

The model revolves around the aspirations of three political factions: the populace, the aristocracy, and the executive. Its normal mode of behavior is identical to that presented in Figure 2.1. In the following sections the various sectors illustrated in that figure will be described in greater detail. However, this 'normal' legislative process is not a sufficient representation of a dynamic political system, as it leaves out the effects of resistance and rebellion. These processes will be described in the final section of this chapter (3.5).

Desired Level of Popular Freedom and Economic Welfare

Populace	High
Aristocracy	Low
Executive	Moderate

Figure 3.2: The Major Political Actors

3.1 Class Conflict and Popular Norms

Figure 3.3 depicts the relationships of interest in the sector representing class conflict over the issue of civil liberties. At the heart of this sector is the concept of freedom. Freedom is the ability of an individual to do as he pleases. It is not necessarily reflected by the state of the laws, as there are many laws in any society which are not enforced, as well as many restrictions of individual freedom which are not legitimate. The freedom exercised by an individual within a society is a function of its economic structure, customs, geography, and major institutions as well as its political system. Thus, the model makes a clear distinction between the current policies being enforced with respect to freedom and the actual level of freedom present. Given enough time and power, it is assumed that the government could eventually reduce freedom to the level it desires, but there are many institutional sources of freedom which are slow in dying. Town meetings, for instance, may be declared illegal, but it is unlikely that they could possibly be eliminated immediately.

Within the model, the state of freedom is represented by a one dimensional variable ranging from 0 (representing absolute mechanical behavior) to 100 (social chaos). This allows us to compare various norms, policies, and conditions using common units. For example, Popular Desired Freedom is a social norm (as is Aristocratic Desired Freedom). It represents the amount of freedom the populace would prefer if they had complete power over their surroundings. The Government Policy Concerning Freedom is a policy; that is to say, a coherent set of actions which are consistent with a certain level of freedom. Freedom is

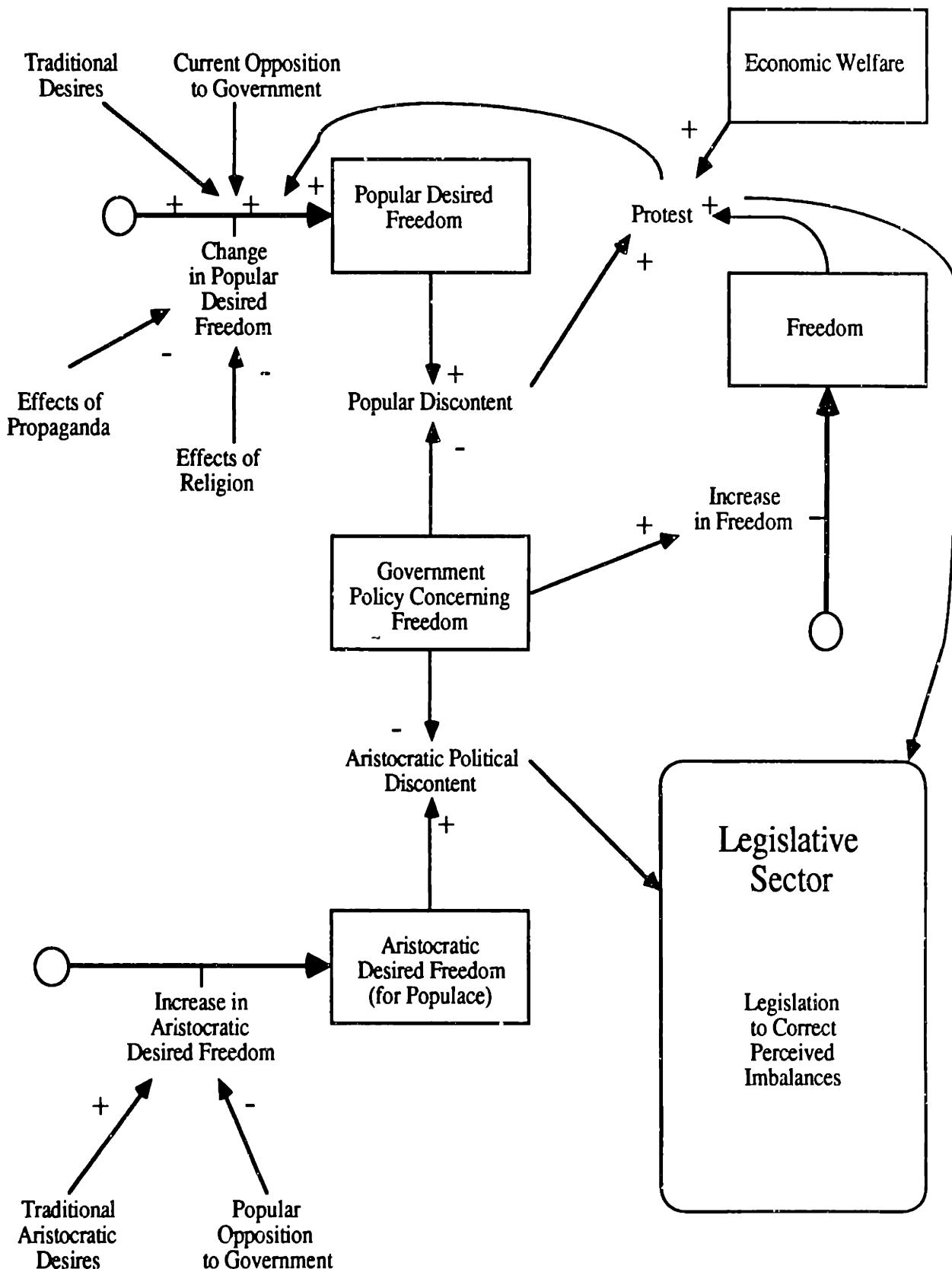


Figure 3.3: Class Conflict and Political Values

a condition--the actual state which all factions seek to influence.

We can see a practical example of how this comparison process works in Figure 3.3, depicting the relationship between norms, policies, and discontent. Discontent is the difference between one's desired and actual state. Here it is important to note that political actors react to the discrepancy between their desires and the government policy (which anticipates a change in the actual level of freedom), and not to the difference between their desires and the actual amount of freedom present. This is due to the greater visibility of government policy; its laws, proclamations, and public acts provide the people with a much clearer reference point than does the intangible state of freedom.

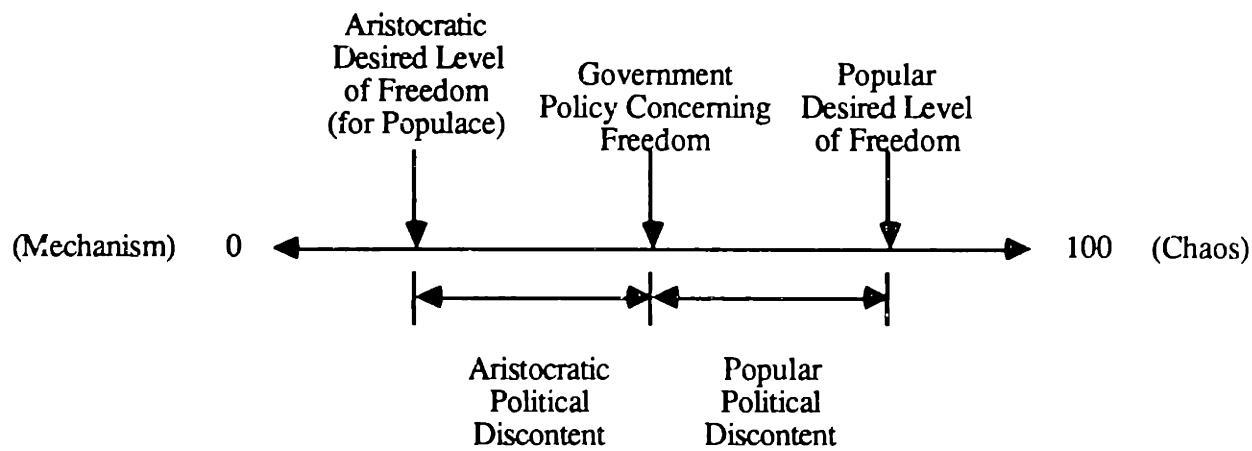


Figure 3.4: Causes of Discontent

Machiavelli says that the aristocracy and the populace are constantly at odds with one another. The populace is likely to always want more freedom than is allowed, while the aristocrats continually try to reduce the amount of freedom possessed by the populace due to their conservative tendencies. Freedom for the populace means among other things a chance to improve their social status and material welfare. However, the most obvious way for them to accomplish this is to strip away the privilege and property of the aristocracy. The aristocrats are uncomfortably aware of this potentiality and thus hesitant to adopt policies that might threaten their own position.

From this Figure 3.4 we are able to note a few important characteristics of the model. First of all, there is an implied level of discontent even in equilibrium. This is the conflict Machiavelli speaks of when he claims that all good laws spring from the dissension between the classes. Second, there are strong policy resistance tendencies. It is difficult to change the level of