

Political Analysis

Democracy and Power

Conceptions of Power

Defining Power

- The word 'power' has no single meaning or use, for example: Power of the Prime Minister, the power of love, the power of ideology, the power of science, etc
- All these uses have elements in common, but share no single common essence
- As a result, some have advocated a 'family resemblance' concept of power; all uses resemble each other in some way, but it's hard to say exactly how

Dahl's First Dimension

- He clearly identified power with the actual exercise of power, not merely the abstract notion of 'having' power
- He formulated his definition of power as follows: If A has power over B then A has an observable affect on B such that A makes B do something that B would not otherwise do
- He also differentiated power from power resources, which are potential or latent power

Baratz's Second Dimension

- They extended Dahl's analysis to describe a 'second dimension' of power
- In this analysis, power was not only overt decision-making, but also non-decision-making
- This refers to the fact that less powerful actors (B's) are prevented from placing issues of importance to them on the political agenda by the actions of the more powerful A actors: agenda setting, voice, resource allocation, etc

Lukes' Third Dimension

- Luke further extended this analysis by arguing that yet another way power is exercised is by influencing, shaping, and determining the perceptions and preferences of others
- This refers specifically to the influence of socially structured and culturally patterned behaviours of groups and institutional practices
- Thus, Bs are not powerless because of the specific behaviours of either decision-makers or non-decision-makers; rather Bs are rendered powerless because they are unable to realise what are their 'true' interests are

Arendt's Communicative Power

- She argued that power is not just human ability but the ability to act in concert, or to agree with others in uncoerced communication to participate in some collective action
- Thus, in contrast to Weber, Arendt thinks that power is not about instrumentalising another's will for one's own purposes, but rather is about the generation of a common will in a communication aimed at agreement
- This implies that power is that about and exercised by groups, not individuals
- She essentially redefines the imposition of one's will over others by coercion (normally called power) as 'violence'

Foucault on Power and Knowledge

- He focuses on how power and knowledge are used or serve to develop and perpetuate a particular socially constructed, and also how this can be resisted
- Foucault argues that there is no such thing as 'power' in the abstract; one must examine precisely how and where and why it is used and abused in particular circumstances
- Foucault talked about how particular beliefs or ideologies structure societal actions and institutions in a particular way such that they create or shape what is considered to be 'true', and hence they are a very important (and underestimated) aspect of power
- Examples of these include the notion of science as how to produce truth, the idea of individuals having separate, stable preferences or interests, the differing roles of the genders (less so now), religious concepts, etc
- In his work *The Order of Things*, Foucault argued that all periods of history have possessed certain underlying conditions of truth that constituted what was acceptable as, for example, scientific discourse
- He argues that these conditions of discourse have changed over time, from one period's episteme to another; sort of like Thomas Kuhn's notion of a paradigm
- *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge's Taxonomy* is a bizarre and seemingly fictitious classification system described by the writer Jorge Luis Borges; Foucault uses this classification system as an example to show how knowledge systems are relative to context and background assumptions about reality
- Foucault's basic point is that whoever controls the episteme controls truth production, and this in turn grants them the power to determine what is and is not normal, what is right and wrong, what should be done, legitimacy, the interpretation of the past, etc
- For example, modern democracy is a struggle between parties who agree to the rules of the game; the real struggle and exercise of power is in determining those rules of the game

Exercising Power

Power, Violence and Coercion

- Power should not be confused with violence or the exercise of physical force, as the latter is only one way to exercise power, and indeed is usually only resorted to when institutional and social means of exercising this power have failed
- Thus, increased use of force may actually be an indication of the loss of power
- States do not maintain a monopoly over the use of force in order to actually use that force, but to prevent private citizens from using such force

Power Resources

- Power resources represent potential power, the potential to shape outcomes in one of the ways described above
- There are two types of power resources: Allocative resources (material goods) and authoritative resources (status, symbolic position in a hierarchy, titles, legitimacy, etc), such as that possessed by a police officer
- Three subtypes of authoritative resources: legal (based on the rational application of agreed up on laws and rules, like democracy), traditional (the authority of practice and ancient wisdom, like primitive cultures and common law), and charismatic (a powerful leader with a particular special mission or goal worthy of obedience)

- In recent centuries there has been a shift away from traditional to legal forms of authoritative resources

Women and Political Power

- Women tend to have different leadership styles, more cooperative over competitive, though this difference is mostly not innate, but shaped and reproduced by social norms, institutions, and socialisation
- Often, however, male norms of behaviour are conflated with 'professionalism', thus putting women at a disadvantage
- When women behave as combative and noisy in parliament as do men, they are ridiculed by men, while if they behave in a more collaborative style they are seen as unfit for the job. Similarly, research has found that women chairing political committees face more challenges to their authority than comparable men
- Gender power theorists analyse how certain actions, attitudes or things are described as being masculine or feminine (e.g. the mother country, founding fathers), and how this in turn shapes people's actions and attitudes
- They also examine how institutions are subtly shaped so as to exclude women from power, for example important communication in parties shifting from formal to informal venues as women came into the party

Constitutional and Popular Democracy

Key Features of Democracy

- These are basic institutional features common to all modern established democracies despite wide variations in specific constitutional and judicial arrangements:
 - Private autonomy of individual to lead own life
 - Free and equal access of voice of every citizen in the political community
 - Inclusive suffrage in regular elections and referenda
 - Equal access to and protection of independent court system
- Democracy thus has a dual task: ensuring freedom of citizens, and limiting state power

Liberal and Republican Traditions

- In the Liberal tradition, the prime focus is on the liberty of the private citizen
- Thus, democratic will formation involves the legitimize exercise of political power as determined by aggregation of individual preferences
- In contrast, the prime focus of the Republican tradition is the actual political participation of active citizens; democratic will formation is thus concerned with constituting society as a collective political community
- In the Liberal conception, sovereignty is underscored by the constitutional state, with authority exercised by the people only through elections, referenda, and specific legislative and judicial agencies
- In the Republican sense of sovereignty, the 'People' embody sovereignty, which therefore cannot truly be delegated or represented by others
- The fundamental tension is thus between constitutional (contractual) versus popular (collective) sovereignty
- Modern democracies are generally a hybrid mixture of republican and liberal sovereignty

Explaining Populism

- One of the core elements of populism is an anti-status quo basis, generally also associated with pitting the people against some antagonistic 'other', where the 'other' may be characterised in political, economic, ethnic, or religious terms
- Defeat of this 'other' will lead to prosperity and freedom for the people
- Populist movements are 'of the people but not of the system'; they involve some kind of revolt against the established structure of power and elite values in the name of the people
- 'The people' may be the classical Marxist working class, or any collective that perceives a substantial lack in its rightful political representation; thus the dichotomy may be between workers and landowners, hard-working 'middle class' persons and criminals, welfare-bums and immigrants, or the white minority in a country now controlled by black South Africans
- Populist movements generally centre around a single symbolic leader, who need not necessarily be charismatic or even active (exiled leaders are common) – they simply serve as a source of unity and identification for the movement, and as a representative 'common man' who has achieved greatness
- Populism is not so much an identity or political label, but a persuasive technique that virtually all politicians use to a greater or lesser extent, especially there has been a failure, or perceived failure, of existing social and political institutions
- Hence, the rise of populism is often associated with specific political and economic crises, including hyperinflation, civil war, ethnic conflicts, and widespread corruption

The Two Faces of Democracy

- Democracy presents two faces, one redemptive, the other pragmatic; that although these are opposed, they are also interdependent; and that between them lies a gap in which populism is liable to appear
- Pragmatically, democracy means institutions: institutions not just to limit power, but also to constitute it and make it effective. But in redemptive democracy, there is a strong anti-institutional, romantic impulse to directness, spontaneity and the overcoming of alienation
- Pragmatically, a general election is a nonviolent way of (re)distributing political power. At the same time, it is also a ritual of democratic renewal, and unless the ritual is taken seriously by most voters and politicians, democratic institutions are weakened
- The constitutional, or pragmatic element of democracy emphasises the need for checks and balances across institutions and which entails government for the people
- The popular component of democracy emphasises the role of the ordinary citizen and popular participation, and which entails government by the people
- For much of modern history, what characterized governments in Europe and North America, was not democracy but constitutional liberalism. The 'Western model' is best symbolized not by the mass plebiscite but the impartial judge
- Many of the recent discussions of institutional reforms and the theory of democracy seem to favour options that actually discourage mass engagement. This can be seen, for example, in the emphasis on stake-holder involvement rather than electoral participation

Decline of Political Parties

The Political Party

- Traditionally, political parties served to mediate the two conflicting conceptions of democracy, as they served the participatory, collective needs of republican theory, and also the contractual, restraints on government of liberal theory
- Citizens interests are thus aggregated, organized, and represented through the party
- The party serves an organizational, procedural, checks and balances role, whilst also permitting for direct popular participation in the political system

Fractures in the Old Model

- Citizens disengagement/disillusionment with conventional politics has been clearly demonstrated in recent decades, for example by the precipitous and significant decline in party membership
- Voters are less attached to a particular political party or position, and hence their behaviour and attitudes are harder to predict
- Parties have become much less focused and ideological, driven much more by media pandering and interest-group appeasement rather than real policy agendas
- Many of these trends are the result of the fact that political parties are no longer mass parties; they have lost touch with their base
- They are now professional machines to secure votes/sentiment, or catch-all to cartel parties competing for office
- Thus, political parties don't really represent a stable set of interests anymore; rather they are selling a product

Withdrawal of People from the Parties

- Electoral Participation: over the last 40 years, and especially since the late 1980s, voter turnout has been steadily declining in the established democracies, including the United States, Western Europe, Japan and Latin America
- Electoral Instability: in European democracies, a majority of the most unstable national elections since 1950 have occurred since 1990, indicating a widespread trend towards greater voter uncertainty and fickleness, consistent with less voter engagement with politics
- Partisan Attachment: the percentage of voters claiming a sense of identification with parties has fallen over the past two decades. Also on the rise is split-ticket voting, and the proportion of people deciding whom to vote for just before the election day
- Party Membership: at the beginning of the 1960s the average membership in political parties across European democracies was 14%, by the end of the 1990s it was just 5%

Withdrawal of Parties from the People

- Just as citizens retreat to their own private and particularized spheres of interest, so too do the political and party leaders retreat into their own version of this private sphere, and become more strongly oriented towards government and the state
- Political parties have become less representative of their base supporting groups, and at the same time more similar to each other, this perhaps being one of the reasons for increasing disillusionment with, and decreasing engagement with, politics

- As political and civic organisations like farming groups, unions, sports clubs, community groups and churches have become less important, the support these groups provided to major political parties has diminished
- Also, the benefits of being a party member have also declined, as parties are increasingly interested in public/popular opinion, as opposed to what is said at party meetings
- Parties in most democracies have moved from being principally dependent for their organizational survival on resources provided by members, donors and affiliated organizations, to being increasingly reliant on public funds and state support
- Parties have also cemented their linkage to the state and to the public institutions by increasingly prioritising their role as governing (as opposed to representative) agencies; parties are either all governing or waiting to govern
- Traditional politics is seen less and less as something that belongs to the citizens or to the society, and is instead seen as something that is done by politicians. There is a world of the citizens, and a world of the politicians and parties, and the interaction between these worlds steadily diminishes. Citizens turn from being participants into spectators

The Crisis of Representation

- All this means that the old idea of political parties representing popular or individual interests doesn't really make sense anymore
- This thereby draws into question the issue of sovereignty and how it is expressed
- One reaction to this has been the rise of a large number of new 'modes of political action', including populist mobilizations and citizens' coalitions, celebrity citizens (e.g. Bono), policy networks, international organizations, new governance strategies, etc

Characterising the Political

Approaches to Politics

What is Political Science?

- Politics: attempts to organize human groups to determine internal rules and, externally, to compete and cooperate with other organized groups, and reactions to such attempts
- Legislatures, bureaucracies, legal systems, political parties, mass media, and all the other institutions of contemporary politics are objects of study, along with less political institutions like business firms, churches, or armies
- Science: a publicly known set of procedures designed to make and evaluate descriptive and causal inferences on the basis of the self-conscious application of methods that are themselves subject to public evaluation
- Political science: the study of politics through procedures of science
- Three main important themes: political science as the study of human processes, the study of government institutions, and as the study of social outcomes

Politics as Arranging Exchanges

- Politics can be seen as aggregating individual preferences into collective actions by some procedures of bargaining, negotiation, coalition formation, and exchange

- In such a view, individual actors have prior desires (preferences, interests) which they use to determine the attractiveness of expected consequences
- Collective action depends on the negotiation of bargains and side-payments among potential trading partners
- The ability of any particular actor to realize his or her desires in such a system of exchange depends on what the desires are, what exchangeable resources that actor possesses, and what political rights he or she has

Rational Choice Theory

- Actors have prior desires (preferences, interests)
- Desires are consistent, stable, exogenous (not influenced by others)
- Typically these are material (wealth), but they do not have to be
- Actors behave rationally to pursue these interests – calculate costs/benefits
- Outcomes are driven by ‘the logic of consequences’

Institutionalism

Politics Through Institutions

- The exchange vision of human nature as static and universal and unaffected by politics is replaced by a view of the political actor as flexible, varied, malleable, culture-dependent and socially constructed
- Preferences: Individuals do not come with pre-formed interests/preferences that they maximize; rather their identities, roles, beliefs, etc, are socially constructed, inconsistent, changing, and at least partly endogenous, formed within political institutions
- Institutions organize hopes, dreams, and fears, prescribe expression of emotions, constitute and legitimize political actors, and provide consistent behavioral rules, conceptions of reality standards of assessment
- Agenda-setting: Institutional theories similarly emphasize the ways in which institutions shape the definition of alternatives and influence the perception and construction of the reality within which action takes place
- Cognition: Institutional structures also affect the flow of information, the kinds of search undertaken, and the interpretations made of the results
- Actions: Although rational calculation and purposeful actions still takes place, it occurs within, and is constrained by, these institutions, rules, roles, and identities
- Exchanges: Interests and cleavages are seen as created by institutional arrangements and maintained by institutional processes of socialization and co-optation, while within these established cleavages people organize themselves in accordance with rules and practices which are socially constructed, publicly known, anticipated and accepted

Rules and Identities

- Institutional theory holds that most people follow rules most of the time if they can, and that the uncertainties they face are less uncertainties about consequences and preferences than they are uncertainties about the demands of identity – what is expected of them
- Thus, their actions are expressions of what is exemplary or acceptable behavior according to the internalized rights, duties and practices of their constituent group, based on a ‘logic of appropriateness’

- As a result, the axiomatics for political action begin not with consequences and preferences (as rational choice would argue), but with rules, identities, and roles
- Institutionalized rules, duties, rights, and roles define acts as appropriate (normal, natural, right, good) or inappropriate (uncharacteristic, unnatural, wrong, bad)
- The logic of appropriateness is not limited to repetitive, routine worlds. Civil unrest, demands for wealth redistribution, and political revolutions often follow more from identity-driven conceptions of appropriateness than conscious calculations of costs and benefit

Variants of Institutional Theory

- Old Institutionalism: focused on detailed descriptive analysis of formal political institutions, legal systems and organisations, with comparisons over time and between countries. Went out of fashion after WWII, as it became clear that even good formal institutions can give rise to terrible outcomes
- New Institutionalism: adopted a much broader definition of institutionalism, including rules, norms, traditions, expectations, procedures. This approach made greater use of theory and analytical rather than merely descriptive approaches
- Rational Choice Institutionalism: Institutions don't shape preferences, but they do influence behaviour by affecting the structure of a situation in which individuals select strategies e.g., institutions communicate information about incentives and reduce uncertainty
- Historical institutionalists: Early choices in the design of government systems influence future decision-making (path dependence)
- Network institutionalists: focus on the regularised (often informal) patterns of interaction between individuals and groups that shape political behaviour

Dilemmas for Institutionalists

- Definition of institutions can be very broad: formal, informal, rules, norms, traditions, values, culture; how are these different to other social facts? How can they be defined and distinguished from one another?
- Where do institutions come from? Rational Choice Institutionalists see individual preferences existing prior to formation of institutions, while other institutionalist approaches see institutions as pre-existing and shaping individual preferences
- Power and institutions: rules and structures are not neutral, but embody values, power relationships and determine 'appropriate' behaviour in specific settings, hence it is important to consider the role of power in shaping and maintaining institutions

Applying the Theories

Identities and the Common Good

- Exchange traditions downplay the significance of virtue in the values of the citizenry and doubt the relevance of social investment in citizenship as being a romantic dream
- The assumption is that interests cannot (and should not) be eliminated or influenced; rather the object is to provide a neutral arena for voluntary exchange among them
- If leaders wish to control the outcomes of this self-seeking behavior, they do so by designing incentives that induce self-interested individuals to act in desired ways as much as possible
- In virtually all institutional theories, on the other hand, humans (through their institutions) are seen as able to share a common life and identity, and to have concern for others

- Giving priority to private interests and preferences is not merely a corruption of the political process but also a corruption of the soul and a fall from grace
- Anyone incapable of achieving an identity based on constitutive attachments-if such a person could be imagined-should not be described as a free and rational agent, but as a being without character or moral depth, a non-person

History and Path-Dependence

- Exchange theories of political change are largely theories of the adjustment of political bargains to exogenous changes in interests, rights, and resources; e.g. when values change, political coalitions change
- From such a perspective, history is efficient in the sense that it matches political institutions and outcomes to environments uniquely and relatively quickly
- On the other side of the debate is the idea typical of institutional theories that history follows a less determinate, more endogenous course
- Political institutions and identities develop in a world of multiple possibilities, and the actual paths they follow are determined in part by internal dynamics only loosely connected to changes in their environments
- In addition, environments are rarely exogenous. Environments adapt to institutions at the same time as institutions adapt to environments; institutions and their linkages co-evolve

Collective Action

- Rational choice theory does not predict strategic game outcomes: levels of initial cooperation are much too high (though not 100%), behavior is not consistent with backward induction in finitely repeated games, Nash equilibrium strategies are not good predictors at the individual level (though they work in aggregate), and individuals do not learn Nash equilibrium strategies in repeated social dilemmas
- Face-to-face communication has been found to enhance cooperation in a large number of game types (despite its irrelevance in formal models); it seems to be important for increasing trust, creating and reinforcing norms, and developing a group identity
- Field studies and experiments show that people will voluntarily contribute their own resources to build institutions to overcome collective action dilemmas, and/or punish defectors
- Learning and cognitive heuristics, internalised norms and rules of thumb play an important role in getting people to cooperate, and are a rational response to uncertainty and limited cognitive resources
- Most people in games prove willing to attempt to develop mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships, though they are also attuned to detecting and punishing cheaters
- While individuals vary in their propensity to use reciprocity, a substantial proportion of the population drawn on by social science experiments has sufficient trust that others are reciprocators to cooperate with them even in one-shot, no-communication experiments
- A reputation for being trustworthy, or for using retribution against those who do not keep their agreements or keep up their fair share, becomes a valuable asset. Trust is also very social, hence why face-to-face communication works better than computer messages

International Regimes

Questions of International Relations

- How can states 'govern' their common affairs in the absence of a global government?
- Why is international cooperation – collective action – so difficult?
- Given that it is so difficult, what makes it possible at all given no enforcer?
- What is the role of power, interests and ideas in global and regional governance?

Defining International Regimes

- The consensus definition: regimes are implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice
- Some scholars have suggested replacing the consensus definition with a more straightforward formulation that would be less amenable to divergent interpretations: e.g., "institutions are explicit rules, agreed upon by governments, that pertain to particular sets of issues in international relations"
- Some scholars argue that principles and norms are in a sense more 'fundamental' than rules and procedures, and hence the former are properties of 'metainstitutions', while the latter are properties of actual institutions
- The Behavioral Approach: only state behavior demonstrates that particular institutions are accepted in a given area. This means that major, perpetual noncompliance with institutions, particularly by major players, draws into question the very existence of those institutions
- The Cognitive Approach: the emphasis on convergent expectations in defining regimes gives them an inescapable intersubjective quality, so we know regimes by the existence of shared understandings of desirable and acceptable forms of social behaviour, not merely based on the behaviour that is actually shown
- The Formal Approach: regimes are primarily explicit rules that are agreed upon by actors and embodied in treaties or other documents. The formal approach is not burdened with the problem of defining a threshold of compliance (or convergence of expectations) to distinguish regime from nonregime situations

Neoliberal Institutionalism

- Although not insensitive to the effects of power differentials, these theories emphasize the role that international regimes play in helping states realize common interests. In so doing, they portray states as rational egoists who care only for their own absolute gains
- Contractualist or Functional Theory: states are self-interested and rationally maximise their own utility independent of other states, but have objectives which can be best met by collective action. They form institutions to achieve this cooperation, which work because they alter the payoffs available in a particular area of policy and therefore overcome the prisoner's dilemma. Payoffs are altered by increasing information transfer to avoid cheating, and also introducing easier mechanisms to expose and punish cheaters through sanctions or reputational effects. Given the transaction costs of establishing a regime, states are more likely to create a regime if the set of potential mutually beneficial agreements in the issue-area is large. This hypothesis explains why, with rising levels of interdependence between

states and societies, the number of international regimes has grown. Even if situations change to make an institution less useful, often institutional inertia and costs and uncertainties of creating a new institution can keep an old one around

- Situation-Structuralism: there are different types of collective action problems, and these will call for different institutional arrangements. There are collaboration problems (prisoner's dilemma), coordination problems (internet standards), and assurance problems (avoiding nuclear war). Also, the nature of the problem will affect the likelihood of regime formation, as some problems require solving all three of monitoring, sanctioning, and distribution problems, while others only face some of these issues
- The Problem-Structural Approach: focuses on issue-areas, which are "inseparably connected objects of contention and debate, the boundaries of which are determined by the perceptions of the participating actors", meaning that issue-area definition itself can be fluid over time and highly controversial. Differences in opinion over these issue-areas lead to conflict between parties, which can be handled through war, inaction, or regime formation, "the characteristics of the issue-area in which a conflict occurs predict, to a large extent, whether the conflict is dealt with cooperatively or by using unilateral self-help strategies"
- Institutional Bargaining and Regime Formation: this approach criticises other liberal theories by arguing that in practise, actors seldom know what strategies are available, what all the payoffs will be, what their opponents want and think, and even how the results of their negotiation relate to their core interests. This uncertainty causes the primary concern of the parties shifts from the distribution of fixed payoffs to the cooperative production of expanded benefits. Because of all these uncertainties, negotiation leaders (powerful or persuasive individuals) are highly important in the negotiation of regimes

Power-Based Theories

- Whereas realists and neoliberals agree that states are the most important actors on the world scene and that states act out of self-interest in an anarchical environment, realists specify the utility functions of state actors differently
- Unlike the neoliberal state, which feels no envy, the realist state cares about benefits accruing to its competitors, and as a consequence, rule-based cooperation is less easily established, especially if benefits are unequally distributed
- Realism generally holds that institutions can be important for determining the particular size and shape of agreements, and in helping to facilitate information transfer, reduce cheating, and balance relative gains
- Nonetheless, states are the primary/sole actors international political actors, with institutions only being relevant insofar as states give (or take away) their power; power/security is the primary concern of states and shapes international affairs
- The realist critique of the role of institutions in international relations argues that international institutions merely reflect state calculations of relative interest; though institutions are sometimes useful to states (e.g. U.S. and NATO; France and Germany in the EU, etc), they only work when states strongly back them
- Hegemonic-Stability Theory: regimes are established and maintained by actors who hold a preponderance of power resources relevant to a particular issue-area, and regimes decline when power becomes more equally distributed among their members. This is because international regimes are a common good, and will only be provided when a single actor has

the power and interest to do so unilaterally. Many international regimes are not really public goods, so hegemonic theory would not apply, but in those cases where it does apply, it may work very well in explaining outcomes

- Power-Oriented Research Program: this approach conceptualises many international issues as battle-of-the-sexes problems, rather than as prisoner's dilemmas. In this situation, the cooperation problem is not one of ensuring adequate information to identify or dissuade cheaters, but revolving around distributional conflicts and the use of power as a means to resolve them. This approach asserts that power shapes institutions, rather than the reverse
- Grieco's "Modern Realist" Perspective: cooperation among states is more difficult to achieve and harder to maintain than neoliberal theories suggest because anarchy creates a structurally induced intolerance for relative losses. Even if a state is not worried about its security, states also fear that their partners may turn relative advantages into greater bargaining power in the issue-area and beyond. This behavior would enable them to drive ever better bargains, ultimately hampering the disadvantaged partner's capacity for autonomous choice-at least in the particular issue-area. Thus cooperation is most difficult for similarly powerful states, as it is there that relative considerations are most important

Knowledge-Based Theories

- From the cognitivist point of view, neoliberalism's problems can be traced directly to three assumptions derived from realism: (1) its conception of states as rational actors whose identities, powers, and fundamental interests are exogenous; (2) its basically static approach to the study of international relations, which is ill-equipped to account for learning and history; (3) its positivist methodology
- Knowledge-based theories of regimes have focused on the origins of interests as perceived by states, emphasising the role of the normative and causal beliefs of decision makers. They fill an important theoretical gap by explaining preference and interest formation
- Norms and ideas permeate the international system and motivate state to state cooperation, e.g. norms of sovereignty, diplomacy, international law that create a common social world in which states interact
- Epistemic communities: professional networks with recognised authority and claim to policy knowledge in a particular issue area
- Moral entrepreneurs: those who campaign and influence important norms and values for international cooperation
- Weak Cognitivism: Three assumptions form the foundation of weak cognitivism: interests cannot be taken as given, as they depend upon implicit or explicit cognitive theories as to how the world works and what consequences of different outcomes will be; before states can agree on whether and how to deal collectively with a specific problem, they must reach some consensus about the nature and the scope of the problem; political actors often act to reduce uncertainty, and those who supply the expert advice necessary to achieve this therefore are very influential in policy outcomes. Learning is thus important to regime outcomes, as actors change their aims or preferred means in response to new evidence or understandings, and as existing institutions can 'lock in' ideas from the past
- Strong Cognitivism: Whereas weak cognitivists can be seen as filling theoretical gap in mainstream rationalistic regime theory, strong cognitivists have undertaken a radical critique of that theory. They argue that regimes don't just shape incentives; they help create

a common social world for interpreting the meaning of behaviour. Another fact emphasised by this school is that states generally follow institutional norms even when they have both the reason and ability to break them. It is argued that social norms are so important in any society that constantly ignoring them would jeopardize the long-run survival of the regimes who did so. Strong cognitivists also downplay the importance of incentives and strategy and emphasise the importance of persuasion and argument in negotiations of regime formation.

The Problem of Order

Political Leadership

Roles of Leaders

- Leadership is a complex, evolving, interactive process between leaders and followers
- It involved both hard power (use of force and material incentives) and soft power (agenda-setting and preference-shaping)
- Leaders interpret problems, pre scribe ends and means to achieve them, and mobilize followers to achieve these ends
- Successful leaders are those who have demonstrated their ability to move society tangibly in the direction that seemed clearly supportive of their grand design
- “An index of leader’s power is the frequency, size, and range of requests they can successfully make of you”

The Power of Followers

- Followers of leaders are generally not mere passive sheep, but also can decide the terms and degree of their compliance, how much effort to put in, whom to follow, etc
- Leaders are often constrained by the moods, desires or interests of their followers: “there goes the mob, and I must follow them, for I am their leader”
- For example, George Washington had enormous prestige and soft power following the American Revolution, but since the very source of this prestige was his opposition to the authoritative power of the English monarch, there were very sharp constraints on the extent to which he could actually exercise his power

Sources of Leader Power

- Traditional authority: like a king or other hereditary position
- Legal authority: position based on rational legal process, like president or director
- Charismatic authority: people follow not because of position but because of personal traits
- “The formal power of the president of the USA rarely changes over the course of a four year term, but the real power to govern fluctuates weekly as the president’s informal authority – approval rating, professional respect, moral standing – waxes and wanes”

Leadership Qualities

- The academic literature seems to show that there are no particular qualities or characteristics that make one a good leader
- Important leaders don’t necessarily have any particular formal office – Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi

- Similarly, there are many leaders who had formal authority but were unable to exercise it – Richard Nixon, the current Arab governments
- Many lists of successful leadership qualities exist, often with little in common with each other and even fewer insightful, non-obvious ones
- However, studies and historical cases do indicate that driven, capable leaders with a clear vision of what they want to achieve can be very effective at attracting followers, even if they are not very nice to work with

Street Gang Studies

- Frederick Thrasher's study of 1920s gangs in Chicago provides interesting insights into gang leadership; he found that there was basically no pattern to the leadership of a particular gang – whom they chose depended upon the exact circumstances the gang was in
- Thus, the leader did not really determine the path of the gang; rather the circumstances of the gang determined the leader they selected
- William Foote Whyte conducted a similar study of Boston Italian gangs in the 1940s, and found that leaders of street gangs actually gave more than they got; they had to buy leadership through favours and other benefits, and their position was always tenuous
- Sudhir Venkatesh conducted a recent study black gangs in the Chicago slums, and found that these modern gangs were larger and more systematically involved in crime (especially drugs) than earlier gangs, which were mostly involved in petty crime

Application to Political Parties

- There are surprising connections between the leadership of gangs and the leadership of political parties
- In particular, Australian political parties regularly overthrow their leaders, especially when they are in opposition
- Many people you would expect to have become leader who never actually did, just because circumstances never worked out (e.g. Beazley and Costello)
- Similarly, Malcolm Turnbull and Brendan Nelson were thrown out of leader of the liberal party just because they didn't meet the requirements of the party at the time

Hierarchy and Heterarchy

Heterarchy

- A system in which the nodes and their connections cannot be easily or well explained by rules and methods of subordination, e.g. Wikipedia, basically a complex networked structure
- It is the opposite of homoarchy or hierarchy, which is defined as the ordinal arrangement of elements (i.e. they can be ranked)
- In a heterarchy any actor can be connected with any other without needing the permission of those on top or in charge

Hierarchy

- Understandings of hierarchy are generally based upon traditional models of the family (parents-children), church and the military
- The role of hierarchy in political theory was established by Hobbes; he argued for a social contract and rule by an absolute sovereign, arguing that chaos or civil war – situations identified with a state of nature – could only be averted by strong central government

Rationality

- Hierarchy is often associated with positivist-type rationality, that is first establishing one's purpose and then determining the most efficient way of achieving that goal – this has been increasingly important in modern political and economic arrangements
- This specialisation and rationalistic ordered arraignment of activity goes hand in hand with a top-down, hierarchical supervision and control (Taylorist/Fordist approaches)
- This type of approach has been criticised as being too rigid and non-adaptive, and also alienating of those at lower levels of the hierarchy, who may have valuable information not being utilised, or who may have little interest in properly adhering to the system

Connectedness

- The necessity of avoiding these sort of problems of rigidity and alienation led to an increasing concern of how to ensure people remain committed to the hierarchy, and engaged with its procedures
- Mancur Olson theorized that “only a separate and ‘selective’ incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way”; that is, only a benefit reserved strictly for group members will motivate one to join and contribute to the group
- This means that individuals will act collectively to provide private goods, but not to provide public goods
- However, people do indeed do things that would seem to be irrational, such as participate in protests and vote in national elections
- This suggests that networks and various other forms of ‘recursive interactions’ may be playing a role in people's behaviour, including the ability of individuals to communicate, feel common identity, and in particular have repeated interactions

Networks

Defining Networks

- A network is a collection of links between elements of a unit, where each unit is some kind of relatively homogenous or internally consistent/stable system
- Examples of networks include ecosystems, DNA regulatory networks, molecular networks, neuronal networks, road networks, river networks, electrical networks, social networks, computer networks, and media networks
- Even within the class of social networks, there are networks between individuals who know each other personally, networks between organisations and their members, mass networks of entire societies and individuals within them, and networks that span the globe
- Each level or layer of the network is not simply the sum of the properties of its constituent parts; rather each level displays unique emergent behaviour

The Rise of Political Networks

- Networks have become increasingly important throughout history because they are an effective method of organising social action
- The reason they are effective is because in many cases they can be self-organising, acting as complex adaptive systems to become better adapted to their environment
- This is possible because networks permit a great deal of interaction, communication, variation, innovation, and selection (survival of effective links)

- Networks are becoming increasingly appreciated in political analysis as useful for the determination and execution of public policy
- “Instead of thinking about policy as a routine engagement between certain public officials and a settled routine of established interests, we are now forced to consider how a single system is constructed from semi-independent institutions and actors linked by resource agreements, joint-projects and cross-border engagements”
- This makes the entire process of policy formation and delivery both more flexible and more difficult to define, arrange and coordinate

From Mass to Network Society

- Mass society: mostly composed of collectives (companies, governments, families, organisations, communities) as the fundamental units, with a wide coverage, but still composed of a large number of only loosely connected, fairly homogenous local groupings
- In a mass society, small local communities and families stayed basically the same as before, but with new (though relatively weak) links to and control from large external organisations, like the mass media, government and corporations
- In a network society, traditional social structures partially or completely break down, and the individual becomes the focal point of social interaction
- Individuals become much more widely and strongly connected to various distant or widespread groups and organisations, generally selected by the individual based upon personal preference or interest
- Strength of ties within groups (especially local ones) is reduced, but many more and stronger ties are developing between groups
- Network society tends to be less inclusive than mass society because there is less possibility to become and remain a member of a group simply by location, birth or inheritance; one must seek out and earn one’s positions and relations
- Information society: society is based on science and rationality, information production dominates the activities of all economic sectors, and culture is dominated by media and other symbolic and verbal information production and transmission

Power and Networks

- Power can originate from one’s position within a network, especially when one is central or is located in an otherwise sparse hub between many nodes
- Strong ties tend to generate more loyalty and sharing of important information, but weak ties are better for obtaining access to novel information or perspectives
- With the rise of networks and a reduction in transaction and informational costs, people tend to possess a larger number of distinct, but overlapping and interrelated identities
- Thus, increasingly “leaders are identity entrepreneurs who increase their power by activating and mobilizing some of their follower’s multiple identities at the expense of others”

Identity and Political Community

What is a Community?

- Community refers to a group of interacting people, which share some common values, participate in shared activities, culture, and traditions, and have a sense of belonging, identity, and solidarity

- Warm and fuzzy feelings of closeness – though the reverse of this is the claustrophobic or suffocating nature of close communities; the ‘iron cage’
- There has been a historical shift away from smaller, traditional, local communities: Gemeinschaft (community, personal) vs. Gesellschaft (society, anonymous)
- Communities are commonly envisioned to exist somewhere between the authority of state and individual liberty (rights, markets, etc); thus communities are to some degree external to politics and a countervailing force to it
- This is very different to premodern times, when there was generally little distinction between the state and the society over which it ruled (at least at the elite level)

Community as a Policy Solution

- During the mid-1960s, there was an emphasis on a ‘community’ approach to fix social ‘problems’, such as crime and punishment, mental health, social welfare, education, etc
- Thus we have the rise of community care, community housing, community policing, etc
- Since the 1990s we have seen the rise of ‘third sector’ approaches to implementing policy and solving difficult problems, moving beyond hierarchies and markets
- Political administration has ‘returned’ to society, with the instrumentalization of ‘community’ capacities to enable governance through community
- But to what extent is this genuine, and to what extent is it merely a reformulation of bureaucratic state action (enacted by state-funded professionals)

Community and Identity

- Postwar social citizenship ‘Universalizing project’: Programs of mass education, social welfare, public broadcasting and uniformity, all part of a processes of assimilating citizens into a single integrated society, and the primacy of common political ‘community’ over local identities
- Contemporary vocab of community: less remote and abstract, more focus on local communities, unique identities, and networks of allegiance with which one identifies (traditional, cultural, ethnic, existential, emotional, religious types of allegiance)
- The former sort of universalizing project seems to be much easier in contexts of ethnic and religious homogeneity, which explains why it has been so successful in Scandinavia, and has somewhat broken down recently with an increase in immigration

Narcissism of Small Differences

- The Narcissism of small differences is a term coined by Sigmund Freud in 1917, based on the earlier work of British anthropologist Ernest Crawley
- The term describes ‘the phenomenon that it is precisely communities with adjoining territories, and related to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and ridiculing each other’
- A prime example of this were the Serb and Croat communities in Yugoslavia who fought each other in the early 1990s, after having lived side-by-side in many towns and villages without incident or substantial distinction for decades, but were now incensed to fighting each other largely through media propaganda that took advantage of existing political uncertainty and drew upon old discourses of religious and ethnic difference

Questions

- Democracy is a means to limit power. Discuss.
- Politics is all about interests. Discuss.
- Political behaviour is predictable. Discuss with reference to organizational forms, leaders and followers, and community orientations.
- Contemporary politics is best analysed in terms of 'governance' not government. Discuss with reference to local, national and international examples.