

The Definition of a Nation

CHARACTERISTICS

Population

A nation must have people. The number of people has nothing to do with its status as a nation.

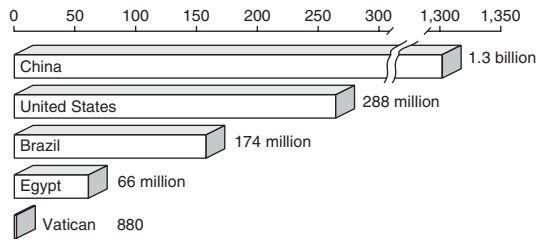
The population can be either homogeneous or heterogeneous.

EXAMPLES

The Vatican has the world's smallest population, 880, while China has the world's largest population, 1.3 billion.

South Korea's ethnicity is 99.9% Korean. Canada has no dominant ethnic group.

Size of Population: 2000



Territory

A nation must have land.

A nation has known and recognized boundaries, that are defined by international law and must be respected; these boundaries can and do change.

Russia, the largest nation, is 6,592,800 square miles; the smallest, Vatican City, has 108.7 acres.

A border dispute between Russia and China east of Mongolia puts the boundaries of these countries in flux.



Sovereignty

A nation has supreme and absolute power within its own territory.

A nation decides its own foreign and domestic policy. It is not subordinate or responsible to any other authority.

A nation defines its own government and forms its own economic system.

Citizens of Saudi Arabia must adhere to strict Islamic dress codes in public.

South Africa instituted apartheid despite objections from other nations.

In 1958, Cuba chose a communist form of economy and government.



Government

Every nation is politically organized, even though forms of government vary. For example, big nations often have different levels of government.

Government is the institution through which a society makes and enforces public policies.

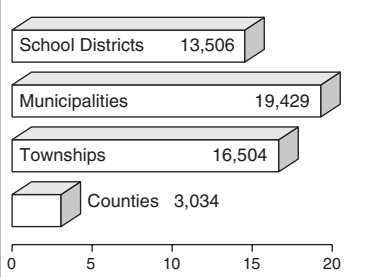
Government is the agency through which a nation exerts its will and accomplishes its goals.

Afghanistan has a central government and provincial governments. The U.S. has several levels of local government.

The 104th U.S. Congress struggled to draft a federal budget that would reduce the nation's deficit.

The 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution allows the government to collect taxes to finance its operations.

Number of Local Governments in U.S.: 2002



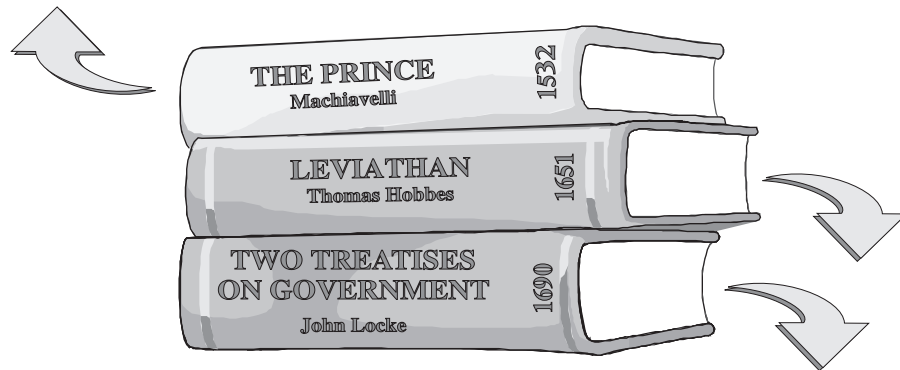
Origins of Government: Force & Conquest, & Social Contract Theories

Force & Conquest Theory

One person or group claimed control over an area and forced all within its borders to submit to that person's or group's rule. The state was born of force.



Excerpt: *For in truth there is no sure way of holding other than by destroying, and whoever becomes master of a City accustomed to live in freedom and does not destroy it, may reckon on being destroyed by it . . . I say, that in entirely new Princedoms where the Prince himself is new, the difficulty of maintaining possession varies with the greater or lesser ability of him who acquires the possession . . . when they depend upon their own resources and can employ force, they seldom fail.*
(Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1532)



Social Contract Theory

Humans lived in a “state of nature” in which no government existed and no one had superior power. Anything a person acquired was done so by force and a person was only as safe as his or her own physical strength. Humans voluntarily gave up their freedom to the state in exchange for protection and security. Individuals agreed to allow the state to protect their “natural rights” of “life, liberty and property” and in return they would abide by the laws of the state.

Thomas Hobbes

In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes described the nature of the contract between man and state. In reference to government, Hobbes believed that the sovereign state has unlimited power in protecting the security of the people.



Excerpt: *And because the condition of man . . . is a condition of war of every one against every one, in which case every one is governed by his own reason, and there is nothing he can make use of that may not be a help unto him in preserving his life against his enemies, it followeth that in such a condition every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body . . . Whensoever a man transferreth his right or renounceth it, it is either in consideration of some right reciprocally transferred to himself, or for some other good he hopeth for thereby . . . The mutual transferring of right is that which men call “contract.”*
(Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651)

John Locke

While John Locke's ideas about the social contract are built on those of Hobbes, Locke disagreed with him about the extent of the state's power over its citizens. His *Two Treatises on Government* suggested that individual rights exist within the social contract between the individual and the community or state.



Excerpt: *Men being, as has been said, by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this Estate, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own Consent. The only way whereby any one divests himself of his Natural liberty and puts on the bonds of Civil Society is by agreeing with other Men to joyn and unite into a Community.*
(John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*, 1690)

Purposes of Government

PURPOSE & EXPLANATION

Keep societies ordered

Keeping the peace at home is a primary role of government.

Order is an essential factor in the functioning of any society; without order, anarchy would exist.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION & EXAMPLES

Preamble to the U.S. Constitution:

*. . . To Insure
Domestic
Tranquillity*



Provide public services

Government acts as a servant of its citizens by providing services.

Types and amounts of services vary; some governments provide public education, health care, public transportation, environmental protection, etc.

U.S. Constitution: Article 1 Section 8, Clause 1

*The Congress shall have
the power . . . to . . .
provide for the common
defense and general
welfare . . .*



Provide for national security

Government acts to protect the nation against foreign enemies or from internal subversion.

Defense is mentioned more times than any other power of government in the U.S. Constitution. For instance, in the Preamble, it says

*Provide for the
common defense.*



Promote standards of behavior

Rules of conduct are established and a means to enforce them are found.

Justice means that laws must be fair, reasonable, and impartial in content and in administration.

Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

*Establish
Justice*



Make economic decisions

Government decisions concerning economic factors vary.

Government can stimulate economic growth or stability through adjusting interest rates and money supply, trade incentives, or the regulation and development of natural resources, etc.

U.S. Constitution: Article 1 Section 5, Clause 5

*Congress has the Power
to Coin money,
Regulate the Value
thereof*



Categories of Government According to Number of Rulers: Democracy

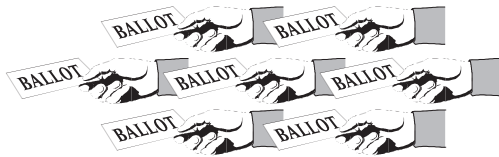
TYPE & CHARACTERISTICS

Direct Democracy

Also called a pure democracy.

The will of the people is translated into public policy (law) directly by the people themselves in mass meetings.

All citizens have the chance to participate.



EXAMPLES

Direct democracy does not exist in its pure form as any nation's government today.

Town meetings in the U.S. are a form of pure democracy.

*Resolution:
To build a
schoolhouse
for
Smithtown's
children*

Representative Democracy

The people elect representatives and give them the power to govern.

Agents of the people are responsible for carrying out the will of the people.

Elections are called when needed, not at regular intervals.



Japan

Jamaica

Taiwan

New Zealand

Pakistan

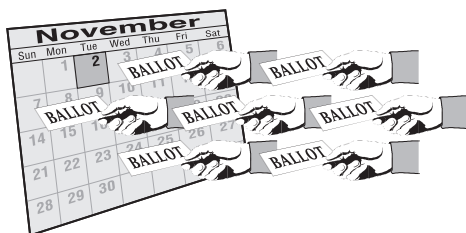


*May 20, 1774
An Act of the
British
Parliament:
To better
regulate the
Massachusetts
Bay Colony*

Democratic Republic

A democratic republic is a representative democracy with no inherited public office.

Regularly scheduled elections make the representatives accountable to the people for their conduct.



United States

France

Tunisia

Kenya

Canada

Brazil



*The Clean Air
Act of 1990
An Act:
To maintain
air quality
standards*

Principles of United States Democracy

The Individual

Individual Worth

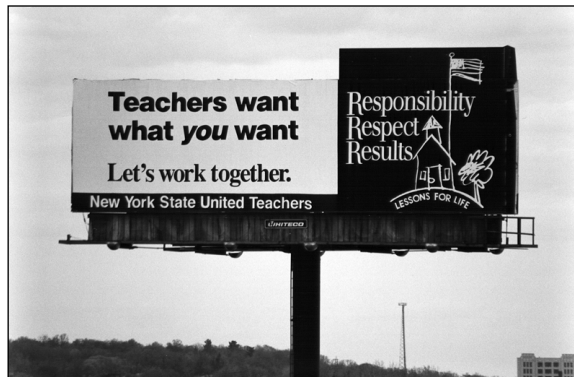
Each individual, no matter what his or her station in life, is a separate distinct being. Each person's worth and dignity must be recognized.

Individual Liberty

Democracy can only thrive in an atmosphere of individual freedom. However, such freedom must be tempered by respect for others.

Equality of Persons

All people are entitled to both equality of opportunity and equality before the law. No person should be held back for any arbitrary reason such as race, color, religion, or gender.



In a democracy, any individual or group has a right to express an opinion, even if they are in the minority or part of a special interest.

Political Power

Free Elections

All democracies have open elections in which people can choose their leaders and voice their opinions on issues. Public officials listen to the wishes of the people if they want to be re-elected. All candidates have the right to express their views. Citizens are free to help candidates or support issues, and they vote freely by secret ballot. Everyone's vote carries the same weight.

Competing Political Parties

Rival parties help make elections meaningful. Voters are given a choice among candidates of different parties whose platforms focus attention on key issues. Parties out of power serve as the loyal opposition.



Differing concepts of individual rights are at the heart of the controversy surrounding public policy aimed at upholding physician-assisted suicide, such as Oregon's 1994 Death with Dignity Law.

Community and Government

Majority Rule with Minority Rights

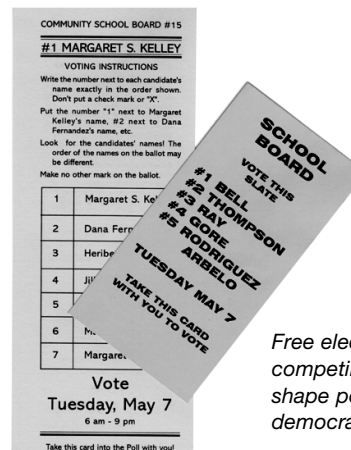
The device by which public policies are decided in a democracy is "majority rule." A majority of the people will make the right decision more often than the wrong decision. The majority must recognize the rights of the minority, listen to its objections, and welcome suggestions for change.

Limited Government

Government is not all powerful; it may do only what the people have given it the power to do. Government and its officers are always subject to and never above the law. This is known as the "Rule of Law."

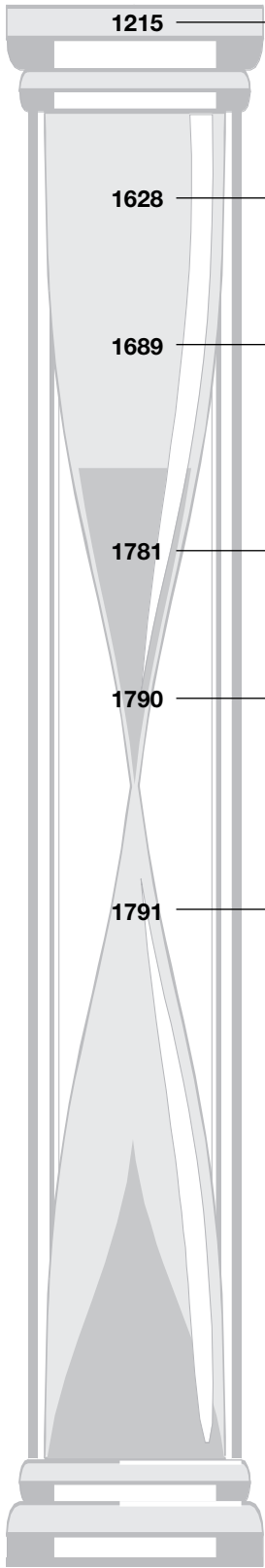
Representative Government

Citizens choose individuals through periodic elections to represent their ideas in the formulation of public policies (law).



Free elections among competing parties help to shape political power in a democracy.

Origins of American Government: A Summary Timeline



1215 — **Magna Carta**

Excerpt: *No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned . . . or outlawed, or banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, nor will send upon him, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.*

1628 — **The English Petition of Rights**

Excerpt: *. . . no man should be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax or such like charge, without common consent by act of Parliament.*

1689 — **The English Bill of Rights**

Excerpt: *That the pretended power of suspending of laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of Parliament is illegal . . . that levying money for or to the use of the crown without consent of Parliament is illegal . . . that it is the right of the subjects to petition the king . . . and prosecution for such petitioning are illegal.*

1781 — **The Articles of Confederation (Article II)**

Excerpt: *Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence and every Power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.*

1790 — **The United States Constitution (Article VI)**

Excerpt: *. . . The Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.*

1791 — **The U.S. Bill of Rights (Amendment I)**

Excerpt: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*

