual, the society, and the state. Normative political theorists develop their ideas about the "should" questions by blending their observations about the world with the detailed articulation and defense of one or more basic

values, principles, or norms that shape their viewpoint. So, for example, a normative theorist's response to whether the government should provide for the poor would require an elaboration on several key issues, such as whether society has a political or moral obligation to assist individuals, how this applies to the particular case of poverty, and how government is implicated in any such obligation. Such theorizing usually invokes fundamental themes such as justice, fairness, equality, and freedom.

Although there are overlaps between the two general approaches, normative political theory can be broadly contrasted with ***empirical political theory***, which *relies upon observation and analysis of real-world data as it attempts to apply the methods of science in order to develop descriptive and explanatory knowledge claims about the political world.* Later sections of this chapter offer information and generalizations about people's cognitive, affective, and evaluative beliefs, based explicitly in an empirical approach. But the formulation of an evaluative belief or a prescriptive knowledge claim will also draw upon normative thinking. Thus, this chapter about political beliefs initially explores some key themes in normative political theory and describes several major political ideologies.

Some of the core issues of normative political theory are associated with the basic question: Why do we need a government? Theorizing about this can provoke further questions about human nature, about why and how people associate with one another, about how government should function, and about how people and government should interact. Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, and Hannah Arendt are among the many important thinkers who have offered profound, provocative, and influential ideas about these basic normative questions regarding the relationships among individuals, the state, and society. Such political questions remain important and fascinating. This section describes some of these questions and a few of the many answers that are proposed.

You will notice that many of the knowledge claims made by normative political theorists are based on more than their values. Most political theorists include descriptive statements (claims of how things actually are) as part of their arguments regarding what should be and why it should be. As they articulate their normative claims about the political world, they are influenced by the same factors that surround those engaged in empirical political analysis—their personal experiences and education, the nature of the time and place in which they live, and other key forces in their lives. Focus in 2 briefly considers how the socioeconomic context contributed to the hugely influential writings of three major political theorists.

Focus in 2

Great Britain as a Context for Some Great Political Theorists

What influences the thinking of the great political theorists? Of course, the answer is complex and variable. Chapter 4 will suggest that most people's political beliefs are influenced by an array of factors, including their personal experiences and upbringing, their teachers and other individuals whose ideas engage them, and the sociopolitical contexts that provide evidence guiding their assumptions

and inferences about human nature, the role of the state, and other key topics. It is probably not surprising that most of the great political theorists of the past four centuries selected for major English-language anthologies were substantially influenced by their lives in the sociopolitical context of Great Britain (see, for example, Goodin and Pettit 2006; Love 2010; Ryan 2012). Even many modern thinkers who did not live in the British Isles were substantially influenced by Britain's unique institutional innovations and political culture in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Here are very brief examples of three major theorists directly affected by their lives in Britain.

Thomas Hobbes. Englishman Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) studied classics in school and then at Oxford University. After traveling in Europe, Hobbes became embroiled in the social turmoil, civil war, and serious succession problems in England after the death of Queen Elizabeth, as several different hereditary lines claimed the throne. One king (Charles I) attempted to reign absolutely over a resistant parliament through two civil wars and then was executed for high treason in 1649 as Cromwell's Puritans took over government. The chaos in England certainly influenced Hobbes's ideas about the brutal behavior of humans in the "state of nature." In 1640, Hobbes had written a tract to lawmakers urging that the sovereign (king) must exercise absolute power to reduce such disorder. He then fled England, fearing that he would be executed for his support of the monarchy. While abroad, Hobbes wrote his masterpiece, *Leviathan* (1651/1958), in which he elaborated on his ideas, arguing that a powerful monarch should be established and obeyed. Recognizing the growing political influence of business in England, he also suggested that the "voice of the people" should be heard through representatives of the business class. However, no one has any right to challenge the complete power of the monarch to make and enforce laws, as long as the monarch preserves social order.

Adam Smith. Adam Smith (1723–1790) left his small village in Scotland to study in Edinburgh and then Oxford, where he focused on philosophy and European literature. Smith served as chair in logic and moral philosophy in Glasgow and then traveled in Europe as tutor to a wealthy English duke. Smith had developed a strong opposition to the British government's interventions in its economy—a view reinforced when he saw similar problems in France. He retired to Scotland to write his classic *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776/2009). Smith was shaped by his training as a philosopher, and his work explored how humans could best interact to produce the most efficient economic system. He emphasized the benefits of a division of labor, in which economic actors—generally unhindered by government—pursue their own rational self-interest while the "invisible hand" of the market guides the economy (see Chapter 8 of this book). However, Smith's life in Britain and his work as a customs agent persuaded him that there were some limitations to the free market, and he began to advocate certain important roles for government in the economy, such as enforcing contracts, protecting intellectual property rights, and acting in areas where the decisions of private economic actors would not produce necessary goods (e.g., roads and bridges). He also entered a contemporary policy debate, arguing that Britain should abandon its American colonies due to the high costs of sustaining imperialism.

Karl Marx. Although Karl Marx (1818–1883) was born in Germany, he lived the second half of his life (34 years) in England, where he researched and wrote his major work, died, and was buried. The moral and philosophical bases of his theories (especially French socialism and German philosophy) were established during his time as a student, journalist, and political agitator in Germany, France, and Belgium. His activism led to his expulsion from all three countries, and thus in 1849 he moved to England and took refuge in London. His earlier ideas were blended with his experiences in England: a detailed study of English corporate records and other research in the British Museum; his projections of the future of capitalism based on his analysis of English capitalism, the world's most sophisticated economic system; and his observations of the hardships of the English working class. Indeed, Marx's own life was substantially shaped by the severe hardships suffered in London by his own family, which lived in poverty and disease and included the

painful deaths of three of his children. His writing in England culminated in his monumental work, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (1867/1981). According to his disciple Wilhelm Liebknecht, "[I]n England Marx found what he was looking for, what he needed: the bricks and mortar for his work. *Capital* could only have been written in London. Marx could only become what he did become in England" (McLellan 2007).

Further Focus

1. Based on these brief discussions, which of the three theorists seems to have been most influenced by the context of life in Britain?
2. Could you make a case that most major political theorists would probably have developed their ideas regardless of the country in which they lived?

Political Ideology

The political theories of Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx are among the several dozen most famous and widely studied in the Western world. Some would describe the work of each of them as a political ideology. We can define a **political ideology** as *a comprehensive set of beliefs about the political world—about desirable political goals and the best ways to achieve those goals.* Thus, a political ideology characterizes what is and what should be in the political world, and it might also offer strategic ideas about how to make changes in the direction of that preferred situation. Many relatively coherent belief systems in the contemporary world might be classified as political ideologies.

This section characterizes three of the fundamental concerns that are addressed by most political ideologies and help us distinguish analytically among them. These three fundamental concerns are their assumptions and value judgments about (1) individual human nature; (2) the proper relationship among the individual, state, and society; and (3) the desirability of establishing equality among individuals. Then it details three broad ideologies that are widely discussed in contemporary Western societies: conservatism, classical liberalism, and socialism. There are also short explanations of the ideologies of fascism and political Islam as well as brief characterizations of some other "isms."

THE INDIVIDUAL The "nature versus nurture" debate centers on disagreements about whether a person's fundamental beliefs and behaviors are determined primarily by innate needs and values with which she is born or are mainly a product of her environment and experiences. Chapter 4 will provide an empirical assessment of the implications of nature and nurture for political beliefs and actions. Here, our focus is on key assumptions that a political ideology makes about an individual's innate nature (e.g., the extent to which individuals are selfish or sharing, violent or nonviolent, emotional or rational) and about the adaptability of individuals (the extent to which they can be taught or induced to act and think in a way that is against their innate nature). For example, Thomas Hobbes grounds his theories in the assumption that people are essentially motivated to serve their own interests and that they will use whatever means necessary, including violence, to protect themselves.

INDIVIDUAL, STATE, AND SOCIETY What is the proper relationship among the individual, the state, and society? One view is that the highest value in social arrangements is to maximize individual liberty and freedom of action. A different view is that the collective good of society is most important, and individual freedom must be constrained by the state (the government, broadly understood—see Chapter 5) to achieve the results that most benefit the overall society. For example, Adam Smith emphasizes the benefits both to individuals and to the "wealth of the nation" from allowing economic actors to operate with a very high level of freedom from government controls because their pursuit of enlightened self-interest will result in a good society with an efficient and effective economy.

EQUALITY To what extent should there be equality in terms of what individuals do and the benefits they acquire? One position is that there should be legal equality—that every person should be equal before the law, have equal political rights, and enjoy equality of opportunity. An alternative position is that there should be material equality—that every person should enjoy a comparable level of benefits and goods. This second position places a high value on equality of conditions, adding social and economic equality to legal equality. A third position posits that people and situations are intrinsically unequal and that it is neither possible nor desirable to legislate any kind of equality. Karl Marx is among those who argue most fervently that a good society is achieved only when there is substantial equality in the material conditions of all individuals.

Three major Western ideologies are described below—conservatism, classical liberalism, and socialism. Although there is broad agreement about the core beliefs within an ideology, it is subject to varying interpretations across individuals and across cultures. And an ideology can have distinct versions, such as the differences within socialism between its Marxist–Leninist form and its democratic socialist form.

Conservatism

Conservatism *attempts to prevent or slow the transition away from a society based on traditional values and the existing social hierarchy.* As the word suggests, the essence of conservative ideology is to conserve the many valued elements of the system that already exists. What the conservative wishes to preserve depends on the time and place, but certain underlying elements are highly valued. Particular importance is placed on stability, tradition, and loyalty to God and country. The relationship of the individual to society and an antipathy to egalitarianism (i.e., equality of conditions) are at the core of conservatism.

THE INDIVIDUAL Conservatism makes two key assumptions about human nature. First, individuals are not consistently rational. In many situations, people are emotional and are unable to reason clearly. Thus, tradition and religion, rather than reason, are viewed as the most reliable sources for guiding society because they support stability and moderate change. In the words of one British conservative, "The accumulated

wisdom and experience of countless generations gone is more likely to be right than the passing fashion of the moment" (Hearnshaw 1933: 22). Second, individuals are inherently unequal in intelligence, skills, and status. Some individuals and groups are superior to others, and those who are superior should be in positions of power in society and in government.

INDIVIDUAL, STATE, AND SOCIETY Individuals have a basic need for order and stability in society. They belong to different groups that are unequal in power, status, and material possessions. Social harmony is maintained when these various groups cooperate. Traditional values and ethics provide the guidelines for group cooperation as well as individual behavior. And it is the role of societal institutions such as the family and the church, as well as government (the state), to communicate and enforce these values.

Individual liberty is valued, and individual rights should be protected— but only within a framework of mutual responsibility. No individual or group has absolute freedom to do whatever it wants; rather, each should behave in a manner consistent with society's traditional values. The superior groups should be allowed to enjoy the benefits and exercise the responsibilities associated with their position, but they should also protect the weak from severe hardships, a responsibility that the French call *noblesse oblige*—"the obligations of the nobility." And government should use its power to maintain social order; to preserve traditional values, especially regarding family life, religion, and culture; and to protect private property rights. State military and economic power should also promote the country's interests abroad and defend against intervention by other states.

EQUALITY Because inequality is a natural aspect of society, it is foolish and even dangerous to seek egalitarianism. Forced equality is unwise because it disrupts the natural, cooperative hierarchy among groups, causes social conflict, and endangers the fundamental goal of order and stability. Attempts to force equality are also unacceptable because they directly undermine individual liberty, which is of greater importance than equality.

Thomas Hobbes, Plato (427–347 B.C.E., who proposed rule by philosopher kings), and Confucius (551–479 B.C.E., who celebrated rigid social hierarchy; see Focus in 4), all reflect core values of conservatism. Other important advocates of conservatism include Edmund Burke, a British member of Parliament; British prime ministers Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill; and, to a lesser extent, American founding fathers James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. In the conversation at the local coffee shop at the beginning of this chapter, Elene offered some conservative points, such as the importance of using military power abroad to protect the interests and security of her own country.

Most contemporary conservatives are pragmatic. They are less concerned about the form of government than about the use of government to promote order and stability. The conservative perspective is sympathetic to government intervention when the objective of the policy is to maintain or return to traditional values such as

patriotism, family, morality, piety, and individual responsibility. In every era, conservatives resist current threats to the traditions they value. Today, those threats often include multiculturalism; expansion of the welfare state; and forced equality across class, race, and gender. A conservative government might actively support a state religion, expand its military power to influence other countries, suppress disorderly protest, provide minimal relief to those in poverty, or make abortion illegal. Some new policies are supported, but the rationale is always "to change in order to preserve," as the British Conservative Party has put it. Many of the contemporary political leaders who come closest to the spirit of conservatism are in certain countries in Asia and the Middle East (e.g., Brunei, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and to some extent Japan and South Korea) where social hierarchy, order, and traditional values are celebrated.

Classical Liberalism

The ideology of **classical liberalism** *places the highest value on individual freedom and posits that the role of government should be quite limited.* In part, this ideology emerged in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries as a response to rigid, hierarchical societies, such as those in feudal Europe. Intellectuals and those in commerce, among others, desired to be free from the constraints imposed by the dominant political, economic, and religious institutions in their society. They posited that each person should live responsibly but also should be allowed to live in the manner dictated by her beliefs and to enjoy fully the benefits of her efforts with minimal limitations from these stifling, conservative institutions.

THE INDIVIDUAL John Locke (1632–1704), a primary theorist of classical liberalism, describes individuals in a "state of nature" prior to the existence of government (see his *Second Treatise of Government,* 1690/1963). Each person enjoys natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Each person is rational and has the ability to use reason to determine the sensible rules (the "laws of nature") that shape how she should live in pursuit of her own needs and without harming others. Classical liberalism contrasts with conservatism in several important ways: (1) The freedom of each individual to pursue her natural rights is the highest value; and (2) each individual is rational and responsible and is the best judge of what is in her self-interest. (Notice also that the classical liberal's view of the state of nature is far more benign than the one described by conservative Hobbes as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.")

INDIVIDUAL, STATE, AND SOCIETY A person's full capabilities can be realized only if she is not limited by a conservative social order in which tradition and hierarchy are dominant. The social order celebrated in conservatism not only restricts individual freedom but also stifles progressive change and growth. In the classical liberal view, no one is forced to accept the authority of the state (government). Individuals can consent to be governed—choosing to "contract" with a minimal government, the main roles of which are limited to clarifying the laws of nature and enforcing the

occasional violations of those laws. The state should mainly play a night watchman, a low-profile police officer who ensures the basic safety and freedom of every individual. Thomas Paine's (1737–1809) slogan captures this perspective: "That government is best which governs least."

For similar reasons, classical liberals celebrate a laissez-faire economy, a view particularly associated with the writings of Adam Smith noted briefly in Focus in 2. Each person should be free to pursue her economic goals by any legal activity and to amass as much property and wealth as possible. Individual actors are guided by enlightened self-interest, and the overall economy is structured by the "invisible hand" of the market and free trade. There are only a few circumstances in which the state should act to constrain this freedom of economic action. This vision of a market political economy will be further explored in Chapter 8.

EQUALITY Equality before the law (equality of opportunity) is important, but government should not attempt to create material equality (equality of outcomes). People pursue their interests in different ways and with different levels of success. Even in situations of hardship, government action is undesirable because it undermines individual initiative and independence. Thus, government should have no significant role in addressing inequalities.

Among the many political thinkers associated with classical liberalism, in addition to John Locke and Adam Smith, are Jeremy Bentham (1748–1831) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). More contemporary advocates of classical liberalism (some of whom are labeled neoconservatives) include economists F. A. Hayek (1899–1992) and Milton Friedman (1912–2006) and political commentator William F. Buckley (1925–2008). At the coffee shop, Lucia was most aligned with this perspective. Part Five of this book will reveal that many contemporary political regimes are powerfully influenced by classical liberalism. Its emphases on limited government, individual liberty, and laissez-faire economics are among the central themes in many ongoing debates about public policy and government action.

A brief aside: If you are an American, you might be confused by these characteristics of liberalism because, in the United States, a *liberal* is someone who supports substantial government intervention and public policies that increase equality of outcomes. This confusion of terminology emerged during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's tenure as U.S. president (1933–1945). Faced with a devastating economic depression, Roosevelt argued for a "New Deal," in which the national government had a clear duty and responsibility to assist actively in economic recovery and in social action. This expanded government would regulate business, create jobs, and distribute extensive welfare services to the citizens, including cash payments and increased public provision of education, housing, health care, and so on. Roosevelt's political opponents labeled his policies "socialism." He knew this was a very negative label in the United States, so he called himself and his policies "liberal," contrasting them with the "conservative" policies of others (mainly Republicans, such as the previous president, Herbert Hoover) who emphasized limited government, laissez-faire economics, and individual freedom. Notice that, in the general language of political ideologies, what

Roosevelt was calling conservatism was mostly classical liberalism, and what he was proposing as liberalism was a very modest version of democratic socialism (described below). Roosevelt's meanings of liberals versus conservatives were adopted in the United States but not in most other countries. In this book, the traditional ideology of liberalism will be called classical liberalism to distinguish it from the American understanding of liberalism as an ideology of extensive government and reducing inequality.

Socialism

For **socialism**, *the most important goal is to provide high-quality, relatively equal conditions of life for everyone, with an active state assisting in the achievement of this goal.* Many people were still impoverished and exploited in the nineteenth-century world, despite the emergence of industrialization and democracy. Socialism evolved as a distinctive ideology among theorists concerned about the plight of people who had relatively little economic, social, or political power. They were dissatisfied that neither conservatism nor classical liberalism revealed much concern for improving the conditions of these groups. Socialism articulated a vision through which economic and political power could be directed to benefit all groups in society.

THE INDIVIDUAL In the socialist perspective, people are social and caring by nature. They are not innately selfish and aggressive, although negative social conditions can produce such behavior. Every individual's attitudes and behaviors are largely determined by the environment of family, community, and work. Thus, it is crucial to create an environment that encourages individuals to place the highest value on cooperation and sharing and to act in ways that increase the collective good.

INDIVIDUAL, STATE, AND SOCIETY Because the good of the society as a whole is the most important goal, some of an individual's interests must be subordinated to, or at least coordinated with, the overall interests and needs of everyone in the society. All groups, from national organizations (e.g., trade unions) to local organizations (e.g., workplaces, social clubs) to the family, must encourage everyone to act in ways that result in cooperation and service to the common good. The state has a crucial role, both through policies that provide every citizen with good material living conditions and through education and civic training. Thus, government must take an expansive role in society, ensuring that every citizen has access to high-quality education, shelter, health care, and jobs, as well as financial security against economic uncertainty. The state is also much more active in controlling powerful actors and self-interested groups whose behavior will harm the collective good of the society, and thus it engages in extensive regulation of both the economic sphere and the social sphere. When everyone enjoys comfortable material conditions, there is much greater willingness to work for the common good and to subordinate one's acquisitiveness and greed.