LIST OF KEY CONCEPTS

Why is this final model of culture so important to academics? Put simply, while (social) culture makes meaningful behaviour possible, it also serves to regulate human behaviour. For example, if you want to play football, get married or vote in an election, you have to observe certain rules. The result of this is that culture produces patterns in human behaviour, and patterns are of great interest to social scientists. Because of this, the social model of culture has been employed by a great many academics in their attempts to identify and explain patterns of behaviour in many areas of social life.

The concept of political culture, for example, has been employed by academics in order to study the way in which culture structures political practice. Early examples of this research sought to argue that different **communities** had different political cultures, and that differences in those cultures could explain why some states tended to support **democracy** while others had a tendency to develop authoritarian **governments** (Almond and Verba 1963). More recently, political culture research has turned away from the categorisation of different types of cultures and towards the analysis of how particular cultures constrain and enable political behaviour (Baker 1990).

In international relations, where culture has also gained importance, the concept has been employed in the analysis of strategic and security-related practices. In strategic studies, the concept of culture has been used to explain why certain states tend to approach the use of military force in particular ways (e.g. Kier 1997), how cultural differences between states can impact on military cooperation (e.g. Meyer 2006) and how culture might shape conflict in the international system (Huntington 1996). In security studies the concept of culture has been employed to examine why different communities understand security in different ways (e.g. Katzenstein 1996) and to demonstrate how certain practices serve to constitute the meanings of security and insecurity within particular communities (e.g. Weldes et al. 1999).

Further reading: Harrison and Huntington 2000; Katzenstein 1996; Weldes et al. 1999.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy has taken on many forms in political theory and practice in its long history. Originating in Ancient Greece as a system which embraced political **equality** and encapsulated it in direct forms of participation for all citizens, it has gravitated through a variety of systems into a rather different form of representative democracy evidenced in

modern liberal capitalist societies. The notion of a distinction between participatory and representative democracy has informed much of the democratic theory literature in the last 100 years, but in the last twenty years we have witnessed the emergence of new forms of democratic theory, such as deliberative democracy, which combine elements of participation and **representation**. Nonetheless these new imaginings of democratic renewal through deliberation have equally been challenged by those who either refute the theoretical underpinnings or doubt the possibility of practically applying it.

Political participation is a commonplace notion in democratic theory and invokes the idea of the people exercising their sovereign role in decision-making processes. However, participation can take on many forms from the formal (like **voting**) to the informal (e.g. engaging in political discussion in a public forum). In the Ancient Greek model participation was understood in formal and direct terms. This involved citizens – a category that was strictly limited – discussing issues together face to face and voting accordingly. Many subsequent arguments in democratic theory have questioned the workability of such a direct model of participation in much more complex societies than the Greek city-states which are much more populous and internally differentiated. Thus, while it is important to recognise the democratic origins of participation, it does not follow that democratic participation necessarily has to be direct.

A second important tradition in democratic theory is republicanism, a theory which also placed participation in the spotlight (Arendt 1958). The republican understanding of democracy, reflected in the Florentine city-state, values participation for the very specific reason that it represents the power of the people as a collective actor against arbitrary **authority**. Here participation is seen as a virtuous activity in which people exercise their freedom from control by assumed or imposed leaders. In this sense republicanism is imbued with certain normative expectations that individuals will not be animated by mere self-interest but that instead they are involved in participation to decide upon the common good.

The emergence of complex modern societies following the Enlightenment and the revolutions in the USA and France witnessed a shift in democratic practice towards greater **representation**. Nowadays representative democracy is often understood as the primary form of democracy in the world (Dahl 1989). Nonetheless, representative democracy is controversial because political institutions vary enormously in different countries and this has a direct impact on what it is that representatives represent. For example, representatives can be

understood to be representing the beliefs or the interests of their con–stituents which can lead to very different outcomes. Moreover, representatives are simultaneously involved in the **representation** of their political party. Thus, although **representation** and democracy are often spoken of together, they are not necessarily coterminous.

Within representative democracy there have been many debates about the precise nature and limitations of representation. Pluralist theories have questioned the capacity of representative systems to encapsulate the multiple voices of diverse constituencies and argued for processes whereby a wider number of minority groups have access to decision–making power (Dahl 1956). Fears of majority domination are also evident in elite theories which renew the suspicion of the masses and their capacity to govern well (originally outlined by Plato). Unlike pluralists, elite theorists argue against the dispersal of power and instead advocate democracy run by (competing) skilled and knowl–edgeable elite groups (Wright Mills 1956). Thus, while undoubtedly the most prominent institutional form of contemporary democracy, **representation** has come in for considerable criticism for the potential shift in emphasis away from participation and the limited enshrinement of political **equality**.

In recent years these limitations have inspired the rise of forms of deliberative democracy which seek to reintroduce more direct forms of political participation. Taking inspiration from ideas such as the town hall meeting and European coffee shops as spaces for direct discussion of political issues, deliberative democrats advocate the development of institutions that enable full discussion of matters among those affected with a view to the establishment of a rational consensual decision (Habermas 1996a, 1996b). Unlike Habermas, some less ideal-driven deliberative democrats who are much more attuned to the likely conflict and dissensus that may emerge in such decision–making processes have put forward ideas of 'discursive democracy' (Dryzek 2000; Young 2000). Deliberative democrats have also been challenged by so-called radical democrats (Little and Lloyd 2009) who point to the continued existence of relations of power in deliberative models and the exclusionary potential of the prioritisation of rational consensus.

It can be seen that the origins of democracy in the conceptual terrain of political **equality** and the distribution of power to the people has generated many different ideas and institutions of democracy. While the idea of the 'rule of the people' is rhetorically powerful, it opens up a range of questions when it comes to application and implementation in political practice. While the trajectory in modern states had been

towards more indirect forms of democratic government, the last twenty years has witnessed a renewed strength in theories which want to reintroduce and strengthen the participation dimension of the democratic equation.

Further reading: Arendt 1958; Dahl 1956, 1989; Dryzek 2000; Habermas 1996a, 1996b; Little and Lloyd 2009; Wright Mills 1956; Young 2000.

DEMOCRATISATION

The term 'democratisation describes the process by which **democracy** is produced. Throughout the twentieth century the subject of democratisation has become increasingly important and increasingly controversial. It has grown in importance for at least two reasons: on the one hand, the spread of the formal model of representative democracy has been unprecedented (Huntington 1991); on the other, the consolidation and development of substantive democracy has, in many parts of the world, been limited (Diamond 2008). Democratisation remains controversial primarily due to recent attempts by the USA in Iraq and Afghanistan to promote democracy, in part through the use of military force (Caraley 2004). These two points give rise to at least two questions. First, why have so many people around the world sought to promote democracy? Second, how can democracy be promoted or constructed?

Before turning to these questions, however, it is worth briefly noting the ambiguity that surrounds the concept of democracy and, therefore, the term 'democratisation . This uncertainty is important because it impacts on our ability to determine whether or not democratisation has occurred. One may argue that, on a formal level, the existence of free and fair elections is enough to constitute a democracy. On the other hand, one might argue that for substantive democracy to exist much more is needed: legal and political rights to freedom of association and speech that make public engagement in politics meaningful; a strong civil society that encourages individuals to actually engage in the political process; and an electoral system that ensures that all major groups within society feel adequately represented by government.

The point of highlighting the varied understandings of the term 'democracy is to illustrate our understanding of the extent to which democratisation has occurred in world politics and will depend heavily on which vision of democracy we have in mind. As is noted above, if we take a formal view of democracy as a political system in which

Afghanistan and Iraq. Again, the term 'empire has been used by those critical of US policy, those who wish to emphasise the expansion of the power of the USA, the increasing number of US military bases on foreign soil, and the promotion, sometimes through the use of military force, of US values (Bacevich 2002; Johnson 2004). Interestingly, however, the use of the term 'empire was not restricted to those who opposed US power and policy. Some loud and influential voices emerged in the early 2000s and suggested that the USA held both the opportunity and the responsibility to construct a new American global order. And like European proponents of empire before them, these individuals argued that empire had much to offer those over whom power would be exercised: international order, peace and stability and the promotion of 'universal values of liberty and **democracy** (Kagan and Kristol 2000; Boot 2002).

Further reading: Arnason and Raaflaub 2010; Bacevich 2002; Doyle 1986b; Hobsbawm 2010; Said 1991.

EQUALITY

While in ordinary parlance equality merely refers to the sameness of two separate entities, in politics the concept of equality relates specifically to the treatment of individuals in law and political life. In particular, the political use of the term tends to focus on the fair (or just) distribution and allocation of primary social goods to reflect the parity of status of a group of **individuals**. An alternative account emanates from **Marxism** which promotes the idea of equality between different social **classes**. This approach emphasises the collective nature of social disadvantage and the dangers of being drawn into an individualistic account of inequality.

Within these broad understandings, however, lie many different theoretical interpretations of equality, all of which have profound implications for the organisation of practical politics. One of the most important formations is the idea of moral equality articulated by philosophers such as Immanuel Kant which is predicated on the idea that 'all men are born equal (Kant 1983). From this foundation, moral equality implies that all individuals have an equal moral status that emanates from their shared humanity. On account of their equal moral status, individuals are therefore entitled to equal treatment in law and politics. This perspective has also had a profound influence on **discourses** of **human rights**.

While this view of equality is highly influential, the implications for the organisation of political structures and institutions generate

considerable debate. For example, a purely formal instantiation of this understanding of equality may translate into the idea that everyone with equal characteristics should be treated equally in law. This idea can be traced to Ancient Greece where philosophers such as Aristotle (1968) argued that equality meant treating 'like cases alike . However, this formal concept of equality has been criticised for failing to give rise to substantive practical forms of equality because it does not adequately account for the different capacities or talents of **individuals** or the social context in which these formal **rights** must be realised.

By the middle of the twentieth century then, theories of equality were dealing much more explicitly with how equality is actually experienced. These more substantive forms of equality tried to take account of the different starting points from which individuals engaged in wider society and envisaged ways in which the outcomes of attempts to recognise similar status needed to be more equal. It was this kind of approach which informed the development of the welfare state in Western capitalist societies in the post–World War II period. The implicit conceptualisation underpinning these developments was that formal equality of opportunity was insu cient to address the unequal starting points of individuals and therefore that the attempt to achieve more equal outcomes might necessitate unequal treatment, particularly in the redistribution of wealth.

Since the publication of *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls in 1971, however, debates in political philosophy on the nature and extent of equality have become closely tied up with conceptualisations of **justice**. Rawls theory of justice is premised upon two major principles. The first of these is the principle of 'fair equality that requires that 'each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others (Rawls 1971: 60). This principle of equality relates to civil and political freedoms that are to apply to all citizens equally.

Rawls second principle is known as the difference principle. This relates to social and economic inequalities which 'are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone s advantage, and (b) attached to positions and o ces open to all (Rawls 1971:60). In operationalising this principle Rawls suggests that inequality is only justifiable where it is to the benefit of everyone. These principles form the basis of the Rawlsian model of distributive justice.

The Rawlsian model has been subject to numerous criticisms from others within the liberal tradition as well as those working from communitarian or Marxist perspectives. However, the most notable critique in terms of the notion of equality is probably the work of

Amartya Sen (1999). Along with Martha Nussbaum (2001), Sen has since championed the 'capabilities' approach as an alternative to earlier theories of equality. The 'capabilities approach is focused more on positive freedom, or the 'freedom to achieve'.

Equality remains a highly contentious concept in politics and international relations. It has taken on a new dimension with the emergence of processes of **globalisation** in the last thirty years. These suggest that it is no longer sufficient to talk about equality within the boundaries of the **nation-state** but that a perspective needs to be developed to properly account for the situation of the global south.

Further reading: Aristotle 1968; Kant 1983; Nussbaum 2001; Rawls 1971; Sen 1999.

ETHNOCENTRISM

The study of politics generally relies on the study of one or more cases in order to develop explanations, theories and models, a process known as comparative politics. These can then be 'tested' in other scenarios (geographically or across time) in order to confirm, refine or refute. Yet it is recognised that not all political concepts and explanations 'travel' – that is to say, that norms and practices are not universal but are subject to cultural expectations and traditions. To this end, early studies of social science (particularly ethnographic and sociological) have been subject to accusations of ethnocentrism; that is, the researcher views and reports what they observe through their own subjective lenses which lack appropriate justification. For example, the assumption that the Western liberal democratic model is the ideal model of **government** is ethnocentric. At its worst, ethnocentrism borders on racism, assuming that a particular culture or value system is superior. Concerns regarding ethnocentrism are predominant in particular sub-disciplines, for example, the field of development studies. The challenge of ethnocentrism has led some to revisit 'classic anthropological studies.

Ethnocentrism as a concept was first employed by Sumner (2002) in the early years of the twentieth century, notifying a superior sense of 'us' compared with 'others' who are lacking in rationality, intelligence and general worldliness. Levinson (1950) further developed the definition in an attempt to distinguish ethnocentrism from basic prejudice – the latter being a hostility towards a particular group (be it on grounds of race, sex or sexuality) whilst the former is a more general outlook which can generate feelings of both negativity and

governance, both in the sense of making more transparent its processes and effects and in terms of making those engaged in global governance electorally accountable to the people of the world. In general, however, it is hoped that the democratisation of global governance might make this system more legitimate and encourage it to address key global issues that require attention.

Further reading: Held 1995; Karns and Mingst 2009; Peet 2009; Williams and Little 2006; Woods 2006.

GOVERNMENT

Government is a general term used to describe a body (or bodies) of **authority** but also the process by which decisions are made. A general distinction is made between democratic government and authoritarian government, though it would be simplistic to suggest that the divide is a clear binary one. Even within democratic regimes government is constituted of both elected and non-elected groups, with the latter in particular dealing with law enforcement and policy implementation (such as the judiciary and **bureaucracy**). Thus we have seen the label 'core executive' emerge as a term to encompass all the organisations and procedures involved in decision making and implementation. The latter twentieth century marked a shift from reference to govern*ment* towards gover*nance*. The former focuses on the structure of decision making whilst the latter focuses on the process. This is significant in an increasingly international political system where decision making may, but does not exclusively, include formal governments (see **governance**).

   As we have progressed from city states, fiefdoms and feudal states so there has been a desire to limit government via the principle of the **separation of powers**. The case for government was made by Hobbes (2010) – human nature, Hobbes argues, is intrinsically cruel, competitive and destructive. Government (referred to as a 'commonwealth' by Hobbes) is the mechanism by which to control this anarchical self-destruction. The eighteenth-century philosopher Montesquieu identified a link between the physical span of state territory and the type of government in operation (such as republican, monarchical or despotic): 'A large empire supposes a despotic authority in the person who governs … a monarchical state possesses modern territory, but it is natural for a republic to have only a small territory otherwise it cannot long subsist' (cited in Ball and Guy Peters 2005: 45), though this simple link between regime type and territory is no longer so apparent.

Aristotle proceeded to classify governments based upon two criteria: (i) the number who govern; and (ii) the 'interests' that government look after (e.g. self-preservation versus a common good), although Huntington (1991) is critical of such neat and unambiguous classification. Nevertheless, as a general rule of thumb Aristotle distinguished between:

> government by individual – monarchy being the 'genuine form, tyranny being an undesirable form;
> government by the few – aristocracy (rule by the virtuous), oligarchy (rule by the rich);
> government by the many – polity (rule by a collective middle class), democracy (rule by the poor and self-interested) (Hague and Harrop 2010: 7–8).

Clearly such classifications have been revised given historical developments, democratisation and social change. Hague and Harrop (2010) suggest three broad categories are now more appropriate:

> liberal democracy – representative, limited government underpinned by individual rights and regular political competition. Checks and balances are articulated and operate effectively;
> illiberal democracy – powerful government where there is limited respect for individual rights and political competition may be subject to bias and corruption;
> authoritarian regime – government is all-powerful and above the law. Very little, if any, attempt to foster political competition or participation. Lack of independent institutions (such as a free media) to ensure that there is accountability.

Yet even in democratic systems the extent to which power is concentrated or shared can vary. Under presidential government, executive power is located in the hands of the role, and the president is not accountable to the legislature. In contrast cabinet government and prime ministerial government ensure executive power is shared. It has also become increasingly common throughout the twentieth century to refer to party government; that is, the frequent operation of elections contested by organised political parties underpinning the democratic context.

Müller (2008) distinguishes between unified and divided government, an American conception. The former refers to a symmetry in political party control of at least one chamber of congress and the position of president. A unified government is likely to experience a

much smoother policy-making process that is less likely to endure vetoes. However, the same principles can be applied to semi-presidential systems (legislature and cabinet relations to the president) and parliamentary systems (relations between the cabinet and parliamentary majority).

In the case of parliamentary systems it is more common to distinguish between majority and minority governments. As no party won a majority of parliamentary seats in the 2010 General Election in the UK, David Cameron had the option of a minority government – knowing that virtually all bills would fail due to the size of the opposition – or to negotiate a coalition with other parties (which he succeeded in doing with the Liberal Democrats). This compares to his Conservative predecessor John Major who won the 1992 General Election with a slim majority of twenty-one seats, though this was effectively wiped out by resignations, defections and death so that on occasion he had to bargain with Northern Irish MPs to win parliamentary votes. In contrast, the sizable parliamentary majorities secured by Margaret Thatcher in 1983 and 1987 and Tony Blair in 1997 and 2001 (respectively 144, 102, 179 and 167 seats) ensured that, in terms of voting at least, opposition was limited.

See also: **executive; opposition; separation of powers**

Further reading: Elgie 2011; Müller 2008.

HEGEMONY

Hegemony is a complex and potentially confusing term. It derives from the Greek word 'hégemonía , which is usually translated as meaning 'leadership , and while it may loosely be employed to describe any instance of dominance or leadership, it is most often used within the disciplines of politics and international relations in either of two specific ways. The first of these is more commonly evident in **international relations** (IR) literature, where the term is employed to describe a situation where one country – the hegemon – has an overwhelming power advantage over others. The second usage of the term 'hegemony , which is evident within both political science and IR, can be traced to the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, whose definition is subtle and complex. Importantly, while both usages of the term describe power relationships, they differ considerably in their explanation of what it is that allows one actor to exercise power over others.

Let us start with the simpler of the two understandings of hegemony, one that is most evident in the work of realist scholars working

realism would suggest. Though the claims linked to these two theories differ significantly, with English School theorists emphasising the importance of an international society and constructivists focusing on the role of culture, each acknowledges the importance of social structures that go some way towards regulating the behaviour of states. Thus, both argue that, despite the absence of some form of world government, the realm of international politics is more predictable and peaceful than realists have made out.

The second of the sources of criticism of the traditional distinction between domestic and international politics starts from the position that while this traditional perspective may once have been accurate, contemporary changes render it untenable. It is the growing popularity of this perspective that has resulted in the increasing use of alternate terms to that of 'international politics , such as 'global politics (Heywood 2011) or 'world politics (Baylis et al. 2011). The changes to domestic and international politics that have occurred are perhaps best captured by the term '**globalisation** . Globalisation describes the increasing interconnectedness of human life due to the ever growing ease and speed of communication and transportation (Held and McGrew 2007a).

One of the consequences of globalisation has been to complicate any neat distinction between the domestic and the international. Economic issues, for example, are often influenced by a range of local, national, regional and global factors and addressing them requires interaction and cooperation between a vast array of governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations. One of the other consequences of globalisation has been the creation of intergovernmental organisations that are tasked with managing issues of regional or global import. The creation of such institutions undermines the claim that the international system is anarchic because, while such organisations do not constitute a world government, they do engage in some measure of global **governance**, exercising authority in international politics over and above nation-states. What we may be seeing emerge, therefore, is a layered global political order in which multiple systems of authority overlap and in which it is no longer possible to distinguish the domestic from the international.

Further reading: Baylis et al. 2011; Brown and Ainsley 2009; Heywood 2011.

JUSTICE

There are many different ways of conceptualising justice but, in its ordinary meaning, the term suggests behaviour and treatment of an

individual that is fair, reasonable and justified. When translated into politics, however, we find that it is articulated around different demands such as procedural justice, moral conceptions of justice and distributive theories of justice. While the concept has a long history, the discussion of justice in political philosophy is epitomised by the publication of John Rawls seminal *A Theory of Justice* in 1971.

Procedural understandings of justice refer to mechanisms of legal justice such as stable and consistent laws and processes that apply to all citizens equally. In **law**, justice is sought as a way of redressing legal wrongs (which may also be moral wrongs). In this sense there is a retrospective dimension to this version of justice in trying to amend or compensate for transgressions. Justice is something that can be 'done so that we can claim after rectification that 'justice has been served .

Moral concepts of justice focus more on the fair treatment of individuals as an entitlement that arises from the equal moral status of all persons. Leading from this, many theorists of justice have attempted to build on this perspective to make a case for distribution or redistribution. In order to make this case, these theories will often go beyond the more individualistic concerns of moral theories to articulate a vision of social justice.

John Rawls *A Theory of Justice* is such a theory of distributive justice, based as it is in the view that the fair distribution of social and economic goods is essential for individual justice in political communities. For Rawls, that fair distribution is based upon a hypothetical contractarian notion of distribution, whereby individuals behind a 'veil of ignorance would choose a basically equal distribution of resources on entering into society.

Several later theorists have taken issue with the Rawlsian perspective and accused it of giving an inadequate account of individual needs and experiences of justice. On this view, a just society cannot merely focus on issues of distribution or redistribution as a way of rectifying injustices. Thus, theorists such as Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth have advanced theories of recognition that they argue are better placed to give a more substantive conception of justice (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Thompson 2006). Other commentators, such as Iris Marion Young (1990), have contended that distributive justice overlooks the power structures that determine the distribution of social goods so we need to move beyond theories focused on first principles of distribution.

In recent years there has been a growing focus on issues of global justice (Risse 2012) which has grown out of analysis of both the magnitude of inequalities between the global rich and the global poor

and the globalised nature of the processes which give rise to these inequalities (Pogge 2002). These approaches are concerned with not only identifying and establishing cases for justice on a global level, but also the re-imagination of the kinds of institutions that might be needed to address these concerns. The implication of these approaches to global justice are that the state has a very limited capacity in dealing with the outcomes of global markets and therefore that we should consider the development of new types of political institutions which have a more expansive reach.

A further relevant approach stemming from a more global consideration of where standards of justice need to be applied is the 'capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2011). This approach focuses on human development, what people are able to do and what opportunities are provided to enable them to achieve. As such it provides a more nuanced account of the complexity of practical debates over justice than theories which concentrate on abstract distributive models of justice.

Further reading: Fraser and Honneth 2003; Nussbaum 2011; Pogge 2002; Rawls 1971; Risse 2012; Thompson 2006; Young 1990.

LAW

Whilst it may seem sensible to argue that law is a topic distinct from the study of politics, this is not the case as it is closely related to the concept of legitimacy. A contentious issue, particularly within the realm of political philosophy, is the distinction between law and morality. The requirement that law should be rooted in some form of moral system can be traced back to the debates of Plato and Aristotle, and continue in contemporary society in regard to **human rights**.

For Poggi (2008: 88) law has two functions: (i) to repress anti-social behaviour and (ii) to allocate access to resources for competing groups and individuals. He adds that in the West it has a third function, which is as underwriter to the process of **government** (what might be termed public law). The general consensus among liberal democracies is that the law should be 'above politics. Whilst law is made by one branch of government (the executive) in a democratic system, it should be implemented and upheld by a different branch of government (the judicial system – courts and police forces). This is what is referred to as the Rule of Law, in which individuals should be treated fairly and with equity. In non-democratic systems such a distinction may not be clear, either because the separation simply does not exist or because of corruption in which the Rule of Law is abused for

who may employ force, how and when. The concept of legitimacy loomed large during the 2003 Iraq War, specifically over the **rights** of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to use force (which was supported by both the US and British governments). The conflict was legitimised by those in favour on the need to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, the existence of which never materialised and was based upon flawed intelligence. A key consideration for Armstrong and Farrell is the extent to which legitimacy principles contain temporal and spatial dimensions – are they fixed or can they change over time, and are they universal or can they be regional?

See also: **authority; democracy; hegemony; rights**

Further reading: Armstrong and Farrell 2005; Bjola 2005.

LIBERALISM

Liberalism is a broad and diverse tradition of Western political philosophy. Within its many variants, there tends to be a focus on a combination of liberty (or freedom), individualism, **equality** and universalism. For example, many liberals prioritise **individual** freedom and emphasise the equal moral qualities of all human beings. Therefore, they tend to argue that any limits to be placed upon liberty (in particular by the state) must be justified according to an appeal to liberal principles of **justice**.

A primary focus of liberal thought is the relationship between the individual and the state. Because the state tends to act in ways that restrict the freedom of individuals, liberalism seeks to understand the conditions under which such infringements can be deemed to be legitimate. One of the key theoretical manoeuvres employed in this theorisation of state legitimacy is the idea of the **social contract**, whereby a hypothetical mechanism is imagined in which individuals consent to the limitations placed upon their freedoms by the state.

Classical liberalism emphasises negative freedoms and a non–interventionist state and these principles have been employed in various ways by later developments in liberal thought such as utilitarianism and libertarianism. The latter is often linked to the emergence of *laissez-faire* **capitalism** with its emphasis on the unregulated freedom of the **market**.

More modern forms of liberalism have placed greater focus on positive freedom and, as a result, a more interventionist role for the state. Sometimes referred to as 'new liberalism , this approach concentrates on the need for social welfare within a market economy. In order to maximise and/or equalise freedom, it contends that the state

has a legitimate role in the distribution of social goods. The implication of this perspective is that the unequal outcomes of an unregulated market need to be rectified and that the state is required to address the unjust distribution of social goods among equal individuals.

The differences within liberalism can partly be explained by the different understandings of where individual freedoms emanate from. For classical theorists such as John Locke, liberalism has natural foundations with individual freedoms developing from God-given qualities that are present in the state of nature. In this Lockean state of nature, individuals were conceived as equal, rational and self-preserving with regard to life, health, liberty and possessions. Locke s liberalism therefore permits limits on freedoms so that 'all men may be restrained from invading others rights, and from doing hurt to one another (Locke 1988).

Alternatively, some models of twentieth-century liberalism, such as the work of John Rawls (1971), emphasise human reason as the basis upon which individuals negotiate the limits on their freedoms in exchange for a just society with social institutions that reflect these liberal principles of **justice**. For Rawls, the political **legitimacy** of the state is a separate question from a question of justice such that state power can be legitimate without being just. For this reason, liberalism must offer more than a theory of political legitimacy; it must also offer a theory of just social institutions. The Rawlsian concept of justice is guided by his two principles of justice and his hypothetical 'original position in which an individual placed behind a 'veil of ignorance whereby they have no knowledge of their place within a social hierarchy, will choose the principles of justice that ought to govern the social institutions of their political community.

These variations help to explain the diversity within liberal conceptions of justice. Utilitarian accounts such as that of John Stuart Mill (2010) prioritise 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number whereas theories of distributive justice emphasise the fair distribution of social goods across individuals. Rawls employs a 'difference principle that justifies unequal distributions of social goods only if the worst off in society are not further disadvantaged by it.

Thus, not surprisingly, while there are multiple variations within liberal thought that engender internal dispute, there are also multiple criticisms of liberal doctrines from other perspectives. For example, political philosophy in the latter part of the twentieth century was characterised by a long debate between liberals and communitarians, who were largely critical of the universalist and individualist methods employed by liberals (MacIntyre 1988; Sandel 1982; Taylor 1989). Similarly, following the proclamations of the triumph of liberalism

and the 'end of history (Fukuyama 1991), a new series of debates emerged between liberals who promoted equality and universalism on the basis of *sameness* and critics, especially multiculturalists, who emphasised the need for the promotion of equality and universalism to be based on respect for *di erence*.

Despite the existence of influential liberal feminists, another important source of critique of liberalism has come from feminists who question liberalism for either being 'gender blind or for attending only to the concerns of white, middle-class women. These critiques suggest that liberalism depends too heavily on a problematic separation of the public and private spheres (Pateman 1988) or that it is inadequate in addressing the power structures of patriarchy in society.

Ultimately, liberalism is the most prevalent and influential tradition in Western political thought but, given its many variations and internal debates, it continues to generate an enormous critical literature. At the same time, then, liberalism is both the most important model of contemporary political theory as well as the most criticised.

Further reading: Fukuyama 1991; Locke 1988; MacIntyre 1988; Mill 2010; Pateman 1988; Rawls 1971; Sandel 1982; Taylor 1989.

MARKET

Since the 1980s the idea of the market has become common parlance in politics. Part of the reason for this was the emergence of governments promoting free market economics in two of the most powerful countries in the world, the USA and the UK. Under the leadership of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher respectively, these countries pursued radical experiments in neo-liberal economics, although the extent to which they were able to undertake a concomitant rolling back of the frontiers of the state is much more questionable.

There are two main senses in which the term market is employed in political science and political theory. In the first, the more orthodox sense, the term denotes a (notional or actual) structure that enables buyers and sellers to exchange goods, services or information. The second stands for the universalisation of market principles across wider geographical spaces as well as into other, traditionally non-commercial spheres. Examples include the use of market metaphors for the conduct of liberal–democratic politics ('consumer democracy), policy (public choice theory), but also extending into such fields as the intellectual sphere (the 'marketplace of ideas) and courtship (the 'marriage market).

rising expectations (see, for example, Gurr 1970) which fuel rebellious behaviour when increased demands cannot be met by the state. In many cases the established leadership is perceived as perpetuating inequality – because it is either ineffective and out of touch or corrupt. Goldstone (2014) states that theorists generally agree on five common elements which act as the catalyst for revolution: economic strains, alienation among elites, a sense of injustice, an effective narrative of injustice (what might be called a 'new ideology') and international sympathy/support. This said, there is rarely a 'perfect storm' in which all these elements emerge concurrently, and as such it is important to appreciate that an event will push a state into the necessary condition of instability (such as large-scale protests which the regime is unable to effectively quell).

This said, revolutions are not inevitably violent (as demonstrated by the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine), and therefore a useful definition is as follows: '*Revolution* is the forcible overthrow of a government through mass mobilization (whether military or civilian or both) in the name of social justice, to create new political institutions (Goldstone 2014: 4).

See also: **legitimacy; violence; war**

Further reading: Goldstone 2014; Nepstad 2011; Skocpol 1979.

RIGHTS

Rights are a common feature of many variants of liberal thought and the concept is frequently articulated in everyday forms of politics. A right is an entitlement to have or do something (a positive right) or an entitlement *not* to have something done to you (a negative right). While rights are a staple element of some forms of liberalism, some rights have also been criticised by liberals. Though supportive of individual legal rights, the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham, famously described natural rights as 'nonsense on stilts'. So it is important to recognise that all claims to rights are not the same and their foundations can vary quite significantly.

Traditionally, rights are usually understood as being held by **individuals**. However, in the late twentieth century influential arguments in political philosophy have suggested extending them to groups in certain circumstances. For example, there have been strong suggestions that indigenous communities may enjoy a right to self-determination which would permit separate governing structures and processes from the broader political **community** within

which they are located. This right is distinct from an individual right to self-determination which implies a right to individual autonomy and decision making. These distinctions have been articulated most influentially by Will Kymlicka in his work on 'group-differentiated rights (Kymlicka 1995).

Rights are usually seen as having a natural or positivist foundation. Natural rights are often conceived along the lines suggested by John Locke s state of nature where they are viewed as God-given or existing prior to society (Locke 1960). Positivist models of rights on the other hand see them as emerging from a particular social practice (Hart 1955; Raz 1994). Whether or not rights are construed in natural or positivist terms, or indeed whether or not they are ascribed to individuals or groups, they can be seen to have a moral or legal character. While legal rights are written down in legislation, case law or treaties, moral rights do not need to be codified to be claimed or defended (although this makes them much more di cult to enforce).

Moral rights are therefore more likely to have a natural foundation because they arise *a priori* to a social community. Because of this *a priori* nature, moral rights are often regarded as inalienable. However, some rights can be both moral and legal. A good example here is the notion of **human rights** which are usually expressed as inalienable moral rights. When they are documented in international conventions and treaties however, they also become legal rights.

All claims to rights demand recognition as they ask something of those around the rights holder (or claimant). These can be either negative or positive rights; they still demand to be respected and enforced. However, rights are not always recognised, respected or enforced and, indeed, it could be argued that **discourses** about rights are articulated most prominently when they are thought to have been breached.

Rights can also be seen as relational insofar as quite often claims to rights are thought to bring into play other political concepts, most notably duties or obligations. So, in many practical political arguments, rights are thought to have a reciprocal link with duties where to claim them is to recognise a duty to act or behave in particular ways. This approach is often discussed in relation to **citizenship** and the social rights that are afforded to citizens through the welfare state. Commentators from a range of political perspectives have suggested that the social right to welfare should be accompanied with responsibilities to do certain things (like seek work or do community service of one kind or another).

Rights are frequently expressed in everyday political engagements but often with a lack of definition or a clear sense of what makes a

particular action or entitlement a right (as opposed to some other form of claim against whoever or whatever it is made). This everyday usage of rights accompanies the very specific political and legal implications of rights which make them fundamental to contemporary political debates. Taken together, the legal and everyday interpretations of rights make them one of the most powerful discursive constructions in contemporary politics.

Further reading: Dworkin 1978; Hart 1955; Kymlicka 1995; Raz 1994.

SECURITY

Security – being or feeling safe from harm – remains one of the central concepts within the discipline of **International Relations** (IR). More particularly, while in the domestic political realm actors are often thought to pursue some version of 'the good life , in the international political realm it has been security that has long been identified as the most important objective of actors. Traditionally, IR scholars, such as Stephen Walt (1991), have deemed the **nation–state** to be the most important actor within international politics. As a result, security has generally been defined in terms of 'national security ; the territorial and political integrity of the nation–state. Furthermore, it has been held that the most notable threat to a particular state results from the military capabilities (or armaments) of other states. More recently, however, traditional definitions of security have been questioned on two grounds: first, in terms of their fixation on the state as the only important actor in international politics and second, in terms of their assumption that the military capabilities of states are the only source of insecurity which actors in international politics may face.

   The resulting debate regarding the meaning of security has led to the emergence of a variety of different understandings of the concept. This variation can be understood in terms of both the referent object of security studies – the actor whose security is to be analysed – and the sources of insecurity that are to be examined. On the one hand, some scholars have begun to shift their focus from the security of the state to that of other actors (or referent objects) in international politics. Some have shifted their analysis to a level 'above the nation–state by examining the security of regions (Meyer 2006) or even that of the global environment as a whole (Dalby 2002). Others have shifted their analysis to a level 'below that of the state by examining the security of regimes (Ayoob 1995), societies (Buzan 1991) or even individual human beings (as is evident in relation to the concept of

transportation. Globalisation poses a clear challenge to state sovereignty because interconnectedness reduces the capacity of rulers to exercise absolute authority over their states (Stiglitz 2003). On the one hand, globalisation has resulted in the growth of states dependence on one another. For example, because of their reliance on energy supplies, a number of European states are dependent on Russia and its exports of natural gas. On the other hand, globalisation has also encouraged states to cooperate with one another on more and more issues. Such cooperation, especially when it is institutionalised through the formation of international organisations, involves states relinquishing certain aspects of their sovereignty (Chayes and Chayes 1998). Thus, the many states that ratified the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty agreed to relinquish their sovereign authority regarding choices relating to the development of nuclear weapons. Crucially, globalisation affects states both large and small. Indeed, powerful states with developed and complex economies are likely to find their sovereignty qualified in a great many ways by the processes of globalisation.

A third and final factor that has influenced the application of sovereignty in contemporary world politics is the growing acceptance that rulers rights to sovereignty ought to be matched by certain responsibilities towards their citizens (Evans 2008). This point has most clearly been made by those calling for recognition of a responsibility to protect (R2P). This principle, which emerged from a report produced by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001), asserts that while states possess the primary responsibility to protect their citizens, that responsibility passes to the international community if and when states cannot or will not exercise it themselves. To the extent that it is endorsed by the international community, the R2P poses a significant qualification to the principle of sovereignty. It identifies a set of circumstances in which states cannot expect to enjoy a right to non-interference. Indeed, it not only justifies humanitarian intervention by external actors when a state fails to protect its citizens, it places a responsibility on the international community to carry out such interventions.

Further reading: Buzan and Little 2000; Evans 2008; Krasner 1999; Stiglitz 2003.

THE STATE AND THE NATION-STATE

Contemporary politics, both domestic and international, remains fundamentally shaped by the idea that the nation–state is the most important form of **community** within which people live. Used

loosely, the term is synonymous with the word 'country , and so we are used to seeing people refer to, for example, Indonesia, France and Argentina as nation-states. The term warrants unpacking, however, because this rather simple usage hides a good deal of complexity. In order to appreciate this complexity we need to do two things: first, we need to clarify our understanding of the two elements incorporated in this concept and, second, we need to note the varied ways in which this concept has been employed in different historical contexts.

It is important to distinguish between the two elements of the concept of the 'nation-state because the terms 'nation and 'state refer to quite different things. The first of them – 'nation – refers to a group of people, where membership of that group tends to be defined through reference to certain common traits. Disagreement does exist regarding what these traits are or can be; some hold that such traits are ethnic or cultural in form, while others argue that adherence to a set of political values can lead to the formation of a nation. In either case, the idea suggests that people have a natural or powerful connection to a particular group, and that such a group ought to have political independence from other such groups.

The term 'state is often used in two ways. On the one hand, it is used loosely to refer to the **government**. This allows us to distinguish between the state and other sectors of a political community, such as the market or **civil society**. Used in this way, the term refers to the institutions and individuals who represent the government (ranging from parliaments and presidents, to civil servants and agents of the state such as police). This usage also mirrors the conceptual divide drawn between the public and the private, one that suggests that there are some (public) areas of life that are appropriately governed by the state, and others (the private realm) which ought to be free of government interference. On the other hand, this term is used to describe a type of political community that is formally defined in terms of the principle of **sovereignty**. This legal principle states that each territorially defined sovereign state ought to be ruled by a source of **authority** that is subject to no internal competitors and no external superiors. One s membership of a sovereign state tends to be more formally defined than does one s membership of a nation; often we use the notion of **citizenship** to define our membership of a state (or states).

The term 'nation-state conflates these two different forms of community into a single concept, yet this is easier said than done. It is worth noting that these two elements emerged historically at different points in time. Sovereignty is often traced to the treaties signed after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, whereas the ideas of nationhood

and **nationalism** are more often traced to, amongst other things, the French Revolution of 1789 (Hobsbawm 1992). This is important because it is entirely possible to have a nation that is not formally recognised as a sovereign state (such as the Kurdish nation) or a state whose citizenry is not comprised of members of a single nation (such as the UK, in which people of multiple nationalities – Scottish, Welsh and English, for example – coexist). Indeed, there are relatively few examples throughout the world of sovereign states whose borders neatly encompass the members of a single nation.

Unpacking the concept of the nation-state helps us to understand the term s meaning but it also highlights that what we know today as a nation-state is a form of political community that has developed over a lengthy historical period. It is worth asking both how nation-states have changed over time and in what ways they might change in the future. The origin of nation-states begins with the origin of the sovereign state, arising as it did more than a century before the development of nationalism occurred. The essence of statehood in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the capacity of a central source of authority to exercise control over a given territory. Thus, Max Weber (1948: 77–8) famously defined the state as possessing a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. The key functions of a state during this era are often understood to be the raising of taxes and the preparation for and engagement in **war**.

The rise of nationalism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed this relationship and so changed the nature of political community itself. Nationalism, as demonstrated so clearly in the context of the French Revolution, involved the construction of political communities in which all individuals were held to be members of a national community and to owe loyalty to that community. This ideology forged a bond between people and government that has since become associated with the principle of citizenship, which asserts the rights of individual citizens before government. Linked to this has been a change in the responsibilities of government with regard to citizens. Starting in the nineteenth century, but expanding considerably in the twentieth century, nation-states became concerned with far more than taxation and war; they became 'welfare states whose function was to provide for the social, economic and physical wellbeing of their citizens (Pierson and Castles 2006).

Nation-states have not always looked as they do today but, equally importantly, even today not all nation-states look alike. There are numerous terms used to categorise nation-states, and many of these terms help us to appreciate the multitude of functions and

responsibilities that we expect political communities to meet. The distinction between 'developed and 'developing states makes reference to the level of economic activity and organisation within states, and it implies that we expect modern nation-states to be effective managers of their domestic economies. The usage of the term 'failed states highlights that we expect our governments to meet minimum standards in terms of the provision of various education, social care and law and order services. The notion of 'rogue states highlights a further expectation: namely that legitimate nation-states will meet the norms and rules of the international community. The key point here is that the 'nation-state has become a complex form of political community that is expected to serve a broad range of functions.

Finally, it is worth noting that forms of political community continue to change. On the one hand, **globalisation** continues to challenge the capacity of nation-states to exercise authority over and provide services for their citizens (Held and McGrew 2007b). This is most evident, perhaps, in the area of economics, where globalised economic and financial structures restrict the capacity of states to exercise autonomy and, perhaps more importantly, to fulfil their responsibilities to their citizens (Strange 1996). Thus, when capital is withdrawn or corporations pull out of developing countries, there may be little if anything that their governments can do in response.

On the other hand, while the sovereign autonomy and powers of nation-states may be declining, other forms of political institutions and community are emerging. Thus, supra-national organisations, such as the European Union, have emerged, exercising authority over multiple nation-states but also forging new understandings of political community whose boundaries extend beyond those associated with either nationality or citizenship. At the same time, transnational and sub-state organisations and communities have emerged that sometimes work in conjunction with, and sometimes compete with existing nation-states. It is important to note that the consequence of these and other processes has not been the complete demise of nation-states, which remain as the most important single type of political community (Sørensen 2004). Instead, these processes have continued to change what nation-states are, both in terms of the functions that they serve and the communities that they represent.

Further reading: Hay et al. 2006; Holton 2011; Jackson 1990; Pierson and Castles 2006.