

The Overview of Political Science in Contemporary Politics

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Abstract

In this article, the author discusses the concepts of nations and states, power and authority. They examine the different ways in which nations and states can combine and the various forms of power and influence that can be exerted. The author also touches on how power can be used to shape preferences and control the climate of opinion. The article concludes by noting that awareness of the different forms of power and how they are exercised is important in understanding the dynamics of political systems.

Keywords: Power, Politics, Government, Authority, Goal attainment.

1. Introduction

In the study of politics, the organization of political systems and decision-making processes in nations is a central topic of investigation. Different interpretations of politics may depend on the concepts and perspectives used to approach the subject. In the realm of politics, it is common for individuals to have different approaches and advocate for the effectiveness of their own methods. In the field of political analysis, concepts and ideas are frequently debated and opinions may vary, making it challenging for those who advocate for a more scientific approach to the subject. Comparative politics, which examines political systems across multiple countries, can provide valuable insights into contrasting perspectives on politics. This area of study is particularly useful in understanding the different ways in which nations address the core political problem of making collective decisions (Corning et al., 1998, pp. 141-172).

2. Politics

When considering the definition of politics, it is easy to identify examples of political activity such as the annual budget negotiations between the American president and Congress or the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001. Despite these clear examples, the boundaries of what is considered political can be less defined. For instance, it can be debated whether an invasion of one country by another is an act of politics or war. Additionally, it can be questioned if politics can occur in situations where resources are unlimited, if it is limited to just government entities, or if it can also be found in smaller groups such as families, universities, and seminar groups (Zegart, 2005, pp. 78-111).

It is challenging to provide a precise definition of politics that encompasses all the things that are considered "political." Politics is a term with multiple meanings and variations. One possible way to define politics is as the activity in which groups make binding decisions collectively by trying to resolve conflicts among their members. This definition, suggested by Miller (1991), contains four key elements:

1. Politics is a collective activity involving individuals who share a common membership or acknowledge a shared fate.

1. It assumes the presence of different perspectives, opinions, or goals among group members.
2. Politics involves resolving these differences through communication and persuasion.
3. Political decisions become authoritative for the group and are enforced if necessary.

Politics is a collective activity that requires the participation of individuals who share a common membership or acknowledge a shared fate. Without a group, politics cannot be practiced, as demonstrated by the example of Robinson Crusoe. Politics assumes the presence of differing views, goals, or means among group members. In the absence of diversity of opinions, politics would be unnecessary. The process of politics involves resolving these differences through discussion and persuasion, where communication plays a central role. The decisions made through the political process become authoritative policies for the group and bind the group members to agreements that can be enforced if necessary. Decisions reached solely by violence do not qualify as politics, but the threat or use of force is crucial in the implementation of policies (Rose & Miller, 1992, pp. 173-205).

Politics is a necessary aspect of human life due to the collective nature of human existence. As individuals, we live and function in groups that require making collective decisions about shared resources, interactions with other groups and planning for the future. Examples of such decisions can range from a family discussing vacation plans, a country deciding on going to war or the world working towards limiting environmental pollution. Being social creatures, politics is an inescapable part of our existence, and we must engage in it as part of our daily lives (Clayton, 2019).

Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, believed that politics is an innate aspect of human nature. He stated that man is a "political animal" meaning that not only is politics unavoidable, but it is also a fundamental human activity that sets us apart from other species. Aristotle believed that by participating in a political community, individuals can fully express their reasoning and virtuous nature. In other words, politics is an essential aspect of human existence, it's what we are meant for (Aristotle, 2000).

It is not uncommon for members of a group to have different ideas or approaches to a problem, even if they have common goals. However, a decision must be made, and once it is, it will affect all the members of the group. Politics is a process that allows the expression of different views and the combination of these views into a single decision. As Shively suggests, politics can be seen as a way to find the best solution for a common problem through rational decision-making, which is known as public choice. Through discussing and debating the different options, the final decision will be of better quality as the participants become better informed and more committed to the agreed course of action. In other words, good politics results in policies that are well-designed and well-implemented (Jhangiani, 2022).

While members of a group share some common interests, they may also have conflicting interests. Collective decisions often involve both common and conflicting interests. For example, deciding to expand higher education is one thing, but determining who should pay for it is a separate issue. Although a decision affects all members of the group, not everyone will benefit equally from it. Typically, a course of action will result in both winners and losers. The core of politics is the process of making decisions that affect both shared and conflicting interests among the members of a group. Some experts define political scenarios as those in which common and competing interests are present. Laver

stated that "pure conflict is war" and "pure cooperation is true love," and that politics is a combination of both (Gallupe et al., 1994, pp. 77-86).

A key objective of politics is to reach a compromise or agreement that is acceptable to all members of the group, even if it is not their first choice. In this sense, Crick defines politics as the process of reconciling differing interests within a given unit of rule by allocating power proportionately based on their importance to the community's welfare and survival. Crick's definition may be considered idealistic and not taking into account the absence of negotiation, bargaining and compromise in dictatorship regimes, however, it emphasizes that the venue for such discussions is government (Heywood, 2013).

3. Government

Groups not only have to make decisions about their shared matters but also have to establish how those decisions will be reached and carried out. In small groups, agreements can usually be reached through informal discussions, and the individuals who make the decisions implement them themselves. However, this approach is not feasible for large groups and special institutions are required to make and enforce collective decisions. These institutions form the government and it is where political issues are resolved.

Once the government makes a decision, it must be carried out. Easton states that politics is the authoritative assignment of values, and this is achieved by implementing decisions, not just making them. This includes raising taxes, declaring war, and enforcing laws. This is the more challenging aspect of politics, as a public authority, including the use of force, is necessary to execute collective decisions. If rules are broken, the government has the authority to impose penalties, such as imprisonment. It's worth noting that the words "politics" and "police" have the same root, highlighting the connection between the two (Sorzano, 1997, pp. 24-40).

In addition, governments do not always seek explicit consent from individuals to abide by laws, pay taxes or participate in wars. Individuals may not have had a role in creating the laws of their country, but they are still expected to comply with them. Even if you choose to leave one country, you will be subject to the government of another. It is impossible to live a life free from the government in the current world.

In everyday language, the term "government" usually refers to the highest level of political leaders such as presidents, prime ministers, and cabinet members. However, in a broader sense, government encompasses all organizations responsible for making and enforcing decisions for the community. This includes public servants, judges, and police, who may not be appointed through political means such as elections. In this broader definition, government encompasses the set of institutions that exert public authority over society (Adcock et al., 2007).

Given that government has a special authority, why do individuals willingly cede their autonomy to such an institution? One justification for government, often cited by contemporary economists, is the efficiency gained by having a standardized way of making and enforcing decisions. Without such a system, every decision would require separate agreements on how to reach and implement it, leading to inefficiency. Efficiency gains allow individuals who disagree on what should be done to agree on a mechanism for resolving their disagreement (Ruggie, 2008, pp. 317-333).

Furthermore, the government provides security and predictability. In a well-governed society, citizens can trust that law will be stable and not changed arbitrarily, that rules apply to all individuals equally, and that decisions will be

enforced fairly. In these ways, government serves as a safeguard from the state of nature as described by philosopher Thomas Hobbes, in which individuals are in a constant state of war with one another without a common authority to maintain order (Gavelin et al., 2009).

Without government, Hobbes believed, human life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". It is only through the establishment of a governing authority that society can progress and flourish, including industry, science and culture. Therefore, the government provides a framework of stability and order that allows for the development of a free market and a welfare state (Victor, 2021).

Despite its benefits, the government can also have unintended consequences. One risk of a centralized governing authority is that it may abuse its power and cause more harm than good. As one of Hobbes's critics pointed out, it is not beneficial to escape the dangers of foxes if it leads to being devoured by lions (Locke, 1690). This is a sentiment that the 130 million people who were murdered by their own government in the 20th century would likely agree with, if they were able to speak.

Furthermore, even when a government effectively maintains internal peace, it may engage in external conflicts. The 20th century saw the rise of both warfare states and welfare states. Government is a complex and risky endeavor, offering the benefits of peace but also the potential for increased conflict. The goal of studying government should be to understand how to harness the power of government for the benefit of society while also limiting its potential for harm (Carey, 2008).

4. Governance

Governance refers to the process of decision-making and management of public affairs. The term shifts the focus from institutions and powers of government to the broader concept of regulation. It encompasses the activities of not only the government but also other actors involved in the regulation and management of public affairs. The popularity of the term has increased in recent years as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of decision-making and management in the public sphere (Bevir, 2012).

The term "governance" refers to the overall process and activity of governing, rather than just the institutions and powers of government. It highlights the involvement of a wide range of actors in regulating modern societies, such as employers, trade unions, the judiciary, professional employees, journalists, and academics. Governance also encompasses the concept of self-regulation in certain sectors, where specialized networks of professionals, such as in healthcare or education, play a significant role in decision-making. This broader term allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the various actors and processes involved in governing (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020, pp. 97-140).

Governance is the process of managing and coordinating society, involving both public and private sector actors. It is the ability to achieve objectives through persuasion and networks rather than direct control. The concept of governance gained popularity as governments lost confidence in their ability to directly manage the economy and welfare systems, shifting focus towards regulation rather than provision.

Governance can be defined as the process of managing and directing society through a combination of public and private sector actors. It involves coordinating the efforts of various actors to achieve shared goals, without relying solely on the use of direct command and control. The term has gained popularity in recent years as governments have shifted their focus from being direct providers of goods and

services to becoming regulators of various sectors. The emphasis on governance also highlights the importance of evaluating the performance and effectiveness of government policies and actions. It's often used to assess the effectiveness of government in promoting economic and social development.

Governance, in the context of international relations, refers to the management and regulation of global affairs without the presence of a central governing authority. It encompasses the process of coordinating and agreeing on policies, standards, and regulations through a network of actors, including private and public entities. Examples of governance include the regulation of the internet, where standards for connecting computers and data are agreed upon by private actors, rather than a central governing body. This highlights the need for the term governance to understand the management of complex global issues (Smouts, 2008).

Governance refers to the process of managing and regulating society, often involving coordination between public and private actors. It has become a popular term in political analysis as it emphasizes the role of various actors in regulating society, rather than just government institutions. The term is particularly relevant in the field of international relations, where there is no central governing body, but rather agreements and rules established by various organizations and private actors. This concept of governance, without traditional government structures, is becoming increasingly relevant in the modern world (Keping, 2018, pp. 1-8).

5. The State and Sovereignty

The state is the primary form of political organization in the world, with most territories being divided into separate states that are recognized by each other and form the global system of nations. There are a few exceptions such as colonies and territories under UN administration, as well as some territories that have partial external control or autonomy within a larger state. But overall, the world is divided into distinct states that make up the international system (Feinstein, 2023).

The state is the ultimate political authority within a defined territory, holding the power to make and enforce laws, maintain order, and exercise control over its citizens. It is a unique institution, separate from all other organizations in society, and is legitimized through the consent of its citizens. The state wields the power to use force if necessary, and citizens are expected to obey its laws and accept its authority as long as they remain within its borders. The state can be both a source of benefit and a source of threat, and its actions can have significant consequences for individuals and society as a whole (Philpott, 2020).

The state is the supreme authority within a defined territory, comprising of government, population and territory. It holds the power of legitimate use of force and its authority is accepted by the citizens living within its borders. The state is distinct from the government, which acts as the executive branch and carries out the mandate of the state. The head of state, such as a monarch, serves as a symbol of the state and is distinct from the head of government, who holds the actual power. The state defines the political community in which government operates (Watts, 2023).

The state is an entity that has a monopoly on the use of force within its territorial boundaries. It is responsible for maintaining law and order, and for protecting the rights and interests of its citizens. The state is not just limited to its government, but it is also composed of the population and the territory it governs. It is the state that establishes the legal framework and provides the mandate for its government to enforce it. The state is often associated with the

use of force, but it also plays a vital role in promoting the economic and social welfare of its citizens (Munro, 2013).

The state is a unique institution that stands above all other organizations in society. It is defined by its ability to use legitimate force within its borders and citizens are expected to accept its authority. The state is more than just its government, it also includes the population and the territory. A central feature of the state is its monopoly on the legitimate use of force and its ability to enforce laws and regulations. The German sociologist Max Weber stated that the state is a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Without this monopoly, the state's existence is at stake and there is no legitimate authority (Harrison & Boyd, 2018, pp. 17-21).

Sovereignty is the concept that underpins the idea of the state. It is the supreme and ultimate authority within a territory, which holds the power to make and enforce laws without interference from any external body. The French philosopher Jean Bodin, in the 16th century, was one of the first to describe sovereignty in this way, as the untrammelled and undivided power to make laws. Similarly, the English jurist William Blackstone argued that there must be a supreme and irresistible authority within every state, in which the right of sovereignty resides. The term "sovereign" originally meant the one seated above, which is why the sovereign body is the one institution within a country that is not subject to any higher authority- and that body is, by definition, the state (Merriam, 2001).

Sovereignty, which originally developed in Europe, refers to the ultimate and unchallenged authority to make laws within a state. Historically, this authority was attributed to monarchs as the supreme ruler, but as democracy emerged, the belief shifted towards the idea that sovereignty lies with the people and their elected representatives. However, the concept of sovereignty varies in different countries and systems, such as in federal systems like the United States, where political authority is shared among different levels of government and is limited by a constitution made by the people and upheld by the judiciary. Thus, the notion of sovereignty and the concept of the state may differ depending on the specific context and political system (Backer, 2011, pp. 137-144).

The concept of sovereignty has two aspects, internal and external. Internal sovereignty refers to the power of a state to make and enforce laws within its borders. External sovereignty, on the other hand, is the recognition by other states and international organizations that a state has jurisdiction and authority over a certain territory. This recognition allows a state to participate as a recognized member in the international system and to assert its authority domestically. Both internal and external sovereignty are interconnected, with the development of the international system reinforcing the authority of states within their own borders (Makinda, 1996, pp. 149-168).

6. Nations and Nationalism

A nation is a group of people who share a common identity, culture and history. This sense of belonging and unity can manifest in various ways, including language, religion, customs and traditions. However, the concept of a nation is not fixed and can change over time. For instance, in France, the idea of a common French nation was actively constructed and promoted by the centralizing elite after the revolution of 1789, through measures such as the establishment of a national education system that emphasized the use of the French language. Thus, while shared language, culture and history can be indicators of nationhood, they are not necessarily the only factors that define a nation (Gyekye, 1997, pp. 77-114).

A nation is a group of people who share a common identity and a sense of belonging to a specific territory. While language, history, and ethnicity are often cited as markers of national identity, they are not necessarily defining characteristics. A nation can be imagined as a community and is often viewed as any group that lays claim to being one. Additionally, nations are peoples with a homeland, which distinguishes them from ethnic groups or tribes that can migrate. The origin of the word "nation" is linked to the Latin term for "place of birth," emphasizing the connection between nation and territory. A nation's boundaries may change over time through expansion and contraction, but it remains tethered to its homeland (Tartakovsky, 2011, pp. 1849-1862).

A nation is a group of people united by a common culture, history and language, and who claim the right to self-determination within a specific territory. The idea of a nation is often linked to the concept of a homeland and is characterized by a group's desire for political autonomy. While language, history, and ethnicity may be used as markers of a nation, they do not necessarily define it. A nation is distinguished from an ethnic group or tribe by its connection to a specific place, and by its assertion of self-rule through independence or devolution.

Nations are groups of people who identify with a common culture and share a sense of belonging to a specific territory. They are often characterized by shared language, history, and ethnicity, but these factors alone do not define a nation. The crucial aspect of a nation is the assertion of self-rule and the demand for autonomy or independence within their homeland. This political dimension of nationhood is what sets it apart from other groups such as linguistic or ethnic communities. Examples of this can be seen in the French-speaking Canadians, who identify as a distinct nation and demand autonomy, or the indigenous people of the Americas, who also make a claim for self-determination. Both of these groups are also connected to specific territories, which is an important aspect of national identity.

On the other hand, nations are also seen as a product of modernity, a concept that emerged in the late 18th and 19th centuries. This perspective argues that nations are a recent phenomenon, formed as a result of the processes of modernization and industrialization. This perspective is known as the 'modernist' view of nations, which suggests that nations are a product of more recent historical developments such as the rise of nationalism ideologies, the emergence of the nation-state, and the growth of mass communication and transportation. These two views of nations, the primordial and the modernist, continue to be debated among scholars in the field.

According to this modernist perspective, nations are a product of the idea of self-determination that emerged during the Enlightenment and gained momentum during the French Revolution. This idea led to the formation of nation-states, where a distinct nation or group of people could govern themselves within a defined territory. This view emphasizes the role of modern political ideologies and movements, such as nationalism, in the formation of nations. In contrast to the primordial view, which sees nations as ancient and unchanging, the modernist view sees nations as a product of historical and political developments (Greenfeld, 1996, pp. 3-40).

From the modernist perspective, nations are a product of the modern era, emerging as a means of unifying diverse populations and providing a sense of identity and self-government. They may draw on historical cultures and traditions, but their primary purpose is to serve the needs of modern societies and economies. The creation of a centralized government and the establishment of a common market often play a crucial role in the formation of national identity.

The emergence of the modern nation is closely tied to the rise of capitalism and the development of mass communication. The spread of literacy and the use of a common language, facilitated by advances in print technology, allowing for the creation of a sense of shared identity and community among diverse populations, ultimately leading to the formation of the modern nation-state. This imagined community, brought together under a veneer of equality, serves to unify and integrate large populations under a common government and market system.

A nation is a group of people who identify with each other and share a common culture, history, and territory. They assert a right to self-determination and autonomy within their homeland. The concept of a nation is complex and it is difficult to define using a single marker such as language, history or ethnicity. The origins of nations are debated, with some viewing them as ancient and others as modern constructs that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nationalism is a doctrine of modernity, and it emerged in the 19th century as a principle that nations have the right to govern themselves. The British philosopher John Stuart Mill was an early advocate of this principle, arguing that where the sentiment of nationality exists, there is a prima facie case for uniting all members of the nationality under the same government.

The principle of national self-determination has been a key driver of political change in the 20th century, particularly in the aftermath of the collapse of empires. It holds that nations have a right to govern themselves and determine their own destiny. This principle was reflected in the redrawing of Europe's map after World War I and further supported by the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that all peoples have the right to determine their political status and pursue economic, social, and cultural rights (Manan, 2015).

7. Nations and State

The relationship between nations and states is complex and multifaceted. There are four different scenarios that can occur when nations and states intersect: the nation-state, the multinational state, the stateless nation, and the diaspora. The first two scenarios pertain to the type of state, while the latter two refer to the status of national groups. The nation-state is a state in which the majority of the population belongs to a single nation, while the multinational state is a state that is composed of multiple nations. The stateless nation is a nation that lacks its own state, while the diaspora is a community of people who have been dispersed from their homeland. Understanding these different scenarios is crucial to understanding contemporary politics and the dynamics between nations and states (Hollander, 2022).

The first category is the traditional non-state, where one state contains multiple nations. These nations may have distinct languages, cultures, and histories, but they are all governed by a single state. An example of a multinational state is Canada, where the majority of the population is English-speaking but there is also a significant French-speaking minority in Quebec. The relationship between the state and the different nations within it can vary, with some nations being granted autonomy while others are not. It's worth noting that the concept of nation and state is complex and can overlap, and different countries and regions may have different perspectives and usage of these terms. The above examples are just general references.

The second category is the multinational state, which contains several distinct national groups. These groups coexist within the same state boundaries, but they may have different languages, cultures, and aspirations for self-determination. Examples of multinational states include Canada, Belgium, and India. In these

countries, the state must navigate the competing demands of different national groups, often through systems of federalism and power-sharing arrangements.

The third category is the stateless nation, which is a national group that does not have its own state. They may reside within the boundaries of a multinational state and may demand autonomy or independence. Examples of stateless nations include the Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, and the Tibetans in China.

The fourth category is the diaspora, which refers to a national group that is dispersed across several states. They may or may not have their own state, but they maintain a sense of connection to their homeland and culture. Examples of diaspora include Jewish, Irish, and Indian communities around the world.

In conclusion, the relationship between nations and states is complex and multifaceted. While the traditional nation-state is still prevalent, many countries today are multinational states, and there are also stateless nations and diaspora groups that complicate the picture. Understanding these different categories is essential for analyzing contemporary politics and conflicts (Harrisson et al., pp. 4-215).

8. Power

Power is the ability to influence or control the actions or decisions of others. It is a fundamental aspect of politics, as it enables decision-making and the enforcement of collective decisions. Without power, a government would be ineffective. Power can be found not only in government, but also in other areas such as the workplace, family, and universities. While some define politics as being primarily about the distribution, exercise, and consequences of power, political scientists are particularly interested in the flow of power within and around the state. Power can be defined and measured in various ways, such as the ability to make decisions, control resources, and enforce rules and laws.

Power can be defined as the ability to produce intended effects and achieve goals. It can be divided into two categories, power to and power over. Power to refers to the ability to achieve one's own goals and objectives, while power over refers to the ability to control or influence others. Additionally, power can also be exerted through incentive shaping, using inducements and threats, or preference shaping, by influencing opinions and attitudes. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons viewed power as a collective resource that allows a government to draw on the obligations of its citizens to achieve collective purposes such as law and order and protection of the environment.

The German-born political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906–75) made a similar point in defining power as 'not just the ability to act but the ability to act in concert'. A group whose members are willing to act together possesses more horsepower – an enhanced capacity to achieve its goals – than does a group dominated by suspicion and conflict. Thus, Arendt viewed power and violence as enemies rather than siblings: 'power and violence are opposites; where the one rules, the other is absent. Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it'. This view of power has exerted some influence but remains incomplete. Power, like politics, has a harder edge. Politics is more than a technical task of implementing a vision shared by a whole society (d'Entreves, 2022). It is also an arena of conflict over which goals to pursue. Politics is substantially a matter of whose vision triumphs, a point that must be reflected in any definition of power. From this perspective, power consists of the ability to get one's way, to impose one's opinions and to overcome opposition. The underlying view of power here assumes conflict rather than consensus. In Dahl's famous definition (1957), power

is a matter of getting people to do what they would not otherwise have done. Dahl's definition is neutral as to means; power is equated with influence; however, exerted (Dahl, 1957, pp. 201-215).

Of course, power and influence can be exerted by a variety of methods. One form is incentive shaping: altering the incentives confronting those subjects to power. This can include the threat of punishment for disobedience or the promise of reward for acceding to a request. In either case, A seeks to alter the context within which B acts rather than B's overall political views. American presidents, for example, spend a significant amount of time on such activities. They threaten, bribe and cajole overseas leaders, wealthy corporations, leading members of Congress and anyone else who can help them achieve their goals. Indeed, their office success depends in part on the skill with which they shape the incentives facing other political actors.

But power can also be exerted by shaping preferences rather than incentives. Here A's effort goes into shaping what B wants to achieve rather than the context within which B behaves. For example, an American president may seek to persuade the Secretary-General of the United Nations that the USA's intervention in another country's affairs is morally justified. Here power shades into influence, exerted through persuasion by discussion and debate.

On a wider scale, preference-shaping can take the form of controlling the overall climate of opinion within which preferences are formed. Here influence arises from agenda-setting: that is, controlling what issues are addressed and how they are interpreted. For example, George W. Bush sought to convince his public that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a response to a threat to American security; this battle for public opinion proved to be more prolonged and more difficult than the initial invasion itself. On a smaller scale, parents exert influence over their children by shaping the way they see the world, not just by directly giving them incentives to behave in a particular way.

Awareness of this point led Lukes (1974) to conclude that A exerts power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests, even if B is unaware of the damage caused (Young, 1978, pp. 639-649). So, the manager of a nuclear power plant that leaks radioactivity into the surrounding community has exercised power over the residents, even if the population is unaware of the contamination. The difficulty here resides in specifying what a person's 'true' interests are, a challenging task once we move beyond physical well-being.

Even so, we must accept that controlling people's knowledge and attitudes are the most efficient way to control them. As the French philosopher Michel Foucault reminded us, supplying the framework within which an issue is approached is a potent form of control. (Garland, pp. 403-422).

9. Authority

Authority is a broader notion than power. Where power is the capacity to act, authority is the right to do so. Authority gives the holder the right to exercise power, just as owning property offers the right to decide how that property is used. Authority exists when subordinates acknowledge the right of superiors to give orders. So, a general may exercise power over enemy soldiers but he does not have authority over them; this is restricted to his own forces.

When writers such as Parsons and Arendt argue that power is a collective resource, they mean that power is most effective when converted into authority. Yet authority is more than voluntary compliance. To acknowledge the authority of rulers does not mean you agree with their decisions; it means only that you accept

their right to make decisions and your own duty to obey. Relationships of authority are still hierarchical (Haugaard, 2018, pp. 104-132).

The German sociologist Max Weber provided a path-breaking analysis of the bases of authority. He distinguished three ways of validating political power (see Box 1.3).

The first type is by reference to the sanctity of tradition. This authority is based on 'piety for what actually, allegedly or presumably has always existed'. Traditional rulers do not need to justify their authority; obedience is demanded as part of the natural order. For example, monarchs rule because they always have done so; to demand any further justification would itself challenge traditional legitimacy – and would meet a firm response. Traditional authority is usually an extension of patriarchy: that is, the authority of the father or the eldest male. Weber offers several examples of paternal relationships: patriarchy means the authority of the father, the husband, the senior of the house, and the elder sibling over the members of the household; the rule of the master and patron over the bondsmen, serfs, and freedmen; of the lord over the domestic servants and household officials, of the prince over house and court-officials (Wolin, 1981, pp. 401-424).

Type	Basis	Illustration
Traditional	Custom and the established way of doing things	Monarchy
Charismatic	Intense commitment to the leader and his message	Many revolutionary leaders
Legal Rational	Rules and procedures; the office, not the person	Bureaucracy

While such illustrations may seem old-fashioned, in reality, traditional authority remains the model for many political relationships, especially in non-democratic countries. In the Middle East, for example, 'government has been personal, and both civil and military bureaucracies have been little more than extensions of the leader' (Hague & Harrop, 2004). The leader takes care of his followers and so on down the chain. These relationships are presented as familial, but in practice, they are based on inequality: the strong look after the weak in exchange for their loyalty. When entire political systems operate on the principle of traditional, patriarchal authority, they are termed 'patrimonial'.

Charismatic authority is Weber's second form of authority. Here leaders are obeyed because they inspire their followers, who credit their heroes with exceptional and even supernatural qualities. Where traditional authority is based on the past, charismatic authority spurns history. The charismatic leader looks forward, convincing followers that the promised land is within reach. A key point here is that, contrary to popular use, charisma is not for Weber, an intrinsic quality of a leader. Rather, charisma refers to how followers perceive such figures: as inspirational, heroic and unique. So, there is little point in searching for personal qualities that distinguish charismatic from ordinary leaders; rather, the issue is the political conditions that bring forth a demand for charismatic leadership.

Generally, charismatic leaders emerge in times of crisis and upheaval. Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Adolf Hitler and Ayatollah Khomeini are illustrations. Khomeini, for instance, was a Muslim cleric and exiled hero who

returned in triumph to take over the government of Iran following the revolutionary overthrow of the Shah in 1979.

Charismatic authority is short-lived unless it can be transferred to a permanent office or institution. 'It is the fate of charisma', wrote Weber, 'to recede with the development of permanent institutional structures.' This process is called the routinization of charisma. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini succeeded in establishing a theocratic regime (system of government) in Iran, dominated by the Islamic clergy, which outlasted the Ayatollah's death in 1989. But as memories of the regime's founder recede, so younger generations increasingly question the political authority of religious leaders. Authority in the Iranian theocracy is not fully routinized (Ashraf, 1990, pp. 113-152).

The third and final base for authority in Weber's scheme is called legal-rational. Here obedience is owed to principles rather than to people. The result is a government based on rules, not traditional or charismatic leaders. Legal-rational authority inheres in a role or a position, not a specific person.

Indeed, a major virtue of legal-rational authority is that it limits the abuse of power. Because it derives from the office rather than the person, we can speak of officials 'going beyond their authority'. Setting out the extent of an officeholder's authority reveals its limits and so provides the opportunity for redress (Weber, 1958, pp. 1-11).

In this way, legal-rational authority is a foundation of individual rights. Weber believed legal-rational authority was becoming predominant in the modern world, and certainly, it has become the dominant form in established democracies. Indeed, Weber's homeland of Germany is the best example of a Rechtsstaat, an entire state based on the law (Mommsen, 1999, pp. 77-92).

10. Legitimacy

We must introduce one final concept in this chapter: legitimacy. This notion is a close cousin of authority, but there is a significant difference in the context in which the terms are used. Legitimacy is normally used in discussing an entire system of government, whereas authority often refers to a specific position. When the authority of a government is widely accepted by those subjects to it, we describe it as legitimate. Thus, we speak of the authority of an official but the legitimacy of a regime.

Although the word legitimacy comes from the Latin legitimate, meaning to declare lawfully, legitimacy is much more than mere legality. Legality is a technical matter. It denotes whether a rule was made correctly – that is, following regular procedures. By contrast, legitimacy is a political question. It refers to whether people accept the validity of either a specific law or, more generally, of the entire political system. Regulations can be legal without being legitimate. For example, the majority black population in white-run South Africa considered the country's apartheid laws to be illegitimate, even though these regulations were made according to the country's then-racist constitution. The same could be said of many laws passed by communist states: properly passed and even obeyed but not accepted as legitimate by the people.

While legality is a topic for lawyers, political scientists are more interested in legitimacy: in how a regime gains and sometimes loses public faith in its right to rule. Legitimacy is judged in the court of public opinion, not in a court of law.

Legitimacy is a crucial concept in understanding governments' stability and effectiveness. A famous analysis, (Lipset, 1994, 1-22) argued that 'legitimacy involves the capacity of the political system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political systems are the most appropriate ones for the society'.

11. Conclusion

In summary, the concept of a nation is complex and multifaceted, with different scholars and theorists providing different perspectives on what constitutes a nation. Some view nations as ancient, primordial entities, while others view them as more recent constructs, arising from the idea of self-determination. The relationship between nations and states is also complex, with some nations having their own sovereign states, while others exist as national minorities within multinational states. Power is also central to politics, and is defined as the ability to achieve one's goals and overcome opposition. This can be achieved through incentive shaping, such as altering the incentives of those subject to power, or preference shaping, such as shaping what people want to achieve. Authority, on the other hand, refers to the legitimate use of power, and is often associated with the state and its institutions, but can also exist in other forms such as religious or moral authority.

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