# Political Power

Political power can simply be defined as the power to influence. The power to influence is essentially the power to control. When pertaining to political matters, the most influential people in any form of government have the most power. The underlying argument is between who has the most influence. Is it the elite or the majority? There are four theories of who truly governs.

The first theory is clearly elitist. Karl Marx has said that all government in any way shape or form is controlled by whichever class dominates the economy. In all societies there is an economic struggle between two major classes. Although the working class is the majority they have the least political power. This is solely because they have less money than the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie on the other hand dominate the working class economically simply because they own the factories where the working class work. The theory also represents the government as a machine designed to favor to the dominant classes interest. This is why a Marxist would believe that it is pointless to study a government because it has none of its own power. It runs on whoever feeds it, and in this case it is the bourgeoisie.

The second theory is most similar to the first. It states that the nongovernmental elite has the most political power. This time when I mention elite it goes beyond the bourgeoisie. This elite is composed of corporate leaders, high ranking military officers, and a small group of political leaders. Other groups can be added, such as the leaders of the media, labor leaders and the heads of special interest groups. Many more groups can be added but the basic underlying idea of this theory is that a very small group of high status officials not involved in government contain the majority of political power.

The third theory tends to sway from the first two theories. It states that political power is concentrated within some of the people who actually run the government, the bureaucrats. Because the bureaucrats are appointed officials it separates itself even farther apart from the other theories. The bureaucrats are only influenced by the people that appoint them. This is why the political power is contained within the government.  
 The fourth and final theory can be described as a combination of the first three theories. It delves into the dominance of power between the elite themselves. All of the elite groups have a certain amount of political control, and they themselves are responsive to their follower?s interests. Their followers being the majority have the most political power in this theory because they influence the elite. If the majority isn?t happy the elite wont be elite anymore.

Majoritarian and Elitist politics represent two ends of the spectrum of political thought. The four theories of who governs is clearly an elitist?s point of view. The majority is influenced by the mass media, and it is rare to find anyone with their own ideas. The majority is told what they want.