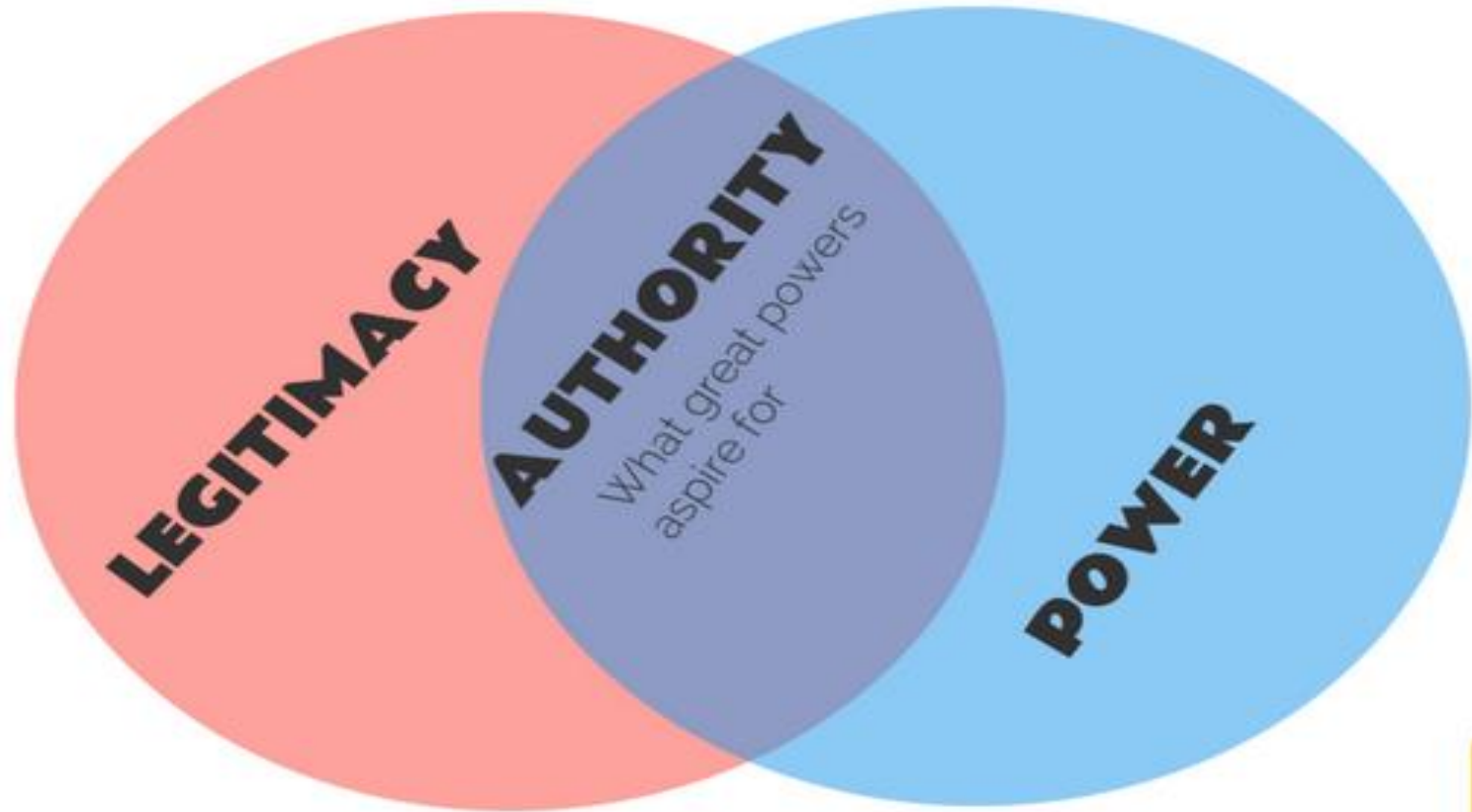


Key Issues of Politics: Power, Authority, Legitimacy



Power, Authority, Legitimacy

- **Power** = is the ability to make us do something.
- **Authority** = the right to make us do something.
- **Legitimacy** = Rightful, justified and acceptable manner.



Power



Meaning, characteristics, sources and forms



There are different viewpoints regarding the meaning of power:

- I. **“One’s ability to achieve goals” – (Bertrand Russel)**
- II. **“Power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others in accordance with one’s own intention” (Goldhamer and Shills)**
- III. **power is the “relationship in which one person or a group is able to determine the actions of another in the direction of the former’s own ends” (David Easton)**

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- IV. “Power is the ability to exercise such control to make others do what they otherwise would not do, by **rewarding or promising to reward** them, or by **depriving or threatening** to deprive them of something they value” (C.P. Schleicher)
- Power is the capacity of an actor to affect the actions of others in accordance with his or her own intention.

Meaning of Power – Definition [3]

- ❑ Power is the ability to influence an outcome to achieve an objective or the ability to influence someone to act in a way contrary to the way he or she would choose to act

- Power can be defined as the ability to get others to do things Even when they might not want to.
- Power can operate through **persuasion**, so that people cooperate willingly and freely, on the basis of reasons they accept (which may include incentives that are offered for cooperation); or **through coercion** – the use of threats, sanctions, and force.

Types of Power

- Force
- Persuasion
- Manipulation
- Exchange

*In actual political relationships, one type of power is rarely found in isolation from other types. In practice, power generally possesses a blended quality, with one type of power blending into and being used simultaneously with another

[See Grigsby, 2014, pp. 46-61]

- a) Relational: At least two actors are required in power relation, one who exercises power and the other upon whom the power is exercised. Power can only be exercised in relation to others.
- b) Situational: Power depends on situation and its degree may varies based on circumstances. Ex: an officer may be able to increase his/her power during his or her service time, but after retirement he or she may not be able to gain that much of importance.

Characteristics of Power [2]

- c) Dependent on use: By effective use of power, a charismatic person can increase his or her power to the optimum level. Ex: India and US president. They do use power differently.
- d) Not absolute: power relation is not absolute, it can change.
- e) Capacity: Power is considered to be the capacity of someone to influence the behaviour of others

Sources of Power

[1]

- a. **Knowledge** : it is the main source. Knowledge helps to develop mind and soul. With the help of knowledge, one can develop leadership ability.
- b. **Organization**: When a particular group of individuals work together in an organised way, they are able to gain more power. Organization itself is a great source of power. In the political sphere, different political parties organize themselves in order to capture power.

Sources of Power

[2]

- c. Wealth: wealth, economic status. Ex: a country with the help of its sound economic status can exercise power or influence over other countries in the s of international relations.
- d. Authority : When a particular person or an institution gains authoritative allocation legitimately to exercise power over others, automatically the concerned person or the institution becomes powerful.
- e. Personality: The capacity to take quick and proper decision, organizational ability, wisdom, courage, etc.

Three Faces of Power

First face - Decision Making:

This face views power as being only about the decision that are made that affect people's lives – getting others to do what they would not have otherwise.

- Power just not have to be being exerted by one person or group of people, power is exerted by lots of different groups, there isn't one all powerful

Three Faces of Power

Second face - Agenda Setting [1]

- If we only measure power when we see it exercised then we fail to see where power exist but not exercised. Groups may have the capacity to intervene in decisions but decided not to.
- Some groups may feel that decision are not going to affect them, so stay out of it. For example: an arm manufacturing company will not step into a debate about education system.

Three Faces of Power

Second face - Agenda Setting [2]

- Power is the ability to set the political agenda, to decide what can be discussed, and more importantly what can not be discussed .
- Some issues organized into politics, while others are organized out of it.

Examples: Tony Blair used this power in cabinet – he set the agendas so things like the war in Iraq were not discussed.

Three Faces of Power

Third Face - Thought Control [1]

- Luke's contribution, also known as the 'radical view' of power.
- "No human being possesses an entirely independent mind, the ideas, opinion and preferences of all structured and shaped by social experience through the influence of family , school, workplace, mass media, political parties etc." – Heywood.

Three Faces of Power

Third Face - Thought Control

[2]

- The idea is that we are all shaped by the world we live in, the norms of our culture. We all accept certain values (murder, physical or psychological abuse is bad, don't steal, cover your mouth when you cough), we label anyone doing it as criminal, psychopathic or insane. We can see people benefit from these norms – this is social contract.
- But, more than this, we all seem to accept the system of capitalism without question - private property, keeping profit – even many of us do not benefit from it.

- Herbert Marcuse argued that “advanced industrial nations control citizens through the **pervasive manipulation of needs**, made possible by modern technology (one might get happy to get a brand new iPhone).
- Nobody seems to ask question – we all just want stuff – here is Luke radical view : **a society without opposition may be evidence of the success of insidious process of indoctrination and psychological control**
- People **are blind from their real interest** - Luke called this difference between subjective and objective interest

Authority



- Whereas ‘**power**’ can be described to as the ability to influence the behaviour of another, ‘**authority**’ can be understood as the right to do so.
- **Power** brings about compliance through persuasion, threats, coercion or violence, **authority** on the other hand, is based on what other people think, and brings about compliance through moral obligation – a duty to obey.

Meaning of Authority [2]

- Authority is not itself power, rather it is the embodiment of reason. we obey authority because it is legitimate and reasonable.
- **This concept (authority) involves an individual, group, or organisation having the institutionalised right or privilege to be able to exercise power.**
- Authority is the right of someone to do something on behalf of the government. But wait, how does the government have the right to do anything? That's because citizens give the government legitimacy.

Sources of Authority - Weber's Classification

a) Traditional Authority: it commands obedience of the people on the basis of unwritten but internally binding rules and conventions that are customary, religious or historical.

Traditional authority is closely related to hereditary system of power

Ex: elder in family, Royalty.

Sources of Authority - Weber's Classification

b) Charismatic authority: exceptional personal quality. This type of authority can inspire devotion, fanaticism or even discipleship. Charismatic authority points to an individual who possesses certain traits that make a leader extraordinary. This type of leader is not only capable of but actually possesses the superior power of charisma to rally diverse and conflict-prone people behind him. His power comes from the massive trust and almost unbreakable faith people put in him. Ex: Prophet, Napoleon...

Sources of Authority (Weber)

c) **Rational Legal Authority:** it emerges from constitutional rules. People obey such an authority because it is based on certain rules and regulations. For example, a DC or an Income tax officer and all government officials exercise legal rational authority.

This authority operates through a clearly defined rules about the power of government – and power is attached to an office (i.e. prime minister) rather person.

<https://www.forbes.com/powerful-people/list/>

Difference between Power and Authority

- <http://www.differencebetween.net/business/differences-between-power-and-authority/>

Legitimacy



Meaning of Legitimacy [1]

- There cannot be 'authority' without legitimacy i.e. recognition on the part of the 'people' upon whom the authority is exercised.
- The people recognize that the power being used, decisions or commands being enforced by the authority-holder is just and beneficial for them.
- Legitimacy transforms power into authority. Legitimacy without authority only remains a wishful thinking.

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- The power of a dictator or an authoritarian ruler of state is devoid of legitimacy and is backed by force and coercion of the power-holder. As against it, the power of a democratically elected power-holder is a recognized and legitimate power i.e. authority. Legitimacy ensures a successful use of authority.
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- Legitimacy is "a value whereby something or someone is recognized and accepted as right and proper"

How is legitimacy created?

- Three criteria must meet to be legitimate:
 1. Power must be exercised according to rules
 2. Rules must be justified in terms of shared belief of government and governed.
 3. Must be demonstrated by the expression of consent on the part of governed.

Relation between Power, Authority and Legitimacy



Relation between Authority and Legitimacy

- Legitimacy is the acceptance of the power by those who obey it - not acceptance at the level of fear, but acceptance at the level of agreeing that someone's authority is morally valid.

Relation between Authority and Legitimacy

Example:

- For example, Someone might be a powerful boss who can make people run around and do what he/she wants through fear. He/she have authority. But people might just want that the boss should go, or may only have negative opinion about him/her. That would be a crisis of legitimacy. Authority becomes legitimate, when people who submit to that authority accept the authority as competent, rightful and moral.

Authority is the **exercise of power**, however when this power is **exercised through proper ways**, for e.g.: according to law of the land, it is called legitimate use of power. Hence ideally authority is someone who exercise power with legitimacy. So, **legitimacy is like tacit consent**. Without it any authority might not be able to use power over citizens. When authority loss legitimacy, there use of power become violence. For e.g. when dictators lost legitimacy and tried to protect themselves it is termed as violence and not an act of authority, any unjust, illegitimate use of power devoids authority of its authoritativeness.

Cases and Examples



Provide examples;--

- ▶ Name a powerful person or group who does not have authority.
- ▶ Authority without power ---
- ▶ Have both authority and power, but no legitimacy.
- ▶ Have all three.