

POS 211
Political Analysis

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

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POS 211 Political Analysis

By
Eghosa Osaghae Ph.D
Department of Political Science,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Reviewed by:
Enemaku Idachaba, Ph.D
Department of Political Science,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.



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General Introduction

The major work of political scientists is political analysis. Political analysis entails systematically studying political problems, issues, decisions, policies or situations by organizing the available information into elements or categories and then relating these to one another. The aim of analysis is to explain and predict political occurrences – why things happen the way they do, why people behave the way they do, and under what conditions such events and enables us to understand the political world in which we live. It is very important because if we do not understand our political lives, we cannot hope to solve our problems.

This course is one of the foundation courses in political science. In it, I will introduce you to the elements of political analysis. I have three main objectives in doing so. First, I want you to become familiar with some of the basic concepts we use in political science. Second, I want you to develop the skill of recognizing and asking relevant political questions. Finally, I want you to learn how to apply the knowledge and skill you will acquire in analyzing political issues, events, behaviour and processes. In summary, I expect that at the end of this course, you will become an “expert” Political Analyst in your own right because, political analysis is best done by experts.

Some of the topics I shall treat are: the essence of politics, modes of political analysis, types of political systems, participants in politics, and political socialization. I am sure you will find them very interesting.

Let me at this point give you a few hints on how you can easily follow and understand the course. First, you should realize that political science has its own “technical” language. Because this course is central to the discipline, you will come across many new words or what we call concepts. Sometimes, you may find it difficult to understand what I am saying at first reading. Do not let this scare you at all. I shall try to explain everything as simple enough as possible.

Second, most of the topics are so related that you must endeavour to understand one chapter before moving on to the next one. This way, you will find reading interesting.

Third, I have included assignments in every lecture, as well as references for further reading. You should endeavour to do all the assignments on your own. This is the only way you can convince yourself

that you are following the teaching. As for the references, I need not overemphasize their usefulness.

Fourth, let me elaborate a little bit more on the assignments by telling you what I expect from you. Although the requirements would naturally vary from one lecture to the other, you should first make sure you understand the question before starting on the assignment. At the end of the lecture, you should compare your answers with those you had at the beginning.

I expect that you will enjoy the course, and that you will profit greatly from it. Have a nice time.

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LECTURE ONE

The Essence of Politics

Introduction

My purpose in this first lecture is to provide a justification for the entire course by drawing your attention to the need for political analysis. You may have always taken it for granted that politics is essential. But I want to let you know that it is not only essential, you cannot do without it. This is why you need to have some basic skills in political analysis.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. define the assertion that Politics is not only for Politicians; and
2. appreciate and explain the need for Political Analysis.

Pre- Test

1. Man is a political animal, true or false? Why is he a political animal?
2. Who is a politician? Give examples of politicians.
3. What is politics? Does politics matter?
4. What is politicization?

CONTENT

Politics and Man

Many times, you discuss politics without consciously setting out to do so. As a father or mother, farmer, teacher, passenger in a commuter bus, indeed, in most roles you play, you are constantly drawn into talking

politics. As a parent, you are concerned with the future of your children and, as such you are interested in government policies on education. What are the advantages and disadvantages of free education? Should special concession be granted to children from educationally backward states? What becomes of children when they leave school? Are there jobs for them? You would find yourself wanting to answer these questions, especially when you discuss with other parents.

As a farmer, you are aware that climatic conditions play a large part in determining your successes or failure, but you still think that government can help you in many ways. Afterall, food which you produce is man's basic need. What is government doing to ensure that fertilizers, farm implements and storage facilities are within the reach of the average farmer? Would you benefit from the agricultural loan scheme?

As a bus passenger probably travelling from Port-Harcourt to Minna, you "while away" time rubbing minds with other passengers over a wide range of subjects: inflation, especially the rising costs of transportation, minimizing accidents on your roads, specific government policies, the performance of the police force and so on.

In each of these instances, what you are doing is discussing politics, expressing that part of you which makes you an integral part of society. This is so because you are a political animal, as Aristotle, one of the founding fathers of political science, wrote a long time ago. The implications of this are two. First, that politics is the essence of social existence because our interactions with others in the society invariably involve politics. Except one prefers to live in isolation which only very few men would do, no one can avoid politics. Second, that every man is a "politician". This could appear strange. You probably believe that politicians are those who belong to political parties, contest elections and canvass for vote, in short, those who are directly involved in politics. True indeed, these are the "conspicuous" politicians, but they are not the only politicians. To the extent that man is a political animal, every member of society is at one time or the other a politician for, afterall, a politician is simply a political actor, one who takes part in politics in any form, including discussing politics. You and I are politicians in this sense because when we talk politics, vote or attend a meeting of teachers, we directly or indirectly hope to influence decision taken by government. Nevertheless, it will not be correct to say that you are as much of a politician as the head of state or the minister is; what is true is that even as

we are all politicians, some of those at the core of the political process who are directly involved in making decisions are more political than we are.

What is Politics?

Politics is difficult to define yet easy to recognize. To some extent with the word 'politics' we can consider current usage and decide our own meaning, making our own definition wide or narrow according to our taste or purposes. From our discussion so far politics is obviously a universal activity.

The conflict of different interests, people or groups of people who want different things be it power, money, liberty etc- face the potential or reality of conflict when such things are in short supply. Politics begins when interests clash. At the micro level we use a variety of techniques to get out own way: persuasion, rational argument, irrational strategies, threats, entreaties, bribes, manipulation anything we think will work. At the macro level, democratic states establish complex procedures for the management of such conflicts codified in the form of written constitutions (except in Britain).

However, the political order is essentially peaceful. But if violence is involved on a widespread scale e.g. war between states, it would be fair to say that politics has been abandoned for other means. I must point out to you here that, political order within a state is ensured through the implicit threat of force which a state's control of the police and army provides. There are many situations in the world, for example in Northern Ireland or the Lebanon, and Nigeria, where violence is regularly used to provide both a context for and an alternative to peaceful political processes.

So while political activity is peaceful for most of the time in most countries, the threat of violence or its reality are both integral parts of the political process. I should now be able to move us towards author definition:

Politics is essentially a process which seeks to manage or resolve conflicts of interest between people, usually in a peaceful fashion. In its general sense it can describe the interactions of any group of individuals but in its specific sense it refers to the many and complex relationships which exist between state institutions and the rest of society.

Up to this point, I have talked about politics without clearly defining what it means. It is necessary that I do so before I go with the rest of the lecture.

There are several definitions of politics because political scientists do not agree on a common definition. I shall have more to say on this when I consider the conceptions of politics in the next lecture but just now, I will give you two of the definitions that have been given. You should try to compare and contrast them. The definitions are:

- i. Politics involves the struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. (Vernon van Dyke).
- ii. Politics is the authoritative allocation of values (David Easton).

The first definition points to the nature of political activities, as they take place in the “public realm”, i.e. that part of society in which issues affect virtually all members. But the definition does not tell us the outcome of the struggle among political actors. This is where the second definition is useful. It tells us that politics is directed at decision-making. The outcome of the struggle among political actors is to influence those who decide who gets what, when and how. Actors struggle because the resources at the disposal of decision-makers are scarce and, consequently, not everyone can get what he or she wants.

The two definitions are therefore related. The definition I shall give then will combine elements of both.

Politics can be defined as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on issues to influence the authoritative allocation of values in terms of who gets what, when and how.

Decision making

Much political activity culminates in the taking of decisions, and all decisions involve choice. Let me now illustrate the micro and macro senses of politics and also introduce to you some important related terminology.

Decision making 1: Micropolitics

You are a 17 year old girl who wish to go on holiday to UK with three other girls. Your father is strongly opposed to the proposal

on the grounds that you are too young and vulnerable for such a risky undertaking.

I will use some political science terms to analyse the situation.

Interests: In politics, interests are those things which you want or care about; usually financial resources; others are status, power, justice, liberty etc. In this example, your interest lies principally in gaining permission to enjoy your first holiday abroad, without your parents. Your father's interests clearly lie in protecting you and to avoid personal worry.

Political actors: In this instance includes you and your father (principal actors) plus your mother, brother, friends, relations and even neighbours that may be drawn into the debate.

Power: In politics, this is the ability to get others to act in a particular way. This can be achieved through the exercise of threats and rewards and also through exercise of authority: or the acceptance of someone's right to be obeyed.

The power relationship in this case is that you could offer 'rewards' to your father in terms of a promise of mature and responsible behaviour, substantial self-funding of your holiday and a firm resolve to work hard for the coming years exams. Your threats could include a unilateral decision to defy your father and go on holiday.

Your father could offer to pay the full cost of a 'safe' holiday or threaten to refuse funding of the trip or cut your pocket money. Your father is obviously in a stronger position: he has both financial power and authority: acceptance by you of your father's right to respect.

Decision making II Macropolitics

The Nigerian Labour Congress seeks a pay increase three times the rate of inflation in order to "catch up with pay settlements in the private sector. The government offers only a rate of inflation increase, but offers to discuss further pay increases along with proposals to increase productivity and weaken terms of employment.

As Nigerians, you and I know that this familiar situation is quintessentially political.

Interest: The government's interests are clearly financial: It wishes to restrict public expenditure or 'sell' a pay increase in return for its austerity measures which will increase efficiency and save money in the future. The union's interests are primarily financial but it will also wish to resist any erosion of its members, job security or status.

Actors: You should note that the actors are potentially numerous in this particular drama – other government departments, public and private unions, the media, local government pressure groups etc.

You will observe that the degree of involvement will depend upon how protracted and intense the process becomes.

Power: As you can see, the power relationship in circumstances would be influenced by the ability of each side to deliver rewards or enforce threats. The government can 'reward' the unions by giving way on the pay demand in exchange for union flexibility on other issues. As paymaster, the government you know can threaten to withhold any reward, sit out strike action and impose its proposals notwithstanding.

Let me also add that the union on the other side can reward the government by giving way on the award-related proposals. Its principal threats lie in its ability to disrupt government activity and possibly national life, through industrial activity.

Authority: You should understand that two kinds of authority are in conflict here. Which side is stronger? On the face of it, the government holds the key cards. Ultimately the government controls the resources. However, it retains a key interest in maintaining good relations with its work-force. The union's strength will depend among others, on the degree of rank and file support for the leadership; the density of union membership; the strength of the union's claim and the degree of public support for it, the willingness of other trade unions to render support; the union's financial resources; and the negotiating skills of its leaders.

The Essence of Politics

The issue of Politics in our everyday life is paramount, because, by necessity, everyone is either an actor or a subject in the web of politics. In other words we live in a politicized world. Politicization-refers to those matters or issues in which there are conflicting interests requiring the intervention of the government or other authorities. Today, you will find that even trivial and private matters like football and marriage attract

government intervention. The more government intervenes in political matters, the more politicization increases. We find therefore that there is very little we can do without politics. If used wisely, politics can enhance human freedom and well-being. While it may be difficult to achieve all our desires, we can, through political pursuit, exercise more choice and achieve some of our aspirations, to render our lives more secure and master a greater degree of our own fates.

From what I have said, it should be clear that politics affects people's lives in many ways, especially in the allocation of scarce resources by government. This does not however mean that government determines all aspect of our lives. If it did, our society will be a completely totalitarian one. But the fact that the allocation of scarce resources will definitely affect us one way or the other, and that we pursue interests which conflict with others in society means that whether we like it or not, politics matters in our lives.

The Importance of Political Analysis

If we cannot do without politics, then it is important to understand how politics can enable us live well. We want to be able to analyse problems as they arise, to advise government on good policies, to suggest ways of making life better, and so on. To be able to do these, we need certain basic skills in political analysis. This is what I intend to introduce to you in the lectures which follow.

Summary

1. Politics exists everywhere around us partly because we live amongst others who do not necessarily share our interests and views and partly because man is a political animal
2. We cannot do without politics because resources are scarce and, consequently we directly or indirectly seek to influence those who decide who gets what, when and how.
3. Politics involves the struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on issues to influence the authoritative allocation of values.
4. We live in an increasingly politicized world.
5. Political analysis is mainly concerned with helping us to understand the political world in which we live, so we can help to bring about desirable changes.

Key concepts to remember

Politics, Political animal, conflicting interests, politicization, politician, political actor, scarce resources, authoritative allocation, government, political analysis.

Instructions

- i. Underline the main points of this lecture.
- ii. Write out questions which arise from your reading of this lecture.

Post-Test

1. Man is a political animal, true or false? Why is he a political animal?
2. Who is a politician? Mention some notable politicians in Nigeria you know.
3. What is politics? Does politics matter?
4. What is politicization?

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LECTURE TWO

Conceptions of Politics

Introduction

Now you have seen that politics is important and requires to be understood. In this lecture, I want to elaborate more on politics as a subject matter by introducing you to the various conditions of politics. This is useful because as I told you in the last lecture, political scientists do not agree on any common definition of politics. As I discuss the various conceptions, you will see why different definitions have been given.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to discuss the numerous dimensions of politics. I also expect that you will be able to explain why different definitions of politics have been given.

Pre-Test

1. Critically examine the conception of politics as the determination of public policy.
2. How true is the assertion that politics is not restricted to the public realm?
3. What is a state? Are there “stateless” societies? Give examples.
4. What similarities are there in the various conceptions of politics?
5. How does an understanding of class conflicts relates to politics?

CONTENT

Conceptions of Politics

Politics is ubiquitous, i.e. it is present everywhere at the same time. To this extent, it has been seen or defined to mean several things. This is what we mean when we talk of conception of politics. The various conceptions are important for specifying what aspects of politics are to be analyzed. They can be assessed according to how well they explain political activities and behaviour in a wide variety of societies. You should watch out for the similarities and differences in the various conceptions.

The major conceptions are: (i) Politics as the Pursuit of the Public interest; (ii) Politics as the Operation of the State; (iii) Politics as the determination and execution of public policy; (iv) Politics as the relations and conflicts among classes. I shall elaborate on each of these conceptions.

Politics as the Pursuit of the Public Interest

The earliest conception of politics belonged to the Greeks who defined politics as belonging to the public realm as distinct from the private realm. The public realm by contrast with the private realm which consists of private matters (family relationships, friendship, farming, etc.) refers to matters of public concern which affects the whole community and on which actions are taken in pursuit of the public good.

The public realm was viewed by the Greeks to be morally superior to the private realm, and was represented by the polis or “city-state.” Plato and Aristotle, two famous Greek philosophers, were at the forefront of this conception of politics. Their primary interest was in the moral purposes that the decision makers ought to pursue to realize the public or common good of all members of the state. Aristotle said that the “highest good” was to ensure happiness of all men. This happiness was not however defined as the attainment of more pleasure, but as the conformity of ideas and actions with perfect goodness. Thus, Aristotle wrote that “What the statesman is most anxious to produce is a moral character in his fellow citizens, namely a disposition of virtue and the performance of virtuous actions”.

You should not however think that the Greek polis which represented the public realm is the same thing as the modern state. Firstly, the present state is mostly secular and is distinct from the church, the polis as Aristotle used it was a union, rather than, a division of functions. The polis was a

political association, a religious community and an educational agency, all at once. Secondly, in the modern state, individuals are divided and unequal in terms of power and authority in the polis, there was a common agreement on moral beliefs. Thirdly sovereignty in the Polis lay with the public assembly in the modern state, presidents and representative institution like the legislature exercise sovereignty.

Although profound changes have occurred since the times of Plato and Aristotle, some political philosophers still define politics in terms of moral beliefs and the moral ends of the state. Notable among these are John Rawls who formulated a theory of justice whose ends are liberty and equality², and Martin Luther King Jr. who also voiced a concept of justice as involving the equality of all men irrespective of race and other circumstances of birth.

The conception of politics as the pursuit of the public interest has however been criticized on some grounds: (1) Public interest is myth which is usually employed by political leaders to rationalize private interests: (2) Politics is not restricted to the public realm because matters in the private realm both influence and determine behaviour in the public realm; and (3) the modern state is too large and divided to allow for agreement on common goods.

Politics as the Operation of the State

The foremost proponent of this conception is Max Weber (pronounced Weber), a German Sociologist who argued that the state cannot be defined in terms of its ends largely because there is no task that is peculiar to it. Ultimately Weber argued, the modern state can only be defined in terms of the means peculiar to it, namely, the use of physical force. Accordingly, he defined the state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within given territory...”

For Weber, politics should be equated with the activities of the state, a state being a concrete administrative structure which uses force to compel obedience.

From his definition, we can identify some characteristics of the state:

- (1) It contains many specialized structure-offices, roles, and institutions
- (2) It has a monopoly of coercive power as embodied in military, police and prison officers
- (3) It exercises sovereignty, i.e., the absolute right to

make final decision binding on society; and (4) It has clearly defined territorial boundaries.

For a very long time, in fact until the 1940s; politics was popularly defined in terms of the state. Since then however, this conception has been seen to be inadequate because we now realize that politics exists in all societies and villages where the state is yet to emerge. Secondly, the conception of politics as the activities of the state does not accommodate what goes on in international politics (which is “stateless”). Thirdly, we now know that in some states, the state does not have a monopoly of coercion. As a corollary, no states rules by sheer force or power for a long time. It has to be accepted by the people, so it becomes legitimate. Legitimacy then transforms power into authority, in which case the state uses force only sparingly.

In spite of these shortcomings, the conception of politics as the activities of the state remains popular amongst those who see politics as revolving around the government which embodies the state.

Politics as the Determination and Execution of public Policy

In lecture one, we defined politics as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires to influence the authoritative allocation of values in terms of who gets what, when, and how. That definition derives from the conception of politics as the determination and execution of public policy. Political scientists who conceive of politics in this way focus attention primarily on how binding decisions are made and carried out for society, rather than on state structures as the sole centre of political life.

This conception is close to that which sees politics as the pursuit of public interest, but differs from it in that it recognizes the conflicting interests and desires that individuals and groups have in society. it further recognizes that resources are scarce and cannot meet everyone’s desire. The conception therefore sensitizes us to the interactions among the individual, cultural beliefs, social structures and public (political) policies. Beyond this, proponents of this conception of politics are also interested in the implementation or execution of public policies once they are made because a policy that is not implemented or cannot be implemented for all practical purposes is a non-policy. In linking the determination of policies to their execution, crucial questions like how policies are determined, the

effects of these policies on the society, group and individuals, and whether they meet the purposes for which they were meant, are asked.

The interpretation of politics as the process of determining and executing policies is probably the most useful of all conceptions of politics because it offers the most useful explanation of political life in a wide variety of societies, including stateless societies. It most importantly points to certain important features of politics. (1) that it is an activity (2) that may be performed by specialized structures; (3) that political decisions affect the vast generality of members in society and are therefore public rather than private; (4) that politics deals with acceptable decisions which do not require force; (5) that political activities often change from one particular problem to the other and according to the effects of policies on society as a whole and (6) that political activities do take place outside of the state structure.

Politics as the Relations and Conflicts among Classes

This is a conception of politics which derives from the writings of Karl Marx. According to Marx, every society is interlocked in a struggle between two broad classes in society. These classes are differentiated in terms of their relations to the mode of production in society: those who own and control the means of production constitute the class of oppressors, and they have not belong to the class of the oppressed. Political activity centers around the struggle between these two classes for supremacy. Ultimately, Marx believed the oppressed class will be victorious, and will establish a socialists society in which all men will be equal.

This conception is important because, as I have emphasized at various points, politics involves struggle: those who are powerful (i.e. those who control the means of production) control more than a fair share of political resources, and disproportionately influence the determination of public policies. However, the conception underrates importance of ethnic, religious, racial and other identities which, in addition to class, influences political behaviour of individuals and groups.

Synthesis

The various conceptions have certain overlaps. For example, most of them place emphasis on the state as the centre of all political activities.

However, since politics takes place everywhere and in all societies, in a later lecture, I will discuss the concept of the political system which, more than the state, constitutes the centre of political activities.

Summary

1. Politics is ubiquitous. Accordingly, it has many interpretations, each of which draws attention to particular aspects of it.
2. Politics can be seen, according to- the Greeks, as involving matters which belong to the public realm.
3. Politics involves the activities of the state.
4. Politics can also be seen as involving the determination and execution of public policy.
5. Politics involves the relations and conflicts among classes.

Key Concepts to Remember

Polis, Public realm, Public interest, Public Policy, Common good, State, Stateless societies, Legitimacy, Authority, Power and Class.

Post-Test

1. Critically examine the conception of politics as the determination of public policy.
2. How true is the assertion that politics is not restricted to the public realm?
3. What is a state? Are there “stateless” societies? Give examples.
4. What similarities are there in the various conceptions of politics?
5. How does an understanding of class conflicts relate to Politics?

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LECTURE THREE

The Nature of Political Analysis

Introduction

In the two previous lectures, I discussed the nature and importance of politics, and told you the necessity for political analysis. In this lecture, I want to familiarize you with the subject of political analysis itself. You have known the “why” of political analysis. Now I want to teach you the “how” as a prelude to considerations of methods and approaches which I shall be concerned with here and in the lectures which follow.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. discuss in detail Political Analysis; and
2. explain whether a Science of Politics is possible.

Pre-Test

1. What is political analysis, and how is it related to political science?
2. What is the scientific method? Why do political analysts seek to be scientific?
3. What are the major goals of science?
4. Can we make accurate predictions in political science?
5. Give broad outline of the structure of scientific explanation.

CONTENT

Political Analysis and political Science

Political analysis is the major task undertaken by Political Scientists. In simple terms, it involves study undertaken by an expert (Political Scientist) that requires studying a problem, decisions, issue or situation by organizing the information (data) that one has into categories or elements and then relating these to one another for the purpose of explaining. Political analysis has three main goals.

- i. To know what is important in politics, i.e. those things that influence or determine the outcome of events.
- ii. To know what is valuable, i.e. the difference every political outcome will make to our desires, both individually and collectively, and
- iii. To know what is real or true by systematically subjecting our guesses, impressions, popular beliefs, even rumours, to verificatory tests.

In summary, political analysis aims at political knowledge that is relevant to our values, that can be confirmed by empirical tests and experience, and that will enable us explain assess and predict outcomes. If therefore, you ask the question, why analyze politics, the answer is simple “Political analysis helps one to understand the world one lives in, to make more intelligent choices among the alternatives one faces, and to influence the changes inherent in all political systems.”

The Quest to be Scientific

As political analysts, we endeavour to be ‘objective in our analysis, so that our likes or dislikes, biases, values, or personalities’ do not distort our analysis. We also want to ensure that our studies provide explanations and generalizations which can be tested or verified by other analysts. By so doing, we seek to be “scientific”, i.e. to be systematic in our studies. This is the sense in which we are Political Scientists, i.e. we seek to use the scientific method.

You may have always thought that “science” is exclusively used in relation to the natural sciences like Chemistry, Biology and Physics. This is not the case because science-from the Latin word ‘scire’ simply means ‘to know”, consequently, any study which advances knowledge is

scientific. But this is not all. Science could be a matter of method, i.e. how to study, or of substance, i.e. what is studied, or both. The natural science are scientific in both senses. Political Science like the other social science (Sociology, Economics, Psychology) is scientific only in the sense of its methods because it seeks to apply the systematic tools of study of man in society.

Opinions are however divided on whether politics can be studied in a scientific manner such as would disallow our own prejudices or values to colour our analysis. In the next lecture, I will examine the arguments against a science of politics. But just now, I want to discuss the essential elements of the scientific method, and how political analysts have sought to be scientific.

An Outline of Scientific Method

I shall begin by presenting in broad outline, the basic procedure of the scientific method. A simple outline involves:

1. Making explicit, in advance, your assumptions and expectations about what you are studying;
2. Making explicit, in advance, the rules and/or guidelines by which you will proceed in your study. You do not change the rules of a football game at half-time.
3. Making careful observations of the phenomena in which you are interested, with a view to discovering the elements of the study and the regularities (consistent patterns of behaviour of occurrence) which may exist.
4. Seeking, through one or more explicit frames of reference (theories, perspective) to map out the relationships among the things you have observed;
5. Seeking to explain the relationships you identify.
6. Making verifiable (testable) predictions based on your explanations and
7. Reporting fully and clearly, your conclusions in such a way that another Scientist could, if he wished, repeat the study by making similar observations.

Glossary of Terms

Before I go any further, it is important to define certain key terms which you will encounter as discussion progresses. These include:

Generalizations: These are statements which describe general conditions or properties of the things we are interested in. They are usually stated in law like terms which are testable. An example of a generalization is; most women are not interested in politics. Notice that I have used most, rather than all because generalizations are not laws which give no exceptions.

Laws: Are statements of universal informities used as explanations of specific phenomena, which, because of their explanatory character can be viewed as predictive statements. Law talks of absolute properties with no exceptions. The unpredictable nature of human behaviour makes it difficult, if not impossible, to develop laws in the social sciences. It is difficult, for example, to say that "All human being love power," because we would certainly find those, no matter how few, who would not love it.

Theories: Are those explanations of uniformities that involves two or more generalizations but which, even though widely held, require empirical validation for confirmation. A theory is different from a law in that a theory offers at one and the same time less certainty and greater explanatory power; it explains in effect why laws work, but it is not as useful as a law in predicting particular events.

Hypothesis: Tentative explanations, suppositions, or assertions that are formulated to be tested and, when extensively tested and confirmed, either themselves take on the character of laws or theories or else modify existing laws.

Values: The importance individuals or groups attach to phenomena and ideals in terms of their views of the world. The scientific method aims at eliminating such values from analysis.

What the Scientific Method Entails

The scientific method has two major aims, namely to explain and to predict on the basis of regularities which have been observed and found to be reliable. I shall elaborate briefly on these goals of science.

Explanations: Suppose you were asked to explain why the United Party of Nigeria (UPN) won the gubernatorial election in Old Bendel State in

1979. You would probably say it won because of its attractive programmes, the personality of its candidate, and the charisma of its national leader. This is an explanation. In scientific terms, we say that explanation entails specifying the conditions under which a particular event occurs. Put differently, explanations take the form of establishing relationships among variables, a variable being a property that takes on different values or assumes different characteristics. There are two types of variables. First, there is the dependent variable, which is what is to be explained. An example is the victory of the UPN in the Bendel State gubernatorial election in 1979. Second, there is the independent variable, which is the variable which explains the dependent variable like the UPN's Welfarist programme or the personality of its candidates in our example. An explanation therefore involves identifying the independent variables which account for the dependent variable, and takes the form "if A, then B" However, the connections we draw between variables must be such that they provide reasons for the occurrence of a particular event rather than other occurrences. This means that "if A then B" is a more acceptable explanation than, if A, B, C, D".

Let us move one further step. Scientific explanation involves an appeal to laws or generalizations which specify relationships among variables, in addition to the conditions present in our explanatory situation. In other words, we can explain an event by deducing it from one more statements of individual fact in conjunction with one or more generalizations or laws. Thus, a particular event A explains another, B, only if there is some generalization or law that justifies the inference from A to B. Let me illustrate, using the example of the UPN victory. Recall the three factors which I have already given. I shall take one of these, say welfarist programmes. Next, I have to find out if there are any generalizations which specify conditions under which welfarist parties win elections. There is one which says that people who live under conditions of want or deprivation are likely to vote for welfarist parties. Our explanation then takes the following form:

1. Initial conditions: most people in the old bendel state live under conditions of deprivation;
2. The UPN is a welfarist part;
3. Generalization: Most people who live under conditions of deprivation tend to vote for welfarist parties. Therefore, most "Bendelites" (now Edo citizens) were likely to vote for the UPN.

The point in scientific explanations is that if the premises are true, then the conclusion is true. The generalization and the facts about the condition of most Bendelite (now Edo citizens) and the character of UPN together provide an explanation for why they UPN won. This is the logical structure of scientific explanations. Ultimately, adequate explanations rely on theories. However, I shall not go into further details about this, as I am sure you will learn more about theories in your other political science courses. For now, suffice it to know that the theories we use in political science could be empirical (based on what is) or normative (based on what ought to be). For scientific purposes however, empirical theories are more useful for explanation because they can be tested and retested in a variety of cases. Normative theories are not usually open to such tests.

Prediction

The other goal of science is prediction. Prediction basically has the same logical form as explanation but, unlike explanation, it involves inferring (predicting) future unknown occurrences from particular facts and laws that are already known. When we predict, we specify conditions under which a future event is likely to occur. This is quite close to explanations. The major difference is that in explanation, we specify conditions under which events which have already taken place occurred while in prediction, we project into the future by stating that certain types of events are likely to occur given certain conditions. In the case of our UPN example, we may predict that if “Bendelites” (now Edo citizens) remain deprived, and the UPN welfarist “Bendelists” (now Edo citizen are likely to vote for the party again.

By their nature, predictions can either be reliable or unreliable. (of course, the reliability depends on how factual or true to life the conditions we specify are. This is a major problem in the social sciences where, because of the unpredictability of man’s actions and behaviour, our predictions cannot be absolutely certain, no matter how adequate our explanations on which such predictions are based may be. To this extent, in Political Science, we talk of the probabilities of events actually taking place. For example, we may say that if “Bendelites” (now Edo citizens) remain deprived and if the UPN remains welfarist, there is a high probability that they will vote for the UPN. Words like “most likely”, “tend to” and “most probably” convey the probabilistic nature of predictions in political science.

Summary

1. Political analysis is the core of political science, and is concerned with the systematic study of political phenomena.
2. Because it aims at true and reliable political knowledge, political analysis seek to be scientific and objective in their study.
3. The major goals of science are explanation and prediction.
4. In a scientific explanation, the conclusions are true because the premises on which they are based are true
5. Predictions cannot be made with certainty in political science because man's behaviour and actions are unpredictable.

Key Concepts to Remember

Scientific method, science, generalizations, Laws, theories, hypotheses, values, variables, dependent variables, independent variables, explanation, prediction, probability.

Post – Test

1. What is political analysis, and how is it related to political science?
2. What is the scientific method? Why do political analysis seek to be scientific?
3. What are the major goals of science?
4. Can we make accurate predictions in political science? Why or Why not?
5. Give a broad outline of the structure of Science explanation.

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LECTURE FOUR

Is a Science of Politics Possible?

Introduction

Having seen what the scientific method entails in the last lecture, I want us to consider the question of whether a science of politics is actually possible. As I told you at the beginning of the last lecture, there are those who argue that it is not. My major aim then, is to balance the two sides of the arguments about a science of politics

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be more than equipped to answer the question: is a science of politics possible?

Pre-Test

1. Is a science of politics desirable?
2. Why are explanations and predictions considered inadequate in political science?
3. Can political analysis be value-free?
4. Are there political phenomena which can be studied scientifically?
5. Is a science of politics possible?

CONTENT

A Resume: What a science of politics aims at

We shall begin by summarizing most of what I already told you in the last lecture. This would provide a useful background to our considerations in this lecture.

A Science of politics aims at the following important goals:

1. **Value-Free Analysis:** This refers to the quest for objectivity and neutrality in political analysis. To be scientific, the analyst must analyze facts (data) as they are rather than as they ought to be. As much as possible, our personal likes and dislikes, interests or values must be kept out of our analysis.
2. **Empirical analysis:** concern with what is rather than what ought to be implies an emphasis on direct observation to discover things as they really are, their relationship with other things, and the regularities of their occurrence. It is on observed regularities of their occurrence. It is on these observed regularities that we base our explanations and predictions.
3. **Explanation:** scientific explanations appeal to generalization and theories in explaining specific occurrence. If these generalizations and the particular conditions are true, then the conclusion (s) must be true.
4. **Prediction:** takes the same logical form as explanation, but is different because it is forward looking, and involves specifying conditions under which certain occurrences are likely to take place.
5. **Theories:** a scientific theory is a set of generalization which specifies the direction of relationships among variables. Theories are therefore the major ingredients of explanation. But for them to be really helpful in this regard, they should be general and restrictive. Finally, a good theory should be open to further empirical tests.
6. **Laws:** are statements of universal uniformities which relate to all the cases of a particular phenomenon i.e., they do not allow for exception. They are useful for both explanations and predictions, but do not possess as much explanatory power as theories do though they have greater certainty.

Is a Science of Politics Possible?

Now we are in a position to answer this question. We shall however rely on the writings of numerous authors who believe that a science of politics is not possible¹. We shall take the major issues one by one:

1. **Value Free Analysis:** Some political scientists believe that it is difficult, if not impossible, for political analysis to be value-free. You may have certain personal reasons for deciding to study local government administration rather than say, electoral behaviour. You may believe for example that elections are not free and fair, and so, do not require analysis. Once you have selected your topic, it becomes difficult for your values to be eliminated from your analysis because you are an interested part of what you study. This is why you normally find that people analysis of the same event differ, sometimes so markedly, that you find it difficult to believe that they are analyzing the same thing.

The other problems is, is it desirable for the political analyst to be objective for its own sake? After knowing things as they are (assuming that he is value-free), should the political analyst not go ahead to tell us what ought to be? Without doubt, political scientists do have a responsibility to society as they are involved in the search for a better society. Would their quest for objectivity for its own sake not reduce the relevance of political scientists?

2. **Empirical analysis:** This rests on “hard” facts which are observable and capable of being subjected to laboratory and quantitative analysis. But, can we really get such “hard” fact in politics? Much of what we study is man’s behaviour, we cannot rely on what we think made him behave in a particular way. We have to mostly depend on what he tells us and this may not be reliable because man is capable of lying. This is different from the hard facts in say physics or chemistry which can be described in purely physical terms based on observation. In politics, even such a simple action like voting can not be described as a purely physical activity.

If direct observation and hard facts are difficult then quantitative analysis is more difficult. First, we cannot subject men to the same laboratory conditions under which natural scientists carry out their analysis. As a result, if we really seek to be scientific, we would have to concentrate on political phenomena which can be directly observed and are quantifiable. This diverts attention away from the main stuff of politics like leadership, and decision making which cannot be subjecting political phenomena to empirical analysis.

Opinion polls and survey research methods which are based on questionnaires have been conducted, and computers and advanced statistical (mathematical) techniques have been devised to study political phenomena.

3. **Uncertainties and Unpredictabilities in human life:** The other essential of the scientific method- explanation and predictions which are based on theories and laws- may be summarized by saying that they all rely on observed regularities in particular occurrences. In other words, they rely on consistent patterns of occurrences to be able to explain and predict. This is where a science of politics is particularly handicapped. Man's behaviour remains uncertain and unpredictable, no matter how much we know him about. Consequently, it is difficult to formulate universal or general theories much less "laws" because there would always be exceptions to observed regularities. As long as this cannot be overcome, our explanations and predictions will remain incomplete and inadequate.

In spite of these difficulties, we still have generalizations and theories which, to the extent that they are stated empirically and therefore open to confirmation or information, can be considered scientific. If we cannot be purely scientific, at least we can try to approximate science.

The Debate Continues

The debate over whether a science of politics is possible or desirable is not likely to be completely resolved. The traditionalists, i.e. those political scientists who argue that it is not possible to be Scientific and emphasize normative theories certainly have their points, as do the empiricists or behaviouralists (see next lecture) who seek to be scientific. At the present stage, the agreement seems to be that political phenomena can be studied while those which cannot be subjected to scientific analysis be studied philosophically using normative theories.

Summary

1. The scientific method emphasizes value-free and empirical analysis, as well as explanations and predictions based on the theories and laws.
2. Those who argue that a science of politics is not possible also say that it is not desirable
3. It is difficult for political analysis to be value-free because the analysis is often a part of what he studies
4. Hard facts are rare in politics because direct observation is difficult
5. Explanations and predictions are frequently inadequate in political analysis because man's behaviour is unpredictable

Key Concepts to Remember

Value-free analysis, empirical analysis, objectivity explanation, prediction, theories, laws, traditionalists, empiricists, behaviouralists, observation, normative theory, empirical theory, quantification.

Post Test

1. Is a science of politics desirable?
2. Why are explanations and predictions inadequate in political science?
3. Can political analysis be value-free?
4. Are there political phenomena which can be studied scientifically?
5. Is a science of politics possible?

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LECTURE FIVE

Political Analysis and the Multidisciplinary Approach in the Social Science

Introduction

In this lecture, I want to consider another important aspect of political analysis. This is its reliance on analysis undertaken by other social scientists, and in turn, the reliance of these other social scientist on it. As you will learn, this is one of the best ways to make political analysis complete because man does not live only in a particular world.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. explain why Political Science, Sociology, Economics and Psychology are very close, and why they are called Social Sciences;
2. discuss in clear terms the ways by which they complement each other; and
3. explain why political science is distinct.

Pre-Test

1. In what sense is society regarded as a social system?
2. Trace the evolution of the multidisciplinary approach in the social sciences.
3. What is the relationship between political science and other Social Science disciplines?

4. How can you distinguish political analysis from analysis in other social science disciplines?
5. What are the advantages of the multidisciplinary approach?

CONTENT

The Social Science and the Multidisciplinary Approach

Political science, sociology, economics and human geography are called the Social Science, because they all are interested in the study of man as a social being, as a member of society. Each discipline however concentrates on a distinct aspect of man in society. Sociology deals with the totality of man's social behaviour and relations, with his economics relations and behaviour under different conditions, and human geography i.e. how he adapts his behaviour to his environment

In spite of these distinctions, there are considerable overlaps in what we study because, certainly, man's political and social relations would have implications for his economic behaviour. A Political Scientist would similarly be interested in man's economic and psychological behavior in explaining his political behaviour. Since the disciplines study basically the same thing from different perspective and their interests often overlap, we would expect their studies to be collaborative and complementary. In practice this is usually the case and no analysis - whether in political science or economics is complete if all the relevant data much of which comes from other disciplines, are not considered. It is when such other relevant data are considered, that we talk of the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach in the Social Sciences. As the name suggests, multidisciplinary analysis is analysis that uses data or method from more than one discipline.

The Basis of Multidisciplinary Political Analysis

For a beginning, I shall briefly relate to you how the multidisciplinary approach has come to be an integral part of political analysis. For a long time, political scientists were concerned with the moral ends of the state as well as the formal structures (constitutions) of government. At this time, our closest friends were lawyers, historian and philosophers, as we were all commonly interested in the origins of the states, its formal structure, the purpose these structure served, and how they could be put to the betterment of man in society. This was the mood in which Plato,

Aristotle, Jean Bodin, J.J Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes John Locke, Machiavelli, J.S Mill and other political philosophers wrote.

Later, the focus of attention shifted to the political process and institutions, to the study of legislatures, executives, judiciary, political parties, interest groups and so on, and the relationships among them. Then finally, in the 1940s, the behavioural revolution which had swept across psychology and sociology, caught up with political science. Behaviouralism aims mainly at subjecting the study of man's behaviour to scientific analysis as we discussed in the two previous lectures. Its major impact on political science however, has been that by placing emphasis on human behaviour, it has expanded the scope of political analysis to include man's social, economic and psychological behaviours as they are related to, and help to explain, his political behaviour. It has now come to be realized, more than ever, that society is an all-inclusive entity, a composite system, whose component parts (or subsystems) are closely related. It follows then that, to understand one part, we require an understanding of the others. This is the basis of the multidisciplinary approach.

You now have some ideas of the nature of politics as an activity. It is the process by which conflicting interests are managed and authoritative choices made in social institutions. The most important set of political institutions are conventionally called "the state" and it is the state which is the focus, of the discipline called "political science". The emergence of political science as a separate discipline organized on a large scale in universities and colleges first developed in the United States of America in the early decades of the 20th century. Before the emergence of political science, the subject was divided between specialists in different disciplines.

Constitutional lawyers studied the legal forms taken by states. Historians studied the relations between and the organizations of states in the past. Philosophers discuss the moral foundations, if any, of state authority. In large part, modern political science is the heir to these earlier approaches. At this point, it is important for me to bring to your knowledge the main approaches. They are the institutional, the policy cycle and the socio-political approaches (3).

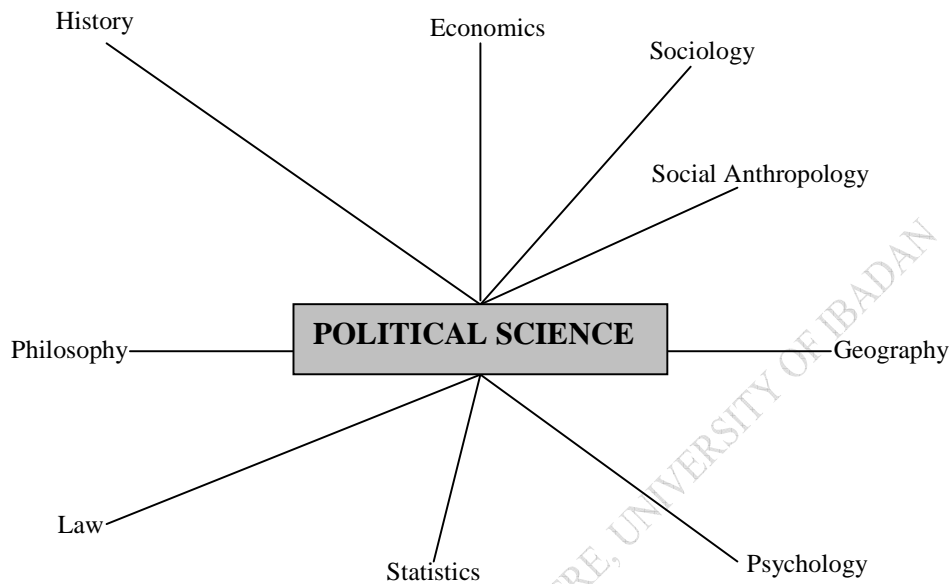


Fig. 5.1: Some of the disciplines contributing to Political Science

Approaches	Focus	Main assumptions	Examples of characteristics evidence examined
Institutional	Formal machinery of government	Formal structures and legal rules are supreme	Structure of parliamentary cabinets, civil service
Public cycle	Choices made by government	Government action shaped by mix of demands and resources, policy affects wider society	Kinds of resources (money etc.) patterns of policy making and implementation
Socio-political	Social context, links between government and society	Structure and production of government shaped by wider society	Economy and class structure; organization of interest groups.

Table 5.1: Summary of important approaches to study of Politics

The Political System and the Social System (Society)

The political system is a part of the society which constitutes an overall social system. The other parts of the social system include the economic system, biological system, cultural system and ecological system. All of

these systems are called subsystems because they constitute a “whole” (society). They are closely related and interact in an interdependent manner, as shown in fig 5.2

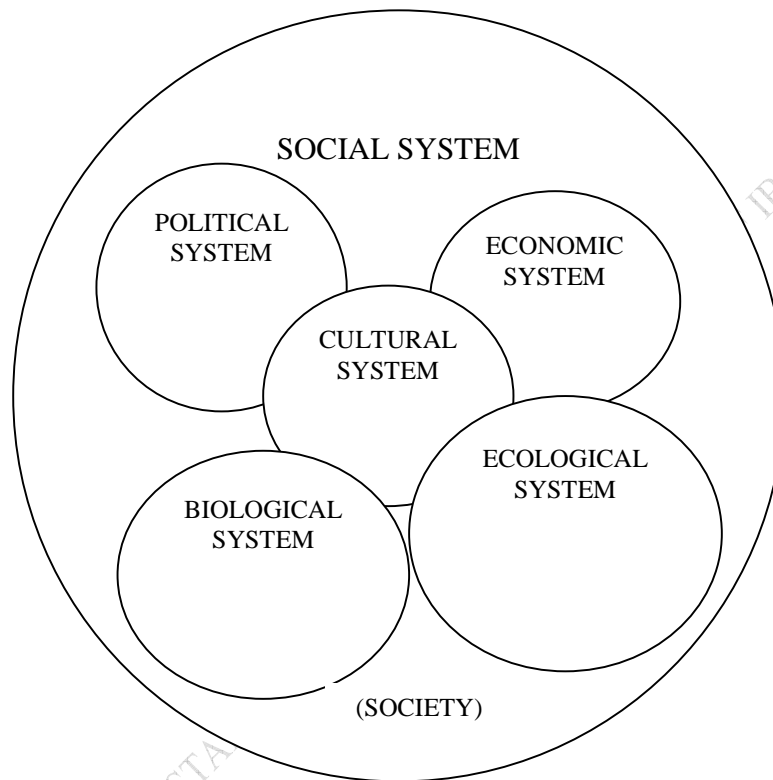


Fig 5.2: The Social System and its Parts

I shall elaborate more on what we mean by a system in a later lecture, but for the immediate purpose, it is enough for you to know that a system is any collection of elements (or parts) that interact in some persistent and interdependent way with one another. From this definition, it is clear that politics should be studied as a part of a whole, which is greatly influenced by what goes on in the other parts. Thus, to say that a society is democratic is to say that its political subsystem is democratic, and at the same time, that the other subsystem contribute directly and indirectly to the sustenance of the democratic political process.

Given the complex web which society is, and the interdependence among its parts, a political analyst should not focus attention only on the political system or the overtly political behaviours and actions just as the economist cannot analyse economic behaviour to the neglect of other relations of man in society. To focus on any of the systems in isolation is to provide incomplete analysis. An economist who is interested in studying inflation for example would be interested in government policies on price, imports and exports (politics) as well as the effects of status (sociology) on spending habits. Similarly, a political scientist who is interested in the occurrence of coups has to know the prevailing economic conditions (economics), the motivations of the officers involved, as well as their personalities (psychology), and the societal norms of political succession (sociology).

Political Analysis is still distinct

So, you see, social scientists require one another, and this is a basic point you must remember as a budding political analyst. However, you may ask the question: does this mean that each social science discipline is not distinct or, more specifically, is political science not a distinct discipline. The answer is no because each discipline has its own aspect of man which it singles out for study. The fact is that each depends on the others for adequate explanation and, even so, each develops its own theories and methods which may or may not be related to other disciplines.

One good way of distinguishing political science from the other social sciences is to say that political behaviour in which we are primarily interested is the dependent variable (i.e. what is to be explained), while the economic, social, cultural and psychological factors which help us to explain constitute the independent variables (i.e. factors which explain). As long as our dependent variables are political, our analysis remains distinct.

Summary

1. The social science disciplines are all related because they all study man in society.
2. The behavioural revolution which spread through the social sciences gave birth to the multidisciplinary approach
3. Society is a social system whose political, economic, biological and cultural parts constitute subsystem. These parts are interdependent
4. The complex web which society is, makes the political analysts interested in sociological, economic and psychological analyses to facilitate adequate explanation
5. Political science remains distinct, in spite of the popularity of the multidisciplinary approach, because its dependent variables are political.

Key Concepts to Remember

Multidisciplinary approach, social sciences, behaviouralism, political system, social system, dependent variable, independent variable

Post Test

1. In what sense is society regarded as a social system?
2. Trace the evolution of the multidisciplinary approach in the Social Sciences.
3. What is the relationship between political Science and other Social Science disciplines?
4. How can you distinguish political analysis from analysis in other social science disciplines?
5. What are the advantages of the multidisciplinary approach?

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LECTURE SIX

Systems Approach to the Study of Politics

Introduction

In the next two chapters, I shall introduce you to two major approaches by which you can pin down what you want to study and carry out your analysis. The approach, as you will see, complement most of what we treated in the last lecture.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. explain how to organise whatever analysis you wish to undertake, especially how to delimit the boundaries of analysis given the close relationship between politics and other aspects of society; and
2. discuss what to look out for each time you undertake analysis

Pre-Test

1. What is a system?
2. Is the systems approach useful for political analysis?
3. What are the major parts of the political system? How are they related?
4. What are the major criticism of the system approach?
5. What are the major goals of the systems approach

CONTENT

In the last lecture, we saw that politics is embedded within an overall system whose other parts directly or indirectly influence the nature of politics. The enlargement of the scope of what we study in political science has brought about a large mass of what is, at first sight, unorganized data knowing all that you need to know is important. But analyzing them and drawing relationship among them is more important still and for this, you require a framework of analysis within which you can organise and analyse your data. This is provided by the systems and structural- functionalist approaches which I shall be concerned with in the next two chapters.

For a start, you should note that an approach is a perspective or framework within which politics is analysed. It can also be defined “a set of concepts, categories or terms that serves to focus attention on particular aspect of politics”.

The System Approach

The system approach is one of the most popular ways of organizing political study. It enables us to selectively identify and organize what is political when we look at the whole society. It also enables us to identify the interrelationships among political phenomena – cabinet office, political parties, and ethnicity e.t.c and between these and other phenomena which are politically relevant but belong to other realms of society – family, economic relations, industrial relations, educational system, etc.

A system is an abstract construct to represent what goes on in the real world for purpose of analysis. It is a pattern of stable relationships among the parts which make it up. There are many kinds of systems, like the heating system in a house, the human physiological system and, of course, the political system. What makes any system a system is that it meets the five major characteristics of systems:

1. A system is made up of parts. The human physiological system for example, is made up of the brain, liver, kidney, heart, lungs, etc.
2. Each of these parts performs important functions which sustain the system and ensures its survival.
3. The parts interact, i.e. that have patterned relationships.

4. The parts are interdependent, meaning that what happens in one part directly or indirectly affects the other parts.
5. A system has boundaries which can either be concrete or physical, as in the boundaries of a political system (which is not synonymous with the nation-state or country). An abstract boundary is a way of specifying what we are interested in analysing as developed by David Easton. It is also called the input-output model, and is presented in Fig. 6.1

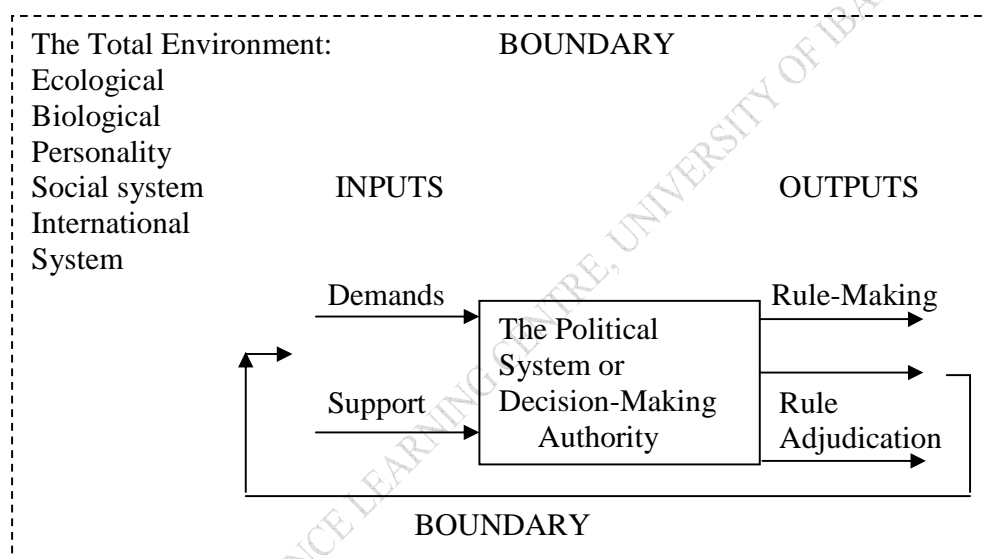


Fig. 6.1: David Easton's Input – Output model

According to this simple model, the major parts of the political system are the boundary, the total environment, the inputs, the structures of the political system concerned with the authoritative allocation of values, outputs, and the feedback loop. All of these parts are inter-related and are interdependent, as the directions of the arrows in Fig. 6. 1 indicates. For you to fully grasp the conception of the arrows in Fig. 6.1 indicate. For you to fully grasp the conception of the political system, I shall elaborate on each of these parts and the ways which they are related.

The notions of boundary and total environment are fairly straightforward. Boundary refers to the limit or dividing line within which political activities take place. The total environment refers to the totality of the society in which we live and how its nature determines what we want,

what we do, and so on. Certainly, this environment will include both internal and international elements because the entire world has become one integrated mass in which what happens in USSR would likely affect what goes on in Nigeria.

From the total environment, come the inputs which consists of demands and supports. Demands refer to actions people want those in authority to undertake or reject. These demands may be articulated (or expressed). However, in this model, demands are viewed as sources of societal stress which can largely be managed or bated by supports given to those in authority. Supports could be given to the political system as a whole, and consists of implicit or explicit agreement with government policies, or encouragement to follow certain courses of action. Generally, if support is lacking, the political system cannot survive for long.

The inputs are transmitted to the decision-making centers where they are processed and converted into authoritative allocation of values as outputs. I have simplified these outputs according to the functions of the three major organs of government, namely, rule-making by the legislature, rule-application by the executive, and rule-adjudication by the judiciary. Basically, outputs are the policies formulated by the decision-makers. The feedback loop represents the process by which the political system informs itself about the consequences of its outputs. Do the outputs meet demands? Or create new problems? The extent to which the political system is able to meet the demands made determines the level of supports it is likely to get.

From what I have said so far, it should be clear to you that one of the major goals of the systems approach is to account for how a given political system maintains its existence over time. It focuses particular attention on the factors which make for stability and instability in political systems by examining how they are able to manage the demands, threats and supports directed towards them in such a way as to maintain their existence. In summary, the approach has three major features. First, it is concerned with how order is maintained, because it suggests that the maintenance of the system depends on its ability to maintain order. Second, it recognizes that change is inevitable as it is interested in how political systems are able to meet the challenges posed by change. Third, it draws attention to the importance of goal-realization as a central aspect of the political system because it assumes that no political system can survive for long without articulating and pursuing identifiable goals.

Merits

1. It provides a framework for comparing political systems. Theoretically, the systems approach is not limited to nation-states alone, as there are political systems in unions, clubs and other organized associations in society.

It provides a standardized set of concepts such as inputs and outputs to describe activities which take place in all political systems. As such, they can be compared.

2. The approach takes cognizance of the inevitability of change and addresses itself to how the system can adapt itself and survive when faced with changes. This is particularly useful for studying African, Asian, and Latin American societies which continuously undergo rapid changes resulting from the process of development. However, I shall point out shortly that its conception of change is inadequate.
3. By drawing attention to the external environment of every political system, it is a useful approach for analyzing the international political system, especially the linkage between the domestic and the international environments.

Criticism

1. The most popular criticism is that the approach is ideologically oriented towards retaining the status quo. By laying emphasis on order and system maintenance, the approach is not well suited to studying revolutionary changes. In fact, some authors have argued that the approach seeks, from a Western ideological standpoint, to be an alternative approach to Marxism which suggests that only revolutionary changes can bring about desired changes in society.
2. The approach fails to give a clear definition of what is political, and what differentiates political interactions from other types of social interaction. It seems to assume that all political interactions are directed towards the “authoritative allocation of values”. Such emphasis seems to imply that politics only takes place in National Political System. This criticism can however be mitigated by the fact that the systems model can be applied to any political system, insofar as the analyst defines its boundaries.

3. The approach seems to suggest that all parts of the political system are equally important. This is however untrue because some parts are more important than the others and in any case, different parts perform similar functions in different political system. This means, for example, that the functions performed by the Political Parties in the United Kingdom may be performed militarily in Nigeria. Rather than generalize, as the systems approach seems to suggest, the analyst requires to specify which parts are crucial in a particular system, and how they affect and are, in turn, affected by others.

Summary

1. The systems approach provides the political analyst a useful framework for organizing his analysis.
2. Every political system is made up of boundaries, total environment, in-puts, outputs and feedback process.
3. These parts are interdependent.
4. The approach is especially useful for comparing systems.
5. It does not provide a useful framework for analyzing revolutionary changes.

Key Concepts to Remember

System, parts, interdependence, boundary, patterned interaction, total environment, inputs, demands, supports, political system, outputs, policies, rule-making, rule-application, rule adjudication, feedback, order, system maintenance, stability.

Post – Test

1. What is a system?
2. Is the systems approach useful for political analysis?
4. What are the major parts of the political systems approach?
5. What are the major goals of the systems approach?

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LECTURE SEVEN

Structural - Functionalist Analysis

Introduction

As indicated at the beginning of the last lecture, the systems approach and the structural functionalist approach provide frameworks for political analysis. Having treated the systems approach let me now turn to structural-functionalism.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to criticize the structural functionalist analysis.

Pre-Test

1. In what are systems approach and structural-functionalist approach similar?
2. Distinguish between manifest and latent functions
3. Identify and elaborate on the requisite political functions
4. What are the merits of the structural-functionalist approach?
5. What are the criticisms of the approach?

CONTENT

Systems Approach and Structural-Functionalist Approach

The structural-functionalist approach has a lot in common with the systems approach, and, in fact, some political scientists treat them as essentially the same approach. The major difference in the approaches however, is in their areas of emphasis. Remember I said in the last lecture

that the systems approach has three major interests, namely, how the system maintains order, how it adapts to changes and survives in spite of them, and how its goals are realized. Also recall that the political system has parts- inputs, outputs, etc. What do these parts do? They functions to maintain the system and to keep it at equilibrium. This is the major concern in the structural-functionalist approach. It is assumed that every political system has certain basic structure or institutions which perform essential functions without which the system cannot survive. The search then is for these functions and the structures that perform them.

Structures or institutions refers to persistent relationships among individuals and groups, to patterns of action, which are assumed to have consequences (functions) that lead either to stability or instability. Examples include the family, legislature, political parties, and roles. A distinction is however often made between concrete and analytical structures. Concrete structures are membership units such as the family and the cabinet, whose parts (Parents, children, ministers, etc.) can be separated physically. The society is regarded as the most inclusive, general concrete structure because it contains all other concrete structures, while the government represents the most important concrete political structure.

Analytical structures, in contrast to concrete structures, have parts that cannot be physically separated. The best example of an analytical structure is "role". A role is a part played by an individual, or an office/position occupied by a political actor. Defined as such, we find that an individual plays more than one role at a time. Thus, a permanent Secretary is a father, a member of Joggers club, a voter, a television personality, etc. Whether these roles are performed at different times and places or simultaneously, the essential point is that they cannot be physically separated.

Functions are the "duties" performed by political structures in the political system. They may also be seen as consequences of their existence. A structure may however perform more than one function as, for example, the bureaucracy does when it performs the functions of communication, law-making and law-interpretation. In the same vein, many structures can perform the same functions as, for example, schools, families, mass media and political parties, all perform the function of political education.

Requisite Functions

The most important functions without which the system cannot survive are called requisite functions. Can you think of some such functions? Let me help you: no society can continue without reproduction, child rearing, rule-making, order, and goal attainment. Political scientists do not agree on what requisite functions are necessary. However Gabriel Almond has identified seven of them which enjoy wide acceptance. These are:

1. Political recruitment, which involves filling new political roles or offices, replacing individuals who can no longer perform, and promoting individuals to new offices. A great deal of the success or effectiveness of any political system would depend on who plays what role, and how they are recruited.
2. Political socialization, which refers to the process by which the individual imbibes or learns his political attitudes, beliefs and values which enable him function well as a member of the political system.
3. Interest Articulation, involving demands by individuals or groups that government changes or continues a specific policy to take no action at all.
4. Interest Aggregation which relates to the combination or aggregation of demands into a smaller number of policy alternatives. This activity is usually associated with political parties which try to compromise and combine the numerous demands in order to build coalition of electoral support.
5. Policy making which is the rule-making process by which values are authoritatively allocated.
6. Policy Implementation which refers to the process of carrying out or executing policies
7. Political communication which involves the flow of political information, especially between the government and the governed through representatives of the latter. Demands and the feedback process would be impossible without political communication.

Manifest and Latent Functions

Another distinction usually made in talking about functions is between manifest functions and latent functions. A manifest function is an intended

function or consequence for which particular structures exist. For example, the manifest functions of a university are teaching, research and the dissemination of knowledge. Latent functions, on the other hand, are unintended functions or consequences which may actually be detrimental (dysfunctional) to the health of the system. To take the University example once more, the breedings of revolutionary youths or increasing sexual promiscuity may be regarded as latent functions which are at the same time dysfunctional.

Resume

In general, structural functionalism is concerned with the nature of the functions that are performed in a political system, and the structures which perform them. It asks what functions are required to be performed in order that the system may survive?

Merit

1. Like the systems approach, the structural- functionalist approach facilitates comparison among political systems. If political systems- whether village or industrialized- required the same basic functions to survive they can be compared if these functions are identified.
2. Although the approach emphasizes the structures in a system, it is more interested in the behaviour of these structures. Specifically, it focuses on what structure do rather than on what their characteristics. In other words, it wants to find out what the behaviour is and why it is important. By so doing, we come to know that some structures perform other functions apart from the manifest ones.

Criticisms

1. Like the systems approach, its emphasis on system-maintenance makes it ideological apposed to revolutionary change. In fact, as is the case with the systems approach, it seems to counter Marxism. As W.G. Runciman has argued, "functionalism can indeed be interpreted as a conscious alternative to Marxism. Some of its writers have wanted to interpret it as a political ideology conditioned by the structure of American capitalism".

2. The approach relies heavily on national political systems, thereby suggesting that politics does not take place outside of the state realm. In addition, it does not actually specify what political activities are.
3. By placing a lot of emphasis on functions and functional behaviour, the approach diverts attention away from the institutions/structures themselves which are then taken for granted because they are assumed to exist simply because they perform certain functions.
4. The laudable abstract analysis of functions has not been matched by an equal concern with or linkage to the concrete structures.

Summary

1. The structural-functionalist approach is similar to the system approach because both of them are concerned with system-maintenance.
2. Structural-functionalism however emphasizes the search for those functions without which the system cannot survive, and the structures which perform them.
3. There are three major kinds of functions, namely, requisites, manifest and latent functions
4. The major merit of the approach is that it facilitates comparison between political systems.
5. The major criticism of the approach is that it is opposed to revolutionary change.

Key Concepts to Remember

Structure, Institution, function, system-maintenance political recruitment, political socialization, interest aggregation, interest articulation, policy making, policy implementation, political communication, requisite functions, manifest functions, latent functions.

Post- Test

1. In what ways are systems approach and structural functionalism similar?
2. Distinguish between manifest and latent functions
3. Identify and elaborate on the requisite political functions.
4. What are the merits of the structural-functionalist approach?
5. What are the criticisms of the approach?

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LECTURE EIGHT

Modes of Political Analysis

Introduction

In the last five lectures, I have been concerned with the methods of and approaches to, political analysis. What I want to do in this lectures is to piece all that I have taught you so far together, by examining the various orientations or aspects of political analysis and the modes (methods) of analysis which are appropriate for each orientation.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to explain the various dimensions of political analysis, and why the scientific method (remember it?) cannot be the only method for analyzing politics.

Pre-Test

1. What are the orientations of political analysis?
2. Analysis that aims at discovering what is, is called what?
3. How are the orientations of political analysis related?
4. What is the goal of policy analysis?
5. When is Semantic analysis useful?

CONTENT

The Orientations of Political Analysis

You always seek to understand what goes on around you so you can act in a reasonable manner most of the time. You realize that you require to know certain things to discuss intelligently, appraise situations and take

decisions. The knowledge you require naturally” varies from one situation to another. Obviously, you cannot use the same information you require to marry a good wife to appraise the decision taken by the President to commit your country to war. In every situation in which you find yourself, you invariably ask certain basic questions. What is the state of things? How has it come to be the way it is? Is it good or could it be better? How can you act to arrive at the desirable state of things (for yourself, your wife, your children, your professional association, your country and so on?). Underlying all of these questions is another one which most of us often take for granted: What do you mean by the key terms you use?

Let us consider a practical situation. Take the problem of destitutes in our society which, many of us agree, is undesirable. How did the problem come to be, i.e. what are its causes? Knowing the causes will enable you offer solutions. So, the next question is, how can the problem be solved? What are the possible alternative ways of solving it, and which of them seems most appropriate? Underlying all of these questions is a very fundamental one; what is destitution?

These questions point to different orientations of analysis. In defining your subject or the problem, you seek to clarify its meaning. When you ask whether the state of affairs is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, you are searching for criteria or norms for evaluation. When you ask about causes, you seek to find out empirical relationships among the various elements present. Finally, when you ask how the problem can be solved, you are looking for a policy: political analysis can accordingly be categorized into semantic analysis (by which you seek clarification of subject); normative analysis (by which you seek to assess or “judge” policies and situations based on certain norms); empirical analysis (by which you seek to discover causes and establish relationships among the elements you are considering); and policy analysis (by which you look for that solution among possible solutions). I shall elaborate further on each mode.

Modes of Political Analysis

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS: In semantic analysis or what is called conceptual analysis, we try to clarify the meaning of the key terms or concepts that we use. This is particularly important because many of the concepts that we use in politics, like power; influence, even politics itself, have no

commonly accepted definitions. Therefore, if you do not clarify your concepts, many people may disagree with your analysis. There are two ways of going about semantic analysis.

First, a term or concept can be defined by appealing to an authority whose definition is widely accepted, or by relying on definitions offered in standard English or “technical” dictionaries. This is called nominal definition. Second, in the case of very nebulous concepts like democracy, freedom, or equality which are often coloured by ideological considerations, we can devise certain “objective” indices according to which they can be defined, and insist that they mean exactly what we want them to mean. This is called “operationalization” of concepts. Let us say you want to define freedom. You may say that it means a very low degree of government intervention in the lives of individuals that can be ascertained from indices like whether or not human rights are guaranteed, whether or not opposition is suppressed, whether or not the rule of law prevails, and so on. The major advantage in this kind of definition is that even if people do not agree with your definition, they can at least see things from your point of view.

Which of these two ways of semantic analysis you choose would, of course, depend on the nature of what you analyse, what is already known about it, and the particular elements you may wish to emphasize.

NORMATIVE ANALYSIS: When you say that something is bad, you are at the same time saying that you have an idea of what is good. But what exactly do we seek to convey when we use terms like good, bad, right and wrong by which we usually judge? What are the criteria for these judgments? Are the criteria objectives in such a way that everyone can easily recognize good and bad things; or are they subjective, in which case, everyone has his own set of criteria for judging things? Must we always search for the good, and if so, why? These are the kinds of questions asked in normative analysis.

Normative analysis involves questions of what ought to be, rather than what is. What ought to be is determined by the values we have, whether these are divine, natural laws, or are purely subjective. This is probably why normative analysis is a major preoccupation of students of religion and moral philosophy who are continually in search of what is good and righteous. But political scientists also engage in normative

analysis because, as some writers argue, our primary responsibility to society is to move beyond what is, to tell society what ought to be. Since society looks up to us for ways of bringing about a better society, it may be correct to argue that political analysis will be incomplete without normative analysis.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: If an analyst says that political instability results from the unfairness of the electoral process, he is making an empirical proposition which is open to verification. As Robert Dahl puts it, 'empirical propositions, experiments or interpretations'.

The point is that in empirical analysis, the concern is with what is. When you ask the question, what causes destitution; you are asking an empirical question based on what is. The possible answers, like destitution results from inadequate care for the old and handicapped or that it results from frustration can be put to test. In essence, empirical analysis and conclusions reflect the implications of (the) empirical evidence rather than (the analyst's) personal values, preferences, or presuppositions." But again, the old question arises: is it possible for you to divorce yourself (your values, biases and beliefs) from your analysis? We have said it is difficult. But it can at least be minimized if we systematically follow the scientific procedure. If the facts we have are not "coloured", and can be said to be reliable, and analysis is based strictly on the facts as they are, then even if our values intrude, they would be minimal.

POLICY ANALYSIS: Policy analysis involves the search for policies or courses of action which will take us from the present state to that which we desire. In other words, policies are solutions which we think will bring desired and satisfactory results. Certainly, in any unsatisfactory situation, there would be more than one possible solution. For example, if we desire a higher level of literacy in our society, many options are open to us. We may introduce a Universal Primary Education programme, accelerate and expand the awards of scholarships, lower entry grades into schools, etc. each of these options will make us achieve our desired goal. But whichever we choose would depend on many considerations: how we define the goal or problem, the relative costs and benefits of each option, the practicability of each option, and so on. These considerations are the major elements in policy analysis.

How the Modes are related

Although each orientation of analysis emphasizes a particular focus, the four modes of analysis are not mutually exclusive i.e. none is independent of the others. Normative analysis requires prior empirical knowledge: to know what ought to be, we require to know what is. Policy analysis makes use of both empirical and normative analysis because, in a sense, it attempts to bridge the gap between what is and what ought to be. Furthermore, normative assumptions provide us the criteria for evaluating policies. Underlying all analysis is, of course semantic analysis, without which few analyses can be made.

Summary

1. There are four orientation of political analysis empirical, normative, policy and semantic
2. Empirical analysis relates to what is and explanations for why it is so.
3. Normative analysis relies on certain criteria and norms to tell what ought to be.
4. Policy analysis involves at a course of action appropriate for moving from the present state to the desirable state.
5. Semantic analysis seeks to clarify the terms that one used in analysis.
6. The four modes of analysis are not mutually exclusive.

Key concepts To Remember

Normative analysis, Empirical analysis, Policy analysis, Semantic analysis, norms, criteria, policy, evaluation.

Post-Test

1. What are the orientations of political analysis?
2. Analysis that aims at discovering “what is”, is called what?
3. How are the orientations of political analysis related?
4. What is the goal of policy analysis?
5. When is semantic analysis useful?

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LECTURE NINE

Types of Political Systems

Introduction

As a way of organizing analysis, the classification of political systems is a necessity. In this chapter, I want to discuss the necessity for classification, and some of the criteria for doing so. This is a necessary background to what I shall be considering in the two lectures after this.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to formulate your own typology or classificatory scheme of political system.

Pre-Test

1. What is a typology?
2. Is classification necessary in political analysis?
3. What are the criteria for evaluating typologies?
4. Discuss Weber's idea types of authority s?
5. Is there one best typology of political systems?

CONTENT

If a political system is defined as any stable pattern of interrelations which involves power and authority, meaning that a political system is not narrowed down to countries alone, we certainly have millions of political systems in the world. By the time we include all business firms, trade unions, private clubs, and so on which have interaction involving power and authority, the number must be quite high. However, we may restrict

the meaning of political system to countries only. This way, we can probably tell how many political systems exist in the world. But even this shows quite a high number of political systems.

Along with the large number of political system is the large body of data about them that we have. If Aristotle performed a feat collecting data on 158 Greek city-states, then the infinite data we have on political systems today is more than spectacular. The development of advanced technology in communication and information gathering has resulted in an information explosion in the study of politics. With so much data, how do we organize analysis? Because, after all, when we analyze, we are not interested in all the data. How can we arrive at valid generalizations that would aid our analysis of different systems? This is what I shall be concerned with in the next three lectures. The basic point which ties all the three lectures together is that we can organize the mass of the data by classifying political systems on the basis of certain. In the present lecture, I shall consider the typologies of political systems that have been developed, and see how political systems have been classified.

Typologies of Political Systems

A typology is a proposed way of classifying the subject matter in which we are interested. It is an analytical construct which seeks to present a simplified view of actual situations. In other words, typologies present ways of simplifying complex political situations by presenting abstract standards by which they can be composed. For example, we can classify political systems based on the criteria of how many actually rule, the types of authority prevalent, as well as the degree of popular participation.

The formulation of typologies of political systems is almost as old as political science itself, as political scientists have always been interested in classi-system. However, since the information explosion came about, there has been what Dahl calls a “flood of typologies”. One of the earliest but still popular classificatory schemes was that developed by Aristotle. Based on the two criteria of rulership-of the relative number of citizens entitled to rule, and whether the ruler in their own selfish interests or in the common interest, he formulated a six-fold classification as shown in Fig. 9.1. Which has remained highly influential over the years.

Number of citizens entitled to rule	Rulers rule in the interest of	
One	ALL	THEMSELVES
One	Monarch (Kingship)	Tyranny
Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many	Polity	Democracy

Fig. 9.1: Aristotles Classificatory Scheme

The classificatory scheme presented above is self-explanatory. Where only one citizen rules in the interest of all citizens in the political systems, the system is a monarchy. Examples can be found in the various African Kingdoms, empires and emirates, and contemporary examples exist in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Swaziland. If the king rules for his selfish interest, the system of rule is tyrannical, as was the case in self-styled Emperor Bedel Bokassa's Central African empire. Next, where only few citizens rule in the interest of all, there is aristocracy. If they rule for themselves, there is oligarchy. In a sense, most political systems are oligarchial because only a few people actually rule. This is the claim of Robert Michels' famous 'Iron law of oligarchy' which states that wherever there is organization, there is oligarchy. Finally, if many citizens rule, as is said to have been the case in the Greek city-states, there is a polity, if they rule in the interest of all, and democracy if they rule for themselves. I am sure you are familiar with the commonplace definition of democracy as government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Another popular classificatory scheme is that of Max Weber. Weber's typology is however restricted to political systems in which power is legitimate. His criterion of classification is the ground on which leaders claim legitimacy for their rule, and the governed accept their claims. These grounds are presented as three "ideal" types of authority. They are called ideal types because they are pure abstractions and because, in reality, more than one type of authority may exist. The three ideal types are:

1. **Traditional Authority:** Here, legitimacy rests "on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions". As such, members of the political system obey the rulers because their forebearers have always done so. Several examples of this type of authority

exist in our society where we have traditional rulers, many of who claim their legitimacy from legendary fathers and kings.

2. **Charismatic Authority:** This is authority derived from exceptional personal qualities of the leader (s). Charisma is the Greek word for “gift of grace”. People accept the leadership of heroes, truly exceptional and exemplary persons, and those they see as ‘God sent’s or messiahs. Jesus Christ and the Holy Prophet Mohammed are two of the best known charismatic leaders. We can also regard Julius Nyerere, Obafemi Awolowo, and Nnamdi Azikiwe as Charismatic leaders in varying degrees. It is however possible for charismatic authority to be tranformed into traditional authority. This happens where leaders, especially off-springs of the charismatic leaders, justify their rule by posing as sucessors to the charismatic leader.
3. **Legal-Rational Authority:** In this case, legitimacy is derived from the constitution or other legal instruments, and is accepted as binding because authority exercised in the name of the sources is legal. One important element in this type of authority is that it is impersonal, i.e. it is not based on the personal qualities of the person who exercises authority, but on the legal authority of the office that he occupies or the role that he plays. This is why we respect poicemen.

As I have indicated, these categories of authority are ideal types, and they could all be present in the same political system. In Nigeria for example, we have all three types of authority. Try to think of examples of these types.

Numerous other typologies have formulated, based on different criteria. Gabriel Almond, for example, has classified political systems into and Totaliatarian. The problem with Almond’s classificatory scheme is obvious; he uses more than one criterion. We can recognise the geo-political criterion (Anglo-Saxon, Continental European), technolgical (Pre- industrial or partially industrial), and ideological (totalitarian). Other typologies include that of Charles Andrain, who classifies political systems into democracy, totalitarian and traditional systems. There is yet another by S.N. Eisenstadt, whose categoies are primitive political systems, patrimonial empires, nomadic or conquest empire, city-states, feudal systems, centralized historical bureaucracies, and modren societies (democratic, autocratic, totalitarian and “underdeveloped”).

Is there a best Typology?

The question that I am sure you will want to ask now is, is there one best typology? The answer is no, simply because we have thousands of criteria for classifying political systems, and the criteria that you use depends on the aspects of politics in which you are interested. A demographer might classify political systems according to their populations, a constitutional lawyer according to their constitutional forms, a political scientist according to their party systems and so on. However, although it is difficult to say there is one best typology, there are criteria for evaluating typologies. For a typology to be considered good, it has to meet the following criteria:

1. its categories (or types) should be appropriate for the purpose of the research in which they are used. This is because how we classify political systems depends very much on what we are interested in analyzing. A typology based on the criterion of geography will not be useful if you are interested in studying party systems.
2. The categories should be exhaustive. They should embrace or be capable of embracing all known political systems
3. The categories should be independent and mutually exclusive. There should be no overlaps, and no political system should fall into more than one category.
4. The criteria of classification must be applied consistently for all categories in the typology. On this ground, Almond's typology is faulty because it uses different criteria for different categories.

Summary

1. Every political analyst requires a classificatory scheme for organizing his study, given the information explosion on political systems.
2. Numerous classificatory schemes or typologies have been formulated using different criteria.
3. Two of the most popular of such typologies are those by Aristotle and Max Weber.
4. There is no best typology because the typology that any researcher uses depends on the aspect of the political system he wants to study.
5. There are four criteria for evaluating the appropriateness of a typology.

Key Concepts To Remember

Typology, Classification, Schemes, categories, Traditional authority, charismatic authority, legal- rational authority, monarch, polity, democracy, Aristocracy, tyranny, oligarchy.

Pre-Test

1. What is typology?
2. Is classification necessary in political analysis?
3. What are the criteria for evaluating typologies?
4. Discuss Weber's ideal types of authority.
5. Is there one best typology of political systems?

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LECTURE TEN

Similarities in Political System

Introduction

My task in this lecture is to provide you with another framework for classifying political systems. This consists of identifying the similarities among them.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to discuss the ways political systems are similar. This will enable you to develop another form of classification.

Pre Test

1. Why do we have uneven control of political resources in political system?
2. Are all political systems equally influenced by others in the international system?
3. Why do leaders seek legitimacy?
4. What is ideology? How is it used in political system?
5. When does government come in to resolve conflicts

CONTENT

Similarities in Political System

No matter how different political systems may be (I shall consider this in the next lecture), there are those who believe that they share similar characteristics. Identifying those characteristics provides one way of

classifying political system. You should however note that these similarities do not define a political system. They are regularities which occur in virtually all of them.

The similarities we are going to be considering are those that have been identified by Robert Dahl. These are:

1. *Uneven Control of Political resource*: This underlines the general notion of inequality in every political system- as control of political resources is distributed unevenly, so it is difficult to have equality. The elite theorists-Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto, and Gaetano Mosca- have highlighted the inequality between the few elites and the mass of the people in every society.

Why is there uneven control over political resources?

There are four main reasons

First, as there is specialization of roles or functions in society, so there are those whose roles give them greater control over political resources than others. Second, individuals have unequal inheritance and endowments especially from their family backgrounds. Some are from wealthy and influential families, others from humble families. Such inheritance gives a start in life. Third, there are inequalities in biological (especially intelligence) and social inheritance (some people come from privileged ethnic groups; as well as life experiences, all of which produce differences in incentives and goals among individuals. Depending on our inheritance and experiences, we are not all equally motivated to participate in politics, to seek power and control over political resources, and so on. Finally, society itself encourages individuals to have different goals and incentives, to be able to perform essential functions. Notwithstanding these factors, we shall find out in the next lecture that political systems still differ in the degree of uneven control.

1. *The Quest for Influence*: In all political systems, not everyone seeks to gain influence over policies and government decisions. There are, however, those who seek influence not necessarily for the sake of merely becoming influential, but as a way of furthering their goals. In some cases, such influence is sought by organized groups, especially trade unions and professional associations which continually seek to bend government machinery to favour their members.

2. *Uneven Distribution of Political Influence:* Because members of the political system do not seek political influence equally, and, more so, because control of political resources is unevenly distributed, political influence is also unevenly distributed in political systems
3. *The Pursuit and Resolution of Conflicting Interests:* In lecture 2, I told you that one of the conceptions of politics is that it is the pursuit of conflicting interest which have to be resolved by the political authority (government). This seems to be the central political activity in political systems though, while some political scientists place emphasis on the pursuit of conflicting interest, others emphasize their resolution. Everyone agrees however that, for members of the political system to continue to live together, their conflicts should be resolved. Even so, we know that government does not have to resolve all kinds of conflicts. There are association and groups to which individuals belong (family private club, church) which habitually resolve conflicts. It is usually at high points of conflict, when coercion becomes necessary, as, for example, when people protest, government interaction may be called for.
4. *The Acquisition of Legitimacy:* According to Dahl, “Leaders in a political system try to ensure that whenever governmental means are used to deal with conflicts, the decisions arrived at are widely accepted not solely from fear of violence, punishment, or coercion but also from a belief that it is morally right and proper to do so”. I told you before that no government can survive for long if it relies on its monopoly of the instrument of coercion or if it rules society by force. This is why leaders try to get the support of the people. The support given to the leaders or, their acceptance system seek legitimacy.
5. *Development of an Ideology:* To justify their claims to leadership, leaders in virtually all political systems espouse a set of more or less coherent, persistent doctrines. This is called political ideology, or what Mosca calls “political formula”. In many African States, rulers espouse the doctrine of African Socialism which is to the effect that Africans accept only one centre of power as there are no class conflicts in Africa. This doctrine justifies their one party rolling system. An ideology serves the purpose of legitimacy only.

Political ideologies are not always espoused for the sake of legitimacy only. Some go further to justify the political system itself, to provide a 'world view' or 'cognitive map' for organizing society to achieve desired ends and goals. Such ideologies are usually state or official ideologies. Such ideologies provide the framework within which the organization, policies and leaders of the system are evaluated, and set out the goals of society. A good example of this is socialism which aims at the equality of all men.

6. *The Impact of Other Political Systems:* Today, the political systems in the world are integral parts of one international system which possesses all the characters of a system!! We discussed in lecture 6. As such every political system is more or less influenced by the behaviour of others. Of course, as is to be expected, all political systems are not influenced by others the same way. "Exposed" and underdeveloped countries like those in Africa, Asia and Latin America which are economically and technologically dependent on the capitalist centres of the world in Western European and USA are more influenced than the "advanced" capitalist countries. In fact, in some underdeveloped countries, those who rule and how they rule are "remotely" controlled by the leaders in the more powerful countries. It is therefore in order to say that all political systems are more or less affected or influenced by others in the international political system.
7. *The Inevitability of Change:* Change is a constant factor in life. The same applies to political systems, all of which undergo inevitable change. Some changes are routine (like yearly budgets), others profound (like new policies which depart completely from past policies), and others are total capable of adapting itself to it, otherwise, it collapses. Systems however differ in their capacities to adapt to changes, as we shall find out in the next lecture.

A Final Word

These eight characteristics summarises the similarities that can be found in political systems. The forms they take however differ from one political system to another as I shall show in the next lecture.

Summary

1. There are similar characteristics present in all political systems.
2. Knowing these similarities provides us with a means for organizing political data.
3. The similarities are eight, as listed by Robert Dahl: uneven control of political resources, the quest for political influence, Uneven distribution of political influence, the pursuit and resolution of conflicting aims, the acquisition of legitimacy, development of an ideology, the impact of other political systems, and the inevitability of change.
4. These similar characteristics may however take different forms in political systems.

Key Concepts to Remember

Similarities, political resources, inequality, inheritance, endowment role specialization, influence, conflicts, government, leaders, legitimacy, ideology, international political system, change, powerful.

Post Test

1. Why do we have uneven control of political resources in political systems?
2. Are all political systems equally influenced by others in the international system?
3. Why do leaders seek legitimacy?
4. What is ideology? How is it used in political system?
5. When does government come in to resolve conflicts?

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LECTURE ELEVEN

Differences in Political Systems

Introduction

I have told you that political systems are both similar and different. This lecture is about the differences which should be seen against the background of the similarities discussed earlier on.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to classify political systems according to their differences.

Pre-Test

1. What is suffrage?
2. Why do political conflicts differ in political systems?
3. What does degree to modernity' mean?
4. Is it true that conflicts fluctuate in severity?
5. What factors determine differences in political skills?

CONTENT

Differences in Political Systems

Robert Dahl has identified six characteristics by which political systems differ. These are (1) paths to the present; (2) the degree of modernity; (3) the distribution of political resources and skills; (4) bases of cleavage and cohesion; (5) the severity of conflicts and (6) institutions for sharing power. Let us consider these characteristics one by one.

1. *Paths to the Present*: Political systems have had different historical experiences or 'paths' to the present. In a sense, the path of every political system, its experience and inheritance from the past, are unique to it. These differences account for the different paths political systems continue to follow today, and are most likely to follow in the future. Certainly, a people who have been under a tyrannical regime for centuries would not be expected to become democratic in a few days. This is not however to suggest that revolutions, when they take place, do not result in complete departures from the past. The point is that the heritage of any political system will have a bearing on its present and future development.
2. *Degree of Modernity*: Quite often, we refer to one country as developed and another as developing or backward. When we use terms, we are in effect saying that political systems have different levels of development or modernization. However, the concept of development or modernization has generated a lot of controversy among political scientists, many of who argue that it has a parochial connotation when used by Western scholars. This notwithstanding, there are some 'objective' indices according to which the modernity of any system can be gauged. These include the level of technology, urbanities, newspaper and magazine circulation, etc. These indices tend to be high on all others. Cumulatively then, we can rank political systems according to their levels of attainment on these indices. Those that have high levels can be modernized or developed, those with low levels, undeveloped, and those in-between, more or less modernized, depending on which end of the continuum they fall.
3. *Distribution of Political Resources and Skills*: In the last lecture, we learnt that political resources and skills are unevenly distributed in all political systems. The degree of unevenness however varies from one political system to another. Let us take wealth which is a basic political resource and knowledge through literacy, which largely determines the political skills individuals have. These resources are unevenly distributed. But whereas in some countries like Niger and Mauritania, the level of literacy is quite low (as low as 100% of the total population aged 15 and above), in the USSR, and USA, it is quite high (about 75% of the total population aged 15

and above). In terms of wealth, it is known that only a few members of society are really wealthy. But if we consider opportunities to wealth offered by free market forces, we find that while only a few members of the royal family are wealthy in Saudi Arabia, many more are in the USA.

The other factors which determine how much political resources an individual has or political skills he has are family background, socio-economic group, popularity, control of mass media, and income-tend to be closely interrelated. Thus, a wealthy man would most likely have greater control of the mass media, have greater popularity, and generally be more influential than other members of society. Although the increasing industrialization of societies, extension of suffrage to lower classes and expansion of educational opportunities, amongst others, have a way of reducing disparities in the distribution of political resources and skills, political systems continue to differ in their degrees of inequality in the distribution of these resources.

4. *Cleavage and Cohesion*: Political systems differ in the patterns of political disagreement, conflict and compromise. It should be noted that political conflicts do not result from single factors like ethnicity, religion or class. Rather, they result from a multiplicity of factors which include differences in income, wealth, economic, class occupation, education, ideology, religion, ethnicity, and region. These factors combine to produce different patterns of political cleavage and cohesion in political systems. Three other factors influence the character of these patterns. First, historical inheritance of cleavages of cohesiveness. Ethnicity, religion and regionalism have historically been crucial in Nigeria, while in Switzerland, Canada and Belgium, it has been languages and regionalism. Second, history has left varying memories of the past treatment of these differences. The Nigerian state was built on the inequality of ethnic groups and regions, while the Swiss nation was built on the equality of language groups. Third different stages of development tend to generate different forces of cleavages and cohesion. It is believed for example that the more modernized a country is, the less ethnic cleavages would be the major basis of conflicts; socio-economic class will take over. This is not entirely

true, but it sheds some light on why cleavage and conflicts patterns differ.

5. *Severity of Conflict*: While it is true that there are conflicts in all political systems; the severity of these conflicts vary over time within political system and among them. Within every political system, the severity of conflict varies. At a time. America went through a civil war, at another time, but, most times, its president was assassinated but, most times, conflicts resulting from elections are minimal. In Nigeria, there has been a civil war, no less than six coup d'états, violent elections and so on, but conflicts tend to be more severe under civilian regimes than they are under military regimes. Most times however, political systems experience peace though, difference in cleavage however, political systems experience peace though, through differences in cleavages and conflict patterns may make some systems more prone to conflicts than others.

Authors like Pitirim Sorokin and Ted Gurr have studied the severity of conflicts in Political system. Their conclusion include the fact that virtually all countries experience major social disturbances on the average of once every five years, that these disturbances are usually violent, and that they vary from civil wars and extensive mass violence in countries like Congo, Indonesia and South Vietnam to total absence of any record of civil conflict.

6. *Institutions for sharing and Exercising Power*: Political systems differ both in their institutions for sharing and exercising power and in their distribution to one, few, or many (see lecture 9). With regards to institutions for sharing and exercising power, political systems differ in two major respects. First, there is the suffrage, i.e. the right to vote. Although in most political systems today, every adult citizen is entitled to vote, there are still a few, like Saudi Arabia, where women are not allowed to vote. Even with this universal suffrage, voting turn-outs are higher in some countries than others.

Second, political systems differ in the extent to which those who are closest to actual decision-making (President, Prime Minister) must compete for the mandate of voters in free and fair election in

which those in opposition can complete on equal terms. Thus, we can compare political systems according to how much freedom of association of expression, access to alternative sources of information, free and fair elections, the emphasis on the mandate of the electorate, and other expressions of preference exist. On these criteria, Dahi has classified political systems into two (1) closed hegemonies that deny suffrage and suppress all forms of opposition to government; and (2) Inclusive polyarchies that grant universal suffrage and permit the existence of opposition.

Summary

1. Even as political systems are similar, they are different.
2. The characteristics on which political systems differ are paths to the present, degree of modernity, distribution of political resources and skills, the basis of cleavage and cohesion, severity of conflict, and institutions for sharing and exerting political power.

Key Concepts to Remember

Path, modernity development, political skills, political resources, cleavages, cohesion, conflict, social disturbances, civil war, violence, suffrage, universal mandate, electorate, vote, closed Hegemonies

Post-Test

1. What is suffrage?
2. Why do political conflict differ in political systems?
3. What does degree of modernity mean
4. Is true that conflicts fluctuate in severity?
5. What factors determine differences in political skills?

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LECTURE TWELVE

Participants in Politics

Introduction

In this lecture, I want to discuss political participation and the actual participants in the political process. All along, we have talked as if everyone participates in politics. But is this true? This is what this lecture is about.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to classify the participants in the political process according to their levels of participation.

Pre-Test

1. What is democracy?
2. What is political participation?
3. Define spectator activities, transitional activities and gladiatorial activities.
4. Discuss Karl Deutsch's typology of political participation.
5. Which of the typologies do you like most? Why?

CONTENT

You would be partly right if you define democracy as government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Actually, the classical liberal notion of democracy relates it to majority participation in the political system. This notion dates back to the Greek city-states in which, because of their small sizes, it was possible for every adult to participate directly in

the affairs of the state. However, with the phenomenal expansion of the modern nation-state which has a complex form of government and bureaucracy; direct participation by all is no longer possible. In most of them, the majority participate indirectly through their representative who they elect at regular intervals.

While majority participation remains a cardinal principle of democracy and adult suffrage has become almost universal everywhere, numerous recent studies reveal that the majority of the members of society, even in countries like the USA, are not interested at all in politics². Many do not vote, much less know a lot about the political process. In effect, it has been found that, only a tiny proportion of members of society participate in politics. Even amongst such participants, only a few are very active. Against this background, we shall examine the levels of political participation that have been developed. I shall reserve the reasons for unequal participation till the next lecture.

What is Political Participation?

There are many definitions of political participation. I shall however give a wide-ranging definition which captures the essence of political participation in most political systems. It refers to involvement in politics and this includes all forms of political activity ranging from discussing political issues or events, taking part in a demonstration

Fig. 12.1: Typologies of Political Participation

12.1 (a) *Milbraith's Typology*

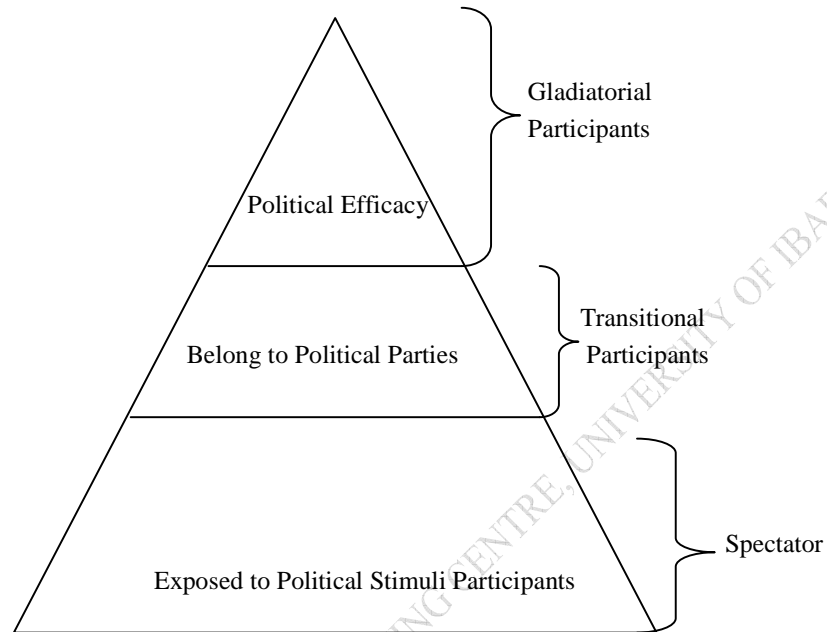
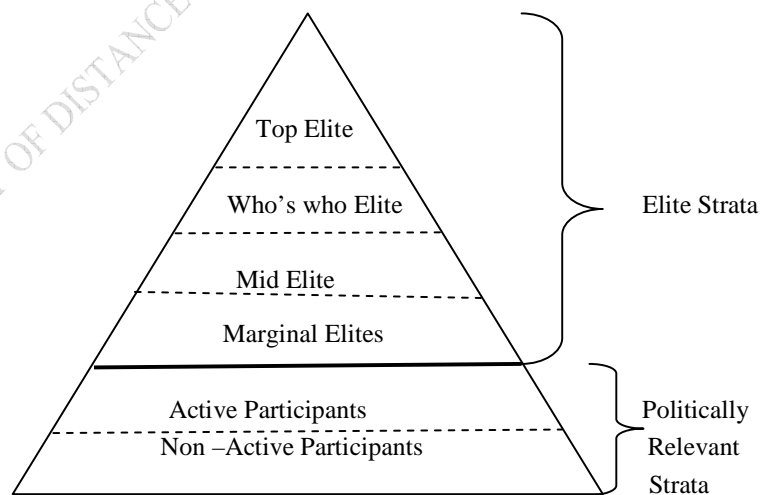
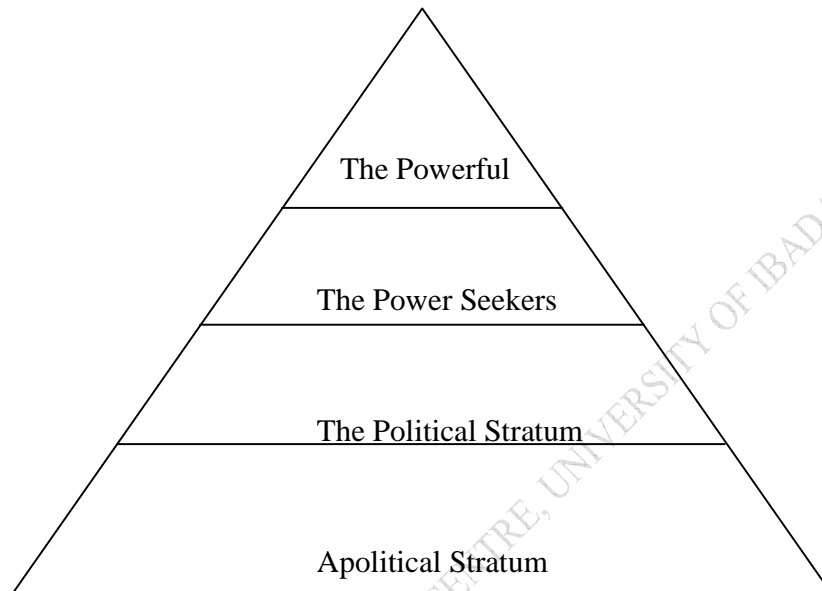


Fig. 12.1 (b) Deutsch's Typology



12. 1 (c) Dayl's Typology



or riot, voting, writing a letter to political leaders, to belonging to political parties and seeking political office. This definition should however mislead you to thinking that everyone participates in politics. You will soon see why.

Typologies of Political Participation

I shall discuss three typologies of political participation which show the levels of participation. They are those of Lester Milbraith, Karl Dutsch and Robert Dahl.

Lester Milbraith's Typology: According to Milbraith, political participants can be classified on the basis of their political activities. He said that there are three of such activities, namely, spectator activities, transitional activities and gladiatorial activities. Accordingly, we have spectator participants, transitional participants, and gladiatorial participants.

Spectator Participants: are those who expose themselves to political stimuli mainly information, initiate and partake in political discussions, attempt to influence others into voting for a party, and who themselves vote. Spectator participants, in effect take part in the basic political activities required of all full members of the society, but they do not become actively involved, but prefer to remain 'spectators' who enjoy seeing active participants.

Transitional Participants: are midway between spectator and gladiatorial participants. Participants in this category typically have begun to take a keener interest than the spectators in politics. The activities they engage in include attending a political meeting or rally, belonging and making a monetary contribution to a political party or association, and contacting a public officer or political leader over issues.

Gladiatorial Participants: These are the most active participants who typically have the highest level of political efficacy. Gladiatorial activities include caucus or strategic meeting, soliciting party funds, seeking political office and influence, and actually holding public and party office. Gladiatorial participants then, are the top political leaders, and they often constitute a tiny minority (between 5-100%) of the total adult population.

What you should not about Milbraith's typology is that it does not include those who are not about interested in politics or do not participate at all. KARL DEUTSCH'S TYPOLOGY. In this typology there are two broad categories of political participants, namely, the politically relevant strata and the elite strata. Each of these categories is further subdivided into narrower categories of participants, based on the *position method* and the *level of participation*.

The Politically Relevant Strata: Comprise those members of the political system who count or matter, and must be taken into consideration by decision-makers. Students, teachers, market women, the "common man", all count because they are those to be affected by the decision made. In democratic and non-democratic political system alike, where voting is a primary political activity, the politically relevant strata would include all those who are eligible to vote. In this sense, most adults belong to the politically relevant strata.

Within the politically relevant strata, a further distinction can be made between those who are active (those who actually participate, by for example voting or demanding or opposing a particular policy) and non activists (those who are relevant, but fail to actually participate by not voting or discussing politics).

The Elite strata: Comprise those who are not only politically relevant, but most actively participate in the political process, seeking influence and power, and actually occupying the most important political positions. The elites are the most educated and influential members of society, and they constitute the “attentive public” which moulds public opinion and provide leadership and direction for society.

The elite strata is further subdivided into the marginal elites, the mid-elite core, the who’s who elite, and the top elite, based on the position method. This method uses the positions or roles of elites to classify them. Members of the lower middle-class, Clerks, small-scale business men and intermediate staffers-belong to the marginal elite class. Those in the upper middle-class, academicians, senior civil servants, military officers-belong to the mid-elite group. The who’s who elite are the ‘notable’ captains of industry, Permanent Secretaries, military Generals, in short, the leaders of the various influential political actors-President, Ministers, Ambassadors, Chief-Justice who usually constitutes between 1 and 5% of the total population.

Again, Deutsch’s typology, like Mitbraith’s does not include those who are not interested at all in politics, though it talks of non-active members of the politically relevant strata.

Robert Dahl’s Typology: There are four categories in this typology:

The Apolitical Stratum: This is the category of those who are apathetic and not interested in politics. People in this category would not even vote. However, they sometimes take part in politics in unsystematic ways, like violently rioting or participating in a civil war.

The Political Stratum: This is similar to Deutsch’s politically relevant strata. Participants in this category take part in basic political activities like voting.

The Power Seekers: Are those who have become so highly involved that they decide to seek power and influence by running for political office.

The powerful: They occupy the top political positions, and control the greatest amount of political resources and have the greatest political skills. Such persons as the President, leader of political parties, heads of legislative assemblies and “the power behind the scene”, who are mostly the wealthiest members of society belong to this class.

A Final word on Typologies

Any of the typologies presented above could be used and is good because as you can see, their categories are similar. If you however wish to formulate your own typology, you should remember the credits for good typologies we discussed in lecture nine.

Summary

1. Democracy entails majority participation in the political process.
2. Political participation generally involves participation in politics.
3. Everyone does not participate in politics the same way. There are varying levels of participation.
4. Lester Milbraith has classified political participation into spectator participants, transitional participants and gladiatorial participants.
5. Karl Deutsch’s typology has two major categories the politically relevant strata and the elite strata.
6. Robert Dahl’s typology consists of the apolitical stratum, political stratum, the power-seekers and the powerful.
7. Any of these typologies is useful because the categories used in all are similar.

Key Concepts to Remember

Democracy, political participation, majority, political involvement, political activities, spectators, transitional participants, gladiatorial participants, political relevant strata, position methods, elite, marginal elite. Mid-elite core, who's who elite, top elite, apolitical stratum.

Post-Test

1. What is democracy?
2. What is political participation?
3. Define spectator activities, transitional activities and gladiatorial activities.
4. Discuss Karl Deutsch's typology of political participation.
5. Which of the typologies do you like most? Why

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LECTURE THIRTEEN

Why Levels of Political Participation Differ

Introduction

Having seen that there are varying levels of political participation among members of a political system, I want to examine the factors for the differing levels in this lecture.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to explain why individuals have different levels of political participation.

Pre-Test

1. Is every political participant rational? Why or why not?
2. How are personality traits acquired?
3. What are the important socio-economic correlates of participation?
4. Is mobilization necessary for political participation?
5. Can a single factor explain participation? Why or Why not?

CONTENT

Why do Individuals Participate In Politics Unequally?

There are many reasons why some people participate in politics and others do not, and why, even among those who participate, some are more active than others. We shall consider these reasons according to models and sets of factors that have been identified.

The Economic Man Model: According to this model, a rational person decides to participate or not participate in politics based on his calculations of gains and losses, with a view to maximizing gains and minimizing losses. The point then, is that the individual who participates in politics does so because he gains immensely from doing so. Such gains are not necessarily monetary there is prestige, psychological satisfaction, and so on. If the individual finds that he cannot benefit or that the costs of participating are high (money, time, convenience, etc.) he is not likely to participate in Politics.

The economic man model has however been criticized because most of those who take part in politics do not rationally calculate their costs and benefits. In fact, voting, and attending a rally sometimes becomes so habitual that few people calculate before they act. Probably because of this, many participants in politics behave non-rationally. For example, some voters vote for candidates because they are handsome or because they speak well, rather than on calculations of what they stand to gain.

Socio-Economic Correlates of Participation: Individuals have different levels of participation because of certain social and economic inequalities. The most important correlates which have been established from numerous studies will be presented as hypotheses (i.e. tentative statements of relationships between variables which can be tested empirically):

1. those with higher education are more likely to participate in politics;
2. those who belong to high income brackets have greater access to control of political resources and, consequently, participate more in politics than those in lower income brackets;
3. those in urban centers are more likely to become active in politics than rural dwellers;
4. members of trade unions, professional associations and other organized interest groups are more likely to take an interest in politics, to have a stronger stand on issues and to vote than are those who do not belong to organized interest groups;
5. the longer a person resides in a community, the more likely he is to participate in politics;
6. as people grow older their level of participation increases but after 50 or 60, it begins to decline; and

7. men are more likely to participate in politics than women.

As you can see, the factors associated with political participation—high levels of education, urban residence, membership of organized interest groups, high socio-economic (especially income) status, and so on—represent advantageous locations in the political system for receiving political information and controlling political resources, having a better leverage with politics, a greater contact with political life, and so on. The only problem however remains that of organizing the information in the context of a general theory of participation. Worse still, these correlates do not explain the spontaneous involvement of those in the lower (apathetic) groups of society in such things like riots, demonstrations and other forms of civil disturbance.

Political Correlates of Participation: The nature of a political system and in particular, of the ruling regime, certainly determines the rate and level of political participation. In military and dictatorial regimes, the scope of political participation is narrow and although trade unions and other interest groups may exist, government often tends to suppress opposition and potential opposition fronts. By contrast, in countries where political parties compete at periodic intervals during elections there is ample room for participation, especially at election times. Even so, as between a one-party and a two or more party state, one expects a higher level of political participation in the two or more party state than in the one-party state where opposition is usually suppressed.

The importance or centrality of elections also determines the level of participation. If political parties are differentiated on ethnic, regional or religious lines, involvement is likely to be high for all voters in elections. Again, there are certain elections which are said to be “critical” for both parties and voter-like the 1959 elections held to decide which party would control Nigeria at independence and the 1979 elections to inaugurate the Second Republic. Such critical elections record high voter turn-outs and high political involvement. Where elections are not considered critical, or are irregular, or believed to be massively rigged, many people are likely to become disenchanted. The result is low participation and apathy.

A final political correlate of political participation that we shall consider is the level of mobilization in the political system. Mobilization as used here, refers to the process by which the government deliberately

encourages (sometimes coerces) the citizenry to become actively involved in politics, to be loyal and patriotic. This is an important factor of participation in socialist and one-party states where most citizens belong to the only ruling party, and in most third world countries which are bogged down by ethnic, religious and regional divisions.

Perhaps the only problem with most of the political correlates that have been identified is that they emphasize voluntary participation in the so-called democratic states, to the detriment of the often involuntary participation in the so-called non-democratic states.

Psychological Correlates of Participation: Some people participate in politics to meet certain psychological needs and not merely for other calculable benefits. Some seek political influence or other reallocations of income, status and prestige because they symbolize to the actor that people were wrong to consider him a failure, that can be loved and respected by those who support him, and that he is powerful.

Personality traits resulting from social learning are also associated with participation. Some basic personality traits like rigidity, guilt intolerance of ambiguity, manic depression and manifest anxiety are not strongly associated with political participation. By contrast, learned traits like sense of efficacy (i.e. importance of the self in influencing outcomes), sense of civic responsibility, sociability, sense of authoritarianism and alienation are more strongly associated with participation. Those who have a feeling of from society (i.e. a feeling of estrangement, of alienation not belonging to society) do not become actively involved in politics, except in rebellious ways. On the other hand, those with high sense of efficacy, of civil responsibility and sociability participate more actively than those with lower, sense of these correlates.

These traits, as I said, result from social learning. But they are also influenced by the variables of education (those with greater education are more likely to have high senses of efficacy and civil responsibility), socio economic group (those in higher groups tend to have higher sense of efficacy than those in lower groups and occupation (manual workers tend to be more alienated than non-manual workers), to mention but a few.

Notwithstanding the importance of psychological variables in explaining political participation, there are two fundamental problems in discussing them. First, they tend to confuse cause and effect: are people more

psychological actively involved, politically because of psychological needs or are they psychologically involved because of satisfactions derived from political activity? Second, how do we measure psychological traits other than by directly interviewing people? This opens up many problems; the people could lie, our questions may be inappropriate, and most importantly, inferring what people have in mind from what they say.

A Final Word

There are a variety of economic, psychological, political and socio-economic factors, which explain why individuals have varying levels of political participation. None of these factors however, singly or in isolation explains the whole process of participation, which is very complex. In explaining political participation then, we should consider these factors in relevant combinations.

Summary

1. The economic man model of political participation assumes that every participant in politics is rational, and would therefore participate if his calculation of gains is more than those of losses.
2. The socio-economic correlates of participation relate to variables like education, income, sex, location, membership of interest groups and so on to varying levels of political participation.
3. Important political variables of participation include regime type, the level of mobilization of the citizenry, and the importance of elections.
4. Psychological traits like sense of efficacy, sense of civil responsibility, alienation, guilt, intolerance and sociability which are socially learned are useful in explaining differences in levels of participation.
5. No single factor however explains participation. Rather, combinations of factors are used in explanation because participation is a complex process.

Key concepts to remember

Political participation, economic man, rationality, costs, benefits, correlates, educations, location, sex, age, elections, regime, party systems, personality, alienation, efficacy, civil responsibility, anxiety, sociability, intolerance, rigidity, guilt.

Post-Test

1. Is every political participant rational? Why or Why not?
2. How are personality traits acquired?
3. What are the important socio-economic correlates of participation?
4. Is mobilization necessary for political participation?
5. Can a single factor explain participation? Why or Why not?

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LECTURE FOURTEEN

Initiation to Politics: Political Socialization

Introduction

Having looked at levels of political participation and why these levels differ, in this lecture, I want to discuss how individuals acquire basic political attitudes and dispositions which account for their political behaviour.

Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to discuss how individuals learn political attitudes and how the process of political socialization is important for political systems.

Pre-Test

1. Define political socialization.
2. Elaborate on the agencies of socialization.
3. Differentiate between childhood and adult political socialization.
4. How useful is political socialization to the political system?
5. What is political culture?

CONTENT

What Is Political Socialization?

In general, socialization is a learning process by which the individual learn the societal norms and values which enable him to function well in the society. The end-product of this process is the personality which the individual acquires. Political socialization can be seen as political

learning. It is the learning process by which the individual acquires political attitudes, beliefs, values and norms in the society. It could be defined as the process by which the individual learns and internalizes the political culture of the system to enable him function effectively in the society.

Agencies of Political Socialization

I have said that political socialization is a learning process. How are attitudes and values learnt? It is obvious that the same thing cannot be learnt in all political systems because political cultures (political culture refers to the sum of political attitudes, beliefs and orientations which predispose behaviour) are different across political systems, nevertheless, the learning process is basically the same. Most political systems, the major institutions in which political attitudes are learnt, which are called the agencies of socialization are the following:

The Family: In every political system, the family constitutes the primary agency of political socialization, especially at the childhood stage. It is within the family that child develops his first cognitive map of the world. By imitation, he imbibes the family traits and learns basic moral values which invariably influence his later political attitudes and dispositions. A child from a family of reputed politicians is more likely to become politically active than one from an apathetic family. Much of what is learnt about politics in the family is however informal and indirect.

The School: Here, the individual learns more directly and formally about politics. In some countries in which political indoctrination is important, the regime determines what individuals learn through an organized system of political education. However, there is virtually no country in which the government wants people to learn what is opposed to its interests or to the political system as a whole.

In general, schools transmit information and values which determine political attitudes and dispositions.

Peer Groups: A peer group is a cluster of people with similar status (age, income group, and so on) and often similar interests. It comprises persons who know and admire each other such as close friends, colleagues,

neighbours, small clubs and informal associates. Informally, we - as children or adults – learn a great deal from our peers. Frequent interaction brings about exchanges of ideas and values which help to shape our views of the outside world. Normally, people belong to numerous peer groups, each. Consequently, we do not usually conform to the standards of only one group, but we do learn to select or reject certain ideas and values in preference for others.

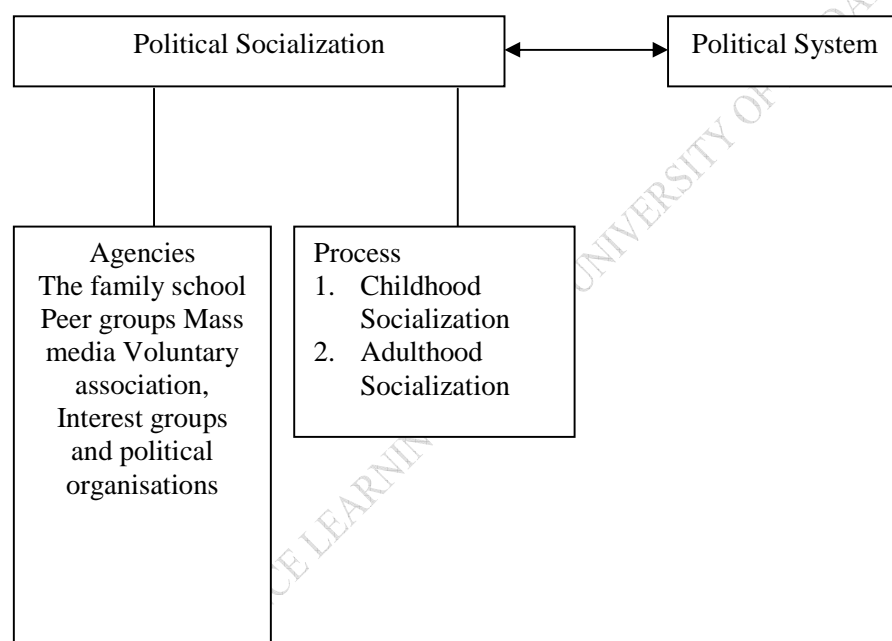


Figure 14.1: The Web of Political Socialization

Mass Media: Since the development of the print and electronic media newspapers, magazines, journals, television, and radio-and their increasing expansion to the rural areas; the mass media have become an increasingly important agency of political socialization. We rely on them for information which enable us form opinions and develop attitudes. In fact, they reflect the basic norms and values of society. The increasing recognition that the mass media are crucial in the learning process has led many governments, especially in the developing countries to interfere in the knowledge and information they disseminate.

Voluntary Associations, Interest Groups and Political Organisations: Voluntary associations like the Boys Brigade, Girls Guide, Boys Scout, Red Cross and so on help to shape our political attitudes, especially in terms of civil responsibility. As adults, we learn a lot about the political process from our membership of interest groups, professional associations and political parties. In particular, we learn to have a high sense of political efficacy.

Childhood and Adulthood Socialization

Socialization is an unending process. We learn everyday. However for political socialization, there is a raging controversy over whether childhood socialization is more critical than adulthood socialization. We shall not however enter into this controversy because it is outside the scope of this course. It is, nevertheless, important for you to know certain important things about how the two are related. First, childhood socialization largely involves indirect and informal (non-specific) political learning which often has wider implication for what we become later in life. As a child, you may come to associate fair people with trickery and certain ethnic groups with honesty you may even believe that women are inferior to men. All these shape your later political attitudes. It is at adult stage that we learn directly, specifically and formally about politics. The roles we play, the association we belong to, our voting experience, all help us to concretise our political attitudes. At the adult stage, we are more exposed to political stimuli.

Any regime interested in changing peoples political attitudes and beliefs would however achieve greater success if it focuses on childhood socialization because at this stage, the child is still malleable. Most adults, having already formed their opinions, are resistant to change.

Political Socialization and the Political System

In lecture seven, I told you that political socialization is one of the requisite functions in the political system. This means that it is very important in the political system. It is especially so because it tends to be supportive of the political regime, especially those which are ideologically oriented. Every government desires a congruent political culture, i.e. a political culture which is supportive of its rule. Consequently,

governments are interested in the socialization process especially in the schools and mass media.

In the USA and USSR, the government interferes in the socialization process to ensure that people learn to love capitalism and socialism respectively. In Germany, Hitler set up the young Hitler movement to indoctrinate children into Nazism, while in Israel, children were collectively taught in the Kibbutz to be loyal and patriotic. It would seem that the major problems facing developing countries, especially political instability, remain because their governments have not positively intervened in the socialization process. They have left the process largely to the families and ethnic groups which teach people to be divided.

Summary

1. Political socialization refer to the process by which the individual acquires his political attitudes, values and dispositions.
2. The major agencies of socialization are the family, schools, peer groups, mass media and organized groups.
3. Adulthood socialization involves specific political learning while childhood socialization involves non-specific political learning.
4. Political socialization is crucial for the stability of the political system.

Key concepts to Remember

Socialization, political socialization, political attitudes, beliefs, norms values, political culture, congruent political culture, childhood socialization, adult socialization, family, school, peer group, mass media, voluntary association, interest group.

Post-Test

1. Define political socialization.
2. Elaborate on the agencies of socialization.
3. Differentiate between childhood and adult political socialization.
4. How useful is political socialization to the political system?
5. What is political culture?

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LECTURE FIFTEEN

Political Evaluation

Introduction

In this final lecture, I want to introduce you to the basic skills you require to evaluate or 'judge' political actions, events and the performance of political systems.

Objective

At the end of this lecture you should be able to discuss what political evaluation involves, particularly the difficulties in assessing the performance of political systems.

Pre – Test

1. What are the major forms of appraisal in political evaluation?
2. How do you judge the quality of empirical analyst?
3. What is institutionalism?
4. What is naturalism?
5. What is the goal of semantic analysis in normative analysis?

CONTENT

Taking Decisions

In every situation of choice, one's decision is often the result of how one appraises the situation. This certainly requires certain knowledge because to be able to make a decision – to buy a car, to vote, to confirm the relative desirability of civilian over military government – we require to know what is involved. The major appraisals which influence decisions include

(1) what are considered to be the alternative courses of action available. (2) What are believed to be the likely consequences of each course of action; and (3) the value one attaches to the consequences of each course of action. These three appraisals are important in situations where we are certain of the consequences of each course of action. In most decision situation however, we are uncertain of the consequences of our actions.

In situations of uncertainty, two additional appraisals become important: (1) one's guesses, hunches, or estimates concerning the probability that the various consequences will actually occur and (2) one's preparedness to gamble or take risks. Obviously, these appraisals do not indicate that one would take the best decisions because even those decisions which we believe would bring about desired consequences, often fail to do so. Over the years, mathematicians and logicians have battled to formulate criteria of "best" decisions for uncertain situations, using models derived from games theory and statistical decisions. But these have proved to be of little value in real worlds, crucial decision situations. However, they do point to the need to develop criteria other than our personal values and norms by which to determine 'the best' alternative. If we do this, we make evaluation more scientific because "the best" can then be judged according to the criteria we use.

Two Types of Analysis Used In Political Evaluation

There are basically, two types of evaluation analysis, namely, empirical analysis and normative analysis. Recall the first two appraisals presented in the previous section, which assumed a certainty that the likely consequences of our courses of action will most probably occur. Knowing the likely consequences of each alternative and the relative probability of their actual ensuring, both take the form of prediction: if x happens, then (probably) will happen. What is required in this case, is empirical analysis. The other three appraisals – judging the value of each alternative and taking risks in uncertain situation require assumptions or beliefs as to what is good, value or desirable. Such appraisals require normative analysis.

Political decisions in practical situations usually entail a mixture of empirical and normative decisions. This is often the case because the possible courses of action open to any decision maker seem limitless, to judge which actions are relevant in a particular situation, he needs to consider what he believes to be good or valuable. But how can we

distinguish good from bad decisions? As political analysts, we are interested in the quality of empirical and normative analysis.

The Quality of Empirical Analysis

Because as I have said, empirical analysis involves making predictions, its quality will be determined by how true predictions prove to be. To this extent, 'empirical analysis falls short of what we want from it if it leads to expectations about the future that are falsified by events.' In emphasizing this quality however, we need to recognize the unpredictable nature of man and society because often times, predictions which will otherwise be correct may turn out to be false because human conditions and dispositions have changed. Because of this, we find that much of the predictive knowledge used in making political decisions are, in the absence of total information, at a low level of reliability. Nevertheless, the quality of empirical analysis continues to be important because, as much as possible, we seek to capture the real world as it exists.

The Quality of Normative Analysis

Here, we are interested in finding a criterion or set of criteria for evaluating the quality of normative analysis in the same way that predictability does for empirical analysis. Since normative analysis entails what ought to be, we require standards of value, or criteria for judging which course of action is good, best or right. In this regard we can talk of the following viewpoints which provide different criteria.

- 1 **Naturalism:** This viewpoint holds that there are certain moral values or principles which are true and useful criteria because they are descriptions of the true property of man. Thus, for example, knowing that we will all seek happiness, any decision which promotes happiness is necessarily good. This viewpoint is highly useful because it closes the gap between value judgment and factual judgments. As it were, anything that is good (value judgments) is factual because it has been observed to be true.
- 2 **Intuition:** According to this view, although the quality of goodness cannot be perceived by the ordinary senses, every man is endowed with a special capacity for knowing what is good. For some institutions, like St. Augustine, the knowledge of God leads to the discovery of moral truths and goodness. For others like Plato

and Rousseau, goodness is not necessarily from God, but one that is discoverable through knowledge of one's structure of the universe. Then, there is St. Thomas Aquinas who believes that moral truths can be discovered through reasoning like mathematics and logic. In the same vein, Immanuel Kant talked of a "categorical imperative" which requires everyone to "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

3. **Noncognitivism or Subjectivism:** According to this view, intrinsic values, unlike factual assertions, cannot be shown to be true or false. Whatever, we say is true of good, is an assertion of our belief: "They may reveal one's orientations or intentions toward the world and towards one's fellow creatures but unlike factual judgments, they lack the 'cognitive status' of objective propositions: hence the name noncognitivism".

Although this viewpoints have been criticized for tending toward nihilism (i.e. total rejection of current political institutions and moral beliefs), it remains quite popular with existentialists (i.e. those who believes that man is a unique and isolated individual who is responsible for his own action and free to choose his destiny). In the world of Jean-Paul Satre, a popular existentialist, "man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself... Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders."

- 4 **Semantic Analysis:** This is recent viewpoint which involves the analysis of meaning of terms as they are actually used in ordinary, non-philosophical language. The major aim of this approach is to enrich and clarify moral discourse and political evaluation by heightening our understanding of the language we use when we discuss moral questions, as practically everyone does. What do we mean by happiness, goodness, valuable, and so on. This is what we do in semantic analysis.

A Final Word

The subject of political evaluation is one of the most complex in political analysis. What I have done here is to simplify it as much as possible into

empirical and normative analysis. As you advance in other political science courses, you will become more familiar with the subject.

Summary

1. Political evaluation relates to how we can appraise decision situations to arrive at good, right, or better decisions.
2. There are two aspects of political evaluation, namely, empirical analysis which involves predictions of future consequences, and normative analysis which involves the search for criteria to tell which options are valuable and good.
3. Every decision situation however involves both empirical and normative analysis.
4. The quality of empirical analysis, is judged by how true predictions made turn out to be.
5. The quality of normative analysis is judged by numerous criteria which are classified into viewpoints as naturalism, intuitionism, non-cognitivism and semantic analysis.

Key Concepts to Remember

Political evaluation, performance, appraisal, course of action, alternatives, outcome, consequences, probability, prediction, empirical analysis, normative analysis, naturalism, intuitionism, semantic, existentialism.

Post – Test

1. What are the major forms of appraisal in political evaluation?
2. How do you judge the quality of empirical analysis?
3. What is intuitionism?
4. What is the goal of semantic analysis in normative analysis?

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