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politics

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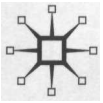

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For Mark and Robin

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Preface

THIS book provides a comprehensive and up-to-date introduction to the study of politics. It is designed to be of use to students taking courses in any field of the discipline, as well as general readers with an interest in the subject.

Politics stubbornly (and splendidly) refuses to stand still. The idea that history is 'speeding up' was not just a symptom of *fin de siècle* anxiety; in a sense, history *is* speeding up. For instance, the final decades of the twentieth century saw the collapse of communism, the end of the Cold War, the emergence of a global economy, a technological revolution in production and communications and the rise of political Islam. Indeed, we appear to be living in a kind of 'post-world'; ideas such as postmodernism, postmaterialism, post-Fordism, post-socialism and postindustrialism vie with one another to demonstrate how much and which bits of the familiar world have now disappeared. And yet not all is flux and confusion. The pace of change may have increased, but certain aspects of social existence and important features of the political landscape have proved to be remarkably resilient to change. Therefore, while this book gives full weight to modern developments such as globalization, the growth of feminism and green politics, the upsurge of ethnic nationalism and the emergence of new social movements, conventional approaches to the discipline are not neglected, and the contribution of classical thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Marx and Mill is not ignored.

This second edition features wider discussion of a number of topics as well as additional boxed material and diagrams. These topics include the nature of globalization, the impact of the mass media and the advent of new forms of political communication, the 'third way' as an ideological project, regionalization, democratization, and the shift from government to governance. The book nevertheless continues to adopt a holistic approach that tries to bring out what is distinctive about political analysis as a whole, and also highlights concerns that are shared by all who are interested in the subject. In an attempt to bridge the political philosophy/political science divide, links are drawn between normative and empirical theory, and a genuinely international perspective is adopted in preference to a country-by-country or system-by-system one.

The book is organized around five central themes. Part 1 on the theories of politics examines the conceptual and methodological issues that underpin the study of politics, and thus serves as an introduction to theories and ideas that are addressed throughout the book. Part 2 on nations and globalization discusses the role and significance of the nation-state, particularly in the light of internationalization and the emergence of global politics. Part 3 on political interaction looks at links between the political and nonpolitical worlds and at channels of communication between government and the governed. Part 4 on

the machinery of government considers the institutional and political processes that affect both the nature of government and its style of operation. Part 5 on policy and performance analyses how policy affec

What is Politics?

CHAPTER 1

'Man is by nature a political animal.'

ARISTOTLE *Politics*, 1

Politics is exciting because people disagree. They disagree about how they should live. Who should get what? How should power and other resources be distributed? Should society be based on cooperation or conflict? And so on. They also disagree about how such matters should be resolved. How should collective decisions be made? Who should have a say? How much influence should each person have? And so forth. For Aristotle, this made politics the 'master science': that is, nothing less than the activity through which human beings attempt to improve their lives and create the Good Society. Politics is, above all, a social activity. It is always a dialogue, and never a monologue. Solitary individuals such as Robinson Crusoe may be able to develop a simple economy, produce art, and so on, but they cannot engage in politics. Politics emerges only with the arrival of a Man (or Woman) Friday. Nevertheless, the disagreement that lies at the heart of politics also extends to the nature of the subject and how it should be studied. People disagree about both what it is that makes social interaction 'political', and how political activity can best be analysed and explained.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- What are the defining features of politics as an activity?
- How has 'politics' been understood by various thinkers and traditions?
- Does politics take place within all social institutions, or only in some?
- What approaches to the study of politics as an academic discipline have been adopted?
- Can the study of politics be scientific?
- What roles do concepts, models and theories play in political analysis?

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Defining politics

Politics, in its broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. Although politics is also an academic subject (sometimes indicated by the use of 'Politics' with a capital P), it is then clearly the study of this activity. Politics is thus inextricably linked to the phenomena of **conflict** and **cooperation.** On the one hand, the existence of rival opinions, different wants, competing needs and opposing interests guarantees disagreement about the rules under which people live. On the other hand, people recognize that, in order to influence these rules or ensure that they are upheld, they must work with others - hence Hannah Arendt's (see p. 9) definition of political power as 'acting in concert'. This is why the heart of politics is often portrayed as a process of conflict resolution, in which rival views or competing interests are reconciled with one another. However, politics in this broad sense is better thought of as a search for conflict resolution than as its achievement, as not all conflicts are, or can be, resolved. Nevertheless, the inescapable presence of diversity (we are not all alike) and scarcity (there is never enough to go around) ensures that politics is an inevitable feature of the human condition.

Any attempt to clarify the meaning of 'politics' must nevertheless address two major problems. The first is the mass of associations that the word has when used in everyday language; in other words, politics is a 'loaded' term. Whereas most people think of, say, economics, geography, history and biology simply as academic subjects, few people come to politics without preconceptions. Many, for instance, automatically assume that students and teachers of politics must in some way be biased, finding it difficult to believe that the subject can be approached in an impartial and dispassionate manner. To make matters worse, politics is usually thought of as a 'dirty' word: it conjures up images of trouble, disruption and even violence on the one hand, and deceit, manipulation and lies on the other. There is nothing new about such associations. As long ago as 1775, Samuel Johnson dismissed politics as 'nothing more than a means of rising in the world', while in the nineteenth century the US historian Henry Adams summed up politics as 'the systematic organization of hatreds'. Any attempt to define politics therefore entails trying to disentangle the term from such associations. Not uncommonly, this has meant attempting to rescue the term from its unsavoury reputation by establishing that politics is a valuable, even laudable, activity.

The second and more intractable difficulty is that even respected authorities cannot agree what the subject is about. Politics is defined in such different ways: as the exercise of power, the exercise of authority, the making of collective decisions, the allocation of scarce resources, the practice of deception and manipulation, and so on. The virtue of the definition advanced in this text, 'the making, preserving and amending of general social rules', is that it is sufficiently broad to encompass most, if not all, of the competing definitions. However, problems arise when the definition is unpacked, or when the meaning is refined. For instance, does 'politics' refer to a particular way in which rules are made, preserved or amended (that is, peacefully, by debate), or to all such processes? Similarly, is politics practised in all social contexts and institutions, or only in certain ones (that is, government and public life)?

From this perspective, politics may be treated as an 'essentially contested' concept (see p. 19), in the sense that the term has a number of acceptable or legitimate mean-

Conflict: Competition between opposing forces, reflecting a diversity of opinions, preferences, needs or interests.

Cooperation: Working together; achieving goals through collective action.

ings. On the other hand, these different views may simply consist of contrasting conceptions of the same, if necessarily vague, concept. Whether we are dealing with rival concepts or alternative conceptions, the debate about 'what is politics?' is worth pursuing because it exposes some of the deepest intellectual and ideological disagreements in the academic study of the subject. The different views of politics examined here are as follows:

- politics as the art of government
- politics as public affairs
- politics as compromise and consensus
- politics as power and the distribution of resources.

Politics as the art of government

'Politics is not a science ... but an art', Chancellor Bismarck is reputed to have told the German Reichstag. The art Bismarck had in mind was the art of government, the exercise of control within society through the making and enforcement of collective decisions. This is perhaps the classical definition of politics, developed from the original meaning of the term in Ancient Greece.

The word 'politics' is derived from ***polis***, meaning literally city-state. Ancient Greek society was divided into a collection of independent city-states, each of which possessed its own system of government. The largest and most influential of these city-states was Athens, often portrayed as the cradle of democratic government. In this light, politics can be understood to refer to the affairs of the *polis* - in effect, 'what concerns the *polis*'. The modern form of this definition is therefore 'what concerns the state' (see p. 87). This view of politics is clearly evident in the everyday use of the term: people are said to be 'in politics' when they hold public office, or to be 'entering politics' when they seek to do so. It is also a definition that academic political science has helped to perpetuate.

In many ways, the notion that politics amounts to 'what concerns the state' is the traditional view of the discipline, reflected in the tendency for academic study to focus upon the personnel and machinery of government. To study politics is in essence to study government, or, more broadly, to study the exercise of authority. This view is advanced in the writings of the influential US political scientist David Easton (1979, 1981), who defined politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values'. By this he meant that politics encompasses the various processes through which government responds to pressures from the larger society, in particular by allocating benefits, rewards or penalties. 'Authoritative values' are therefore ones that are widely accepted in society, and are considered binding by the mass of citizens. In this view, politics is associated with 'policy' (see p. 400): that is, with formal or authoritative decisions that establish a plan of action for the community.

However, what is striking about this definition is that it offers a highly restricted view of politics. Politics is what takes place within a **polity,** a system of social organization centred upon the machinery of government. Politics is therefore practised in cabinet rooms, legislative chambers, government departments and the like, and it is engaged in by a limited and specific group of people, notably politicians, civil servants and lobbyists. This means that most people, most institutions and most social activities can be regarded as being 'outside' politics. Businesses, schools and other educational institutions, community groups, families and so on are in this sense 'nonpolitical',

Concept

Authority

Authority can most simply be defined as 'legitimate power'. Whereas power is the *ability* to influence the behaviour of others, authority is the *right* to do so. Authority is therefore based on an acknowledged duty to obey rather than on any form of coercion or manipulation. In this sense, authority is power cloaked in legitimacy or rightfulness. Weber (see p. 211) distinguished between three kinds of authority, based on the different grounds upon which obedience can be established: *traditional* authority is rooted in history, *charismatic* authority stems from personality, and *legal–rational* authority is grounded in a set of impersonal rules (see the section on legitimizing power, pp. 211–13).

Polis: *(Greek)* City-state; classically understood to imply the highest or most desirable form of social organization.

Polity: A society organized through the exercise of political authority; for Aristotle, rule by the many in the interests of all.



Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527)

Italian politician and author. The son of a civil lawyer, Machiavelli's knowledge of public life was gained from a sometimes precarious existence in politically unstable Florence. He served as Second Chancellor (1498–1512)

first-hand observations of the statecraft of Cesare Borgia and the power politics that dominated his period. It was written as a guide for the future prince of a united Italy. The adjective 'Machiavellian' subsequently

because they are not engaged in 'running the country'. By the same token, to portray politics as an essentially state-bound activity is to ignore the increasingly important international or global influences upon modern life, such as the impact of transnational technology and multinational corporations. In this sense, this definition of politics is a hangover from the days when the nation-state (see p. 121) could still be regarded as an independent actor in world affairs. Moreover, there is a growing recognition that the task of managing complex societies is no longer simply carried out by government but involves a wide range of public and private sector bodies. This is reflected in the idea that government is being replaced by 'governance'.

This definition can, however, be narrowed still further. This is evident in the tendency to treat politics as the equivalent of party politics. In other words, the realm of 'the political' is restricted to those state actors who are consciously motivated by ideological beliefs, and who seek to advance them through membership of a formal organization such as a political party. This is the sense in which politicians are described as 'political', whereas civil servants are seen as 'nonpolitical', as long as, of course, they act in a neutral and professional fashion. Similarly, judges are taken to be 'nonpolitical' figures while they interpret the law impartially and in accordance with the available evidence, but they may be accused of being 'political' if their judgement is influenced by personal preferences or some other form of bias.

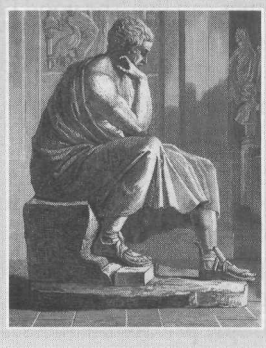
Concept

Governance

Governance is a broader term than government (see p. 26). Although it still has no settled or agreed definition, it refers, in its widest sense, to the various ways through which social life is coordinated. Government can therefore be seen as one of the institutions involved in governance; it is possible to have 'governance without government' (Rhodes, 1996). The principal modes of governance are markets, hierarchies and networks. The wider use of the term reflects a blurring of the state/society distinction, resulting from changes such as the development of new forms of public management, the growth of public–private partnerships, the increasing importance of policy networks (see p. 406), and the greater impact of both supranational and subnational organizations ('multi-level governance'). While some associate governance with a shift away from command and control mechanisms to a reliance on consultation and bargaining, others argue that it implies a preference for 'less government' and the free market.

Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

Greek philosopher. Aristotle was a student of Plato and tutor of the young Alexander the Great. He established his own school of philosophy in Athens in 335 BCE; this was called the 'peripatetic school' after his tendency to walk up and down as he talked. His 22 surviving treatises, compiled as lecture notes, range over logic, physics, metaphysics, astronomy, meteorology, biology, ethics and politics. In the Middle Ages, Aristotle's work became the foundation of Islamic philosophy, and it was later incorporated into Christian theology. His best known political work is *Politics*, a study of the ideal constitution.



Concept

Power

Power, in its broadest sense, is the ability to achieve a desired outcome, and it is sometimes referred to in terms of the 'power *to*' do something. This includes everything from the ability to keep oneself alive to the ability of government to promote economic growth. In politics, however, power is usually thought of as a relationship: that is, as the ability to influence the behaviour of others in a manner not of their choosing. It is referred to in terms of having 'power *over*' people. More narrowly, power may be associated with the ability to punish or reward, bringing it close to force or manipulation, in contrast to 'influence', which also encompasses rational persuasion (see the faces of power focus box, p. 11).

The link between politics and the affairs of the state also helps to explain why negative or pejorative images have so often been attached to politics. This is because, in the popular mind, politics is closely associated with the activities of politicians. Put brutally, politicians are often seen as power-seeking hypocrites who conceal personal ambition behind the rhetoric of public service and ideological conviction. Indeed, this perception has become more common in the modern period as intensified media exposure has more effectively brought to light examples of corruption and dishonesty, giving rise to the phenomenon of **anti-politics.** This rejection of the personnel and machinery of conventional political life is rooted in a view of politics as a self-serving, two-faced and unprincipled activity, clearly evident in the use of derogatory phrases such as 'office politics' and 'politicking'. Such an image of politics is sometimes traced back to the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli, who, in *The Prince* ([1531] 1961), developed a strictly realistic account of politics that drew attention to the use by political leaders of cunning, cruelty and manipulation.

Such a negative view of politics reflects the essentially liberal perception that, as individuals are self-interested, political power is corrupting, because it encourages those 'in power' to exploit their position for personal advantage and at the expense of others. This is famously expressed in Lord Acton's (1834-1902) aphorism: 'power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Nevertheless, few who view politics in this way doubt that political activity is an inevitable and permanent feature of social existence. However venal politicians may be, there is a general, if grudging, acceptance that they are always with us. Without some kind of mechanism for allocating authoritative values, society would simply disintegrate into a civil war of each against all, as the early social-contract theorists argued (see p. 89). The task is therefore not to abolish politicians and bring politics to an end, but rather to ensure that politics is conducted within a framework of checks and constraints that ensure that governmental power is not abused.

Politics as public affairs

A second and broader conception of politics moves it beyond the narrow realm of government to what is thought of as 'public life' or 'public affairs'. In other words, the distinction between 'the political' and 'the nonpolitical' coincides with the division between an essentially *public* sphere of life and what can be thought of as a *private* sphere. Such a view of politics is often traced back to the work of the famous Greek

Anti-politics: Disillusionment with formal and established political processes, reflected in nonparticipation, support for antisystem parties, or the use of direct action.

Concept

Civil society

The term civil society has been defined in a variety of ways. Originally, it meant a 'political community', a society governed by law, under the authority of a state. More commonly, it is distinguished from the state, and the term is used to describe institutions that are 'private' in that they are independent from government and organized by individuals in pursuit of their own ends. 'Civil society' therefore refers to a realm of autonomous groups and associations: businesses, interest groups, clubs, families and so on. Hegel (see p. 86), however, distinguished between the family and civil society, viewing the latter as a sphere of egoism and selfishness.

philosopher Aristotle. In *Politics,* Aristotle declared that 'man is by nature a political animal', by which he meant that it is only within a political community that human beings can live 'the good life'. From this viewpoint, then, politics is an ethical activity concerned with creating a 'just society'; it is what Aristotle called the 'master science'.

However, where should the line between 'public' life and 'private' life be drawn? The traditional distinction between the public realm and the private realm conforms to the division between the state and civil society. The institutions of the state (the apparatus of government, the courts, the police, the army, the social-security system and so forth) can be regarded as 'public' in the sense that they are responsible for the collective organization of community life. Moreover, they are funded at the public's expense, out of taxation. In contrast, civil society consists of what Edmund Burke (see p. 47) called the 'little platoons', institutions such as the family and kinship groups, private businesses, trade unions, clubs, community groups and so on that are 'private' in the sense that they are set up and funded by individual citizens to satisfy their own interests, rather than those of the larger society. On the basis of this 'public/private' division, politics is restricted to the activities of the state itself and the responsibilities that are properly exercised by public bodies. Those areas of life that individuals can and do manage for themselves (the economic, social, domestic, personal, cultural and artistic spheres, and so on) are therefore clearly 'nonpolitical'.

An alternative 'public/private' divide is sometimes defined in terms of a further and more subtle distinction, namely that between 'the political' and 'the personal' (see Figure 1.1). Although civil society can be distinguished from the state, it nevertheless contains a range of institutions that are thought of as 'public' in the wider sense that they are open institutions, operating in public, to which the public has access. One of the crucial implications of this is that it broadens our notion of the political, transferring the economy in particular from the private to the public realm. A form of politics can thus be found in the workplace. Nevertheless, although this view regards institutions such as businesses, community groups, clubs and trade unions as 'public', it remains a restricted view of politics. According to this perspective, politics does not, and should not, infringe upon 'personal' affairs and institutions. Feminist thinkers in particular have pointed out that this implies that politics effectively stops at the front door; it does not take place in the family, in domestic life, or in personal relationships. This view is illustrated, for example, by the tendency of politicians to draw a clear distinction between their professional conduct and their personal or domestic behaviour. By classifying, say, cheating on their partners or treating their children badly as 'personal' matters, they are able to deny the political significance of such behaviour on the grounds that it does not touch on their conduct of public affairs.

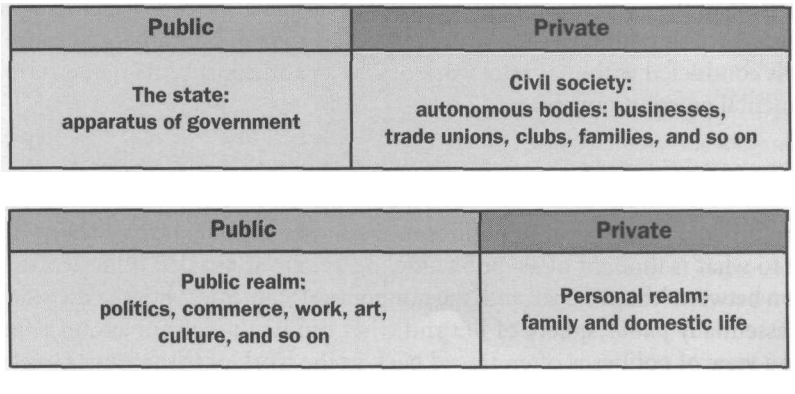


Fig. 1.1 Two views of the public/private divide

Hannah Arendt (1906–75)

German political theorist and philosopher. Hannah Arendt was brought up in a middle-class Jewish family. She fled Germany in 1933 to escape from Nazism, and finally settled in the USA, where her major work was produced. Her wide-ranging, even idiosyncratic, writing was influenced by the existentialism of Heidegger (1889–1976) and Jaspers (1883–1969); she described it as 'thinking without barriers'. Her major works include *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *The Human Condition* (1958), *On Revolution* (1963) and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), which she described as a study of the 'banality of evil'.



The view of politics as an essentially 'public' activity has generated both positive and negative images. In a tradition dating back to Aristotle, politics has been seen as a noble and enlightened activity precisely because of its 'public' character. This position was firmly endorsed by Hannah Arendt, who argued in *The Human Condition* (1958) that politics is the most important form of human activity because it involves interaction amongst free and equal citizens. It thus gives meaning to life and affirms the uniqueness of each individual. Theorists such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (see p. 75) and John Stuart Mill (see p. 46) who portrayed political participation as a good in itself have drawn similar conclusions. Rousseau argued that only through the direct and continuous participation of all citizens in political life can the state be bound to the common good, or what he called the 'general will' (see p. 74). In Mill's view, involvement in 'public' affairs is educational in that it promotes the personal, moral and intellectual development of the individual.

In sharp contrast, however, politics as public activity has also been portrayed as a form of unwanted interference. Liberal theorists in particular have exhibited a preference for civil society over the state, on the grounds that 'private' life is a realm of choice, personal freedom and individual responsibility. This is most clearly demonstrated by attempts to narrow the realm of 'the political', commonly expressed as the wish to 'keep politics out of private activities such as business, sport and family life. From this point of view, politics is unwholesome quite simply because it prevents people acting as they choose. For example, it may interfere with how firms conduct their business, or with how and with whom we play sports, or with how we bring up our children.

Politics as compromise and consensus

The third conception of politics relates not so much to the arena within which politics is conducted as to the way in which decisions are made. Specifically, politics is seen as a particular means of resolving conflict: that is, by compromise, conciliation and negotiation, rather than through force and naked power. This is what is implied when politics is portrayed as 'the art of the possible'. Such a definition is inherent in the everyday use of the term. For instance, the description of a solution to a problem as a 'political' solution implies peaceful debate and arbitration, as opposed to what is often called a 'military' solution. Once again, this view of politics has been traced

Concept

Consensus

The term consensus means *agreement, but it usually* refers to an agreement of a particular kind. It implies, first, a broad agreement, the terms of which are accepted by a wide range of individuals or groups. Second, it implies an agreement about fundamental or underlying principles, as opposed to a precise or exact agreement. In other words, a consensus permits disagreement on matters of emphasis or detail. The term 'consensus politics' is used in two senses. A *procedural* consensus is a willingness to make decisions through consultation and bargaining, either between political parties or between government and major interests. A *substantive* consensus is an overlap of the ideological positions of two or more political

back to the writings of Aristotle and, in particular, to his belief that what he called 'polity' is the ideal system of government, as it is 'mixed' in the sense that it combines both aristocratic and democratic features (see pp. 27-8). One of the leading modern exponents of this view is Bernard Crick. In his classic study *In Defence of Politics,* Crick offered the following definition:

> Politics [is] the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and the survival of the whole community. (Crick, [1962] 2000:21)

In this view, the key to politics is therefore a wide dispersal of power. Accepting that conflict is inevitable, Crick argued that when social groups and interests possess power they must be conciliated; they cannot merely be crushed. This is why he portrayed politics as 'that solution to the problem of order which chooses conciliation rather than violence and coercion' (p. 30). Such a view of politics reflects a deep commitment to liberal-rationalist principles. It is based on resolute faith in the efficacy of debate and discussion, as well as on the belief that society is characterized by consensus rather than by irreconcilable conflict. In other words, the disagreements that exist *can* be resolved without resort to intimidation and violence. Critics, however, point out that Crick's conception of politics is heavily biased towards the form of politics that takes place in western pluralist democracies: in effect, he equated politics with electoral choice and party competition. As a result, his model has little to tell us about, say, one-party states or military regimes.

This view of politics has an unmistakeably positive character. Politics is certainly no Utopian solution (compromise means that concessions are made by all sides, leaving no one perfectly satisfied), but it is undoubtedly preferable to the alternatives: bloodshed and brutality. In this sense, politics can be seen as a civilized and civilizing force. People should be encouraged to respect politics as an activity, and should be prepared to engage in the political life of their own community. Nevertheless, Crick saw politics as an embattled and often neglected activity. He saw its principal enemy as 'the desire for certainty at any cost', and he warned that this is demonstrated in many forms, including the seductive influence of political ideologies, blind faith in democracy, the impact of rabid nationalism, and the promise of science to disclose objective truth.

Politics as power

The fourth definition of politics is both the broadest and the most radical. Rather than confining politics to a particular sphere (the government, the state or the 'public' realm) this view sees politics at work in all social activities and in every corner of human existence. As Adrian Leftwich proclaimed in *What is Politics? The Activity and Its Study* (1984:64), 'politics is at the heart of *all* collective social activity, formal and informal, public and private, in *all* human groups, institutions and societies'. In this sense, politics takes place at every level of social interaction; it can be found within families and amongst small groups of friends just as much as amongst nations and on the global stage. However, what is it that is distinctive about political activity? What marks off politics from any other form of social behaviour?

At its broadest, politics concerns the production, distribution and use of resources in the course of social existence. Politics is, in essence, power: the ability to achieve a desired outcome, through whatever means. This notion was neatly

that 'the personal is the political'. This slogan neatly encapsulates the radical-feminist belief that what goes on in domestic, family and personal life is intensely political, and indeed that it is the basis of all other political struggles. Clearly, a more radical notion of politics underlies this position. This view was summed up by Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1969:23), in which she defined politics as 'power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another'. Feminists can therefore be said to be concerned with 'the politics of everyday life'. In their view, relationships within the family, between husbands and wives, and between parents and children, are every bit as political as relationships between employers and workers, or between governments and citizens.

Marxists have used the term 'politics' in two senses. On one level, Marx (see p. 53) used 'politics' in a conventional sense to refer to the apparatus of the state. In the *Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1967) he thus referred to political power as 'merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another' (p. 105). For Marx, politics, together with law and culture, are part of a 'superstructure' that is distinct from the economic 'base' that is the real foundation of social life. However, he did not see the economic 'base' and the legal and political 'superstructure' as entirely separate. He believed that the 'superstructure' arose out of, and reflected, the economic 'base'. At a deeper level, political power, in this view, is therefore rooted in the class system; as Lenin (see p. 77) put it, 'politics is the most concentrated form of economics'. As opposed to believing that politics can be confined to the state and a narrow public sphere, Marxists can be said to believe that 'the economic is political'. From this perspective, civil society, characterized as Marxists believe it to be by class struggle, is the very heart of politics.

Views such as these portray politics in largely negative terms. Politics is, quite simply, about oppression and subjugation. Radical feminists hold that society is patriarchal, in that women are systematically subordinated and subjected to male power. Marxists traditionally argued that politics in a capitalist society is characterized by the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, these negative implications are balanced against the fact that politics is also seen as the means through which injustice and domination can be challenged. Marx, for instance, predicted that class exploitation would be overthrown by a proletarian revolution, and radical feminists proclaim the need for gender relations to be reordered through a sexual revolution. However, it is also clear that when politics is portrayed as power and domination it need not be seen as an inevitable feature of social existence. Feminists look to an end of 'sexual politics' achieved through the construction of a nonsexist society, in which people will be valued according to personal worth rather than on the basis of gender. Marxists believe that 'class politics' will end with the establishment of a classless communist society. This, in turn, will eventually lead to the 'withering away' of the state, bringing politics in the conventional sense also to an end.

Studying politics

Approaches to the study of politics

Disagreement about the nature of political activity is matched by controversy about the nature of politics as an academic discipline. One of the most ancient spheres of

Plato (427–347 BCE)

Greek philosopher. Plato was born of an aristocratic family. He became a follower of Socrates, who is the principal figure in his ethical and philosophical dialogues. After Socrates' death in 399 BCE, Plato founded his own academy in order to train the new Athenian ruling class. Plato taught that the



intellectual enquiry, politics was originally seen as an arm of philosophy, history or law. Its central purpose was to uncover the principles upon which human society should be based. From the late nineteenth century onwards, however, this philosophical emphasis was gradually displaced by an attempt to turn politics into a scientific discipline. The high point of this development was reached in the 1950s and 1960s with an open rejection of the earlier tradition as meaningless metaphysics. Since then, however, enthusiasm for a strict science of politics has waned, and there has been a renewed recognition of the enduring importance of political values and normative theories. If the 'traditional' search for universal values acceptable to everyone has largely been abandoned, so has been the insistence that science (see p. 16) alone provides a means of disclosing truth. The resulting discipline is today more fertile and more exciting, precisely because it embraces a range of theoretical approaches and a variety of schools of analysis.

The philosophical tradition

The origins of political analysis date back to Ancient Greece and a tradition usually referred to as 'political philosophy'. This involved a preoccupation with essentially ethical, prescriptive or **normative** questions, reflecting a concern with what 'should', 'ought' or 'must' be brought about, rather than with what 'is'. Plato and Aristotle are usually identified as the founding fathers of this tradition. Their ideas resurfaced in the writings of medieval theorists such as Augustine (354-430) and Aquinas (1225-74). The central theme of Plato's work, for instance, was an attempt to describe the nature of the ideal society, which in his view took the form of a benign dictatorship dominated by a class of philosopher kings.

Such writings have formed the basis of what is called the 'traditional' approach to politics. This involves the analytical study of ideas and doctrines that have been central to political thought. Most commonly, it has taken the form of a history of political thought that focuses on a collection of 'major' thinkers (that spans, for instance, Plato to Marx) and a canon of 'classic' texts. This approach has the character of literary analysis: it is interested primarily in examining what major thinkers said, how they developed or justified their views, and the intellectual context within which they worked. Although such analysis may be carried out critically and scrupulously, it cannot be **objective** in any scientific sense, as it deals with normative questions such as 'why should I obey the state?', 'how should rewards be distributed?' and 'what should the limits of individual freedom be?'.

Objective: External to the observer, demonstrable; untainted by feelings, values or bias.

Normative: The prescription of values and standards of conduct; what 'should be' rather than what 'is'.

The empirical tradition

Although it was less prominent than normative theorizing, a descriptive or empirical tradition can be traced back to the earliest days of political thought. It can be seen in Aristotle's attempt to classify constitutions (see pp. 27-8), in Machiavelli's realistic account of statecraft, and in Montesquieu's (see p. 312) sociological theory of government and law. In many ways, such writings constitute the basis of what is now called comparative government, and they gave rise to an essentially institutional approach to the discipline. In the USA and the UK in particular this developed into the dominant tradition of analysis. The empirical approach to political analysis is characterized by the attempt to offer a dispassionate and impartial account of political reality. The approach is 'descriptive' in that it seeks to analyse and explain, whereas the normative approach is 'prescriptive' in the sense that it makes judgements and offers recommendations.

Descriptive political analysis acquired its philosophical underpinning from the doctrine of empiricism, which spread from the seventeenth century onwards through the work of theorists such as John Locke (see p. 45) and David Hume (1711-76). The doctrine of empiricism advanced the belief that experience is the only basis of knowledge, and that therefore all hypotheses and theories should be tested by a process of observation. By the nineteenth century, such ideas had developed into what became known as positivism, an intellectual movement particularly associated with the writings of Auguste Comte (1798-1857). This doctrine proclaimed that the social sciences, and, for that matter, all forms of philosophical enquiry, should adhere strictly to the methods of the natural sciences. Once science was perceived to be the only reliable means of disclosing truth, the pressure to develop a science of politics became irresistible.

The scientific tradition

The first theorist to attempt to describe politics in scientific terms was Karl Marx. Using his so-called materialist conception of history (see p. 53), Marx strove to uncover the driving force of historical development. This enabled him to make predictions about the future based upon 'laws' that had the same status in terms of proof as laws in the natural sciences. The vogue for scientific analysis was also taken up in the nineteenth century by mainstream analysis. In the 1870s, 'political science' courses were introduced in the universities of Oxford, Paris and Columbia, and by 1906 the *American Political Science Review* was being published. However, enthusiasm for a science of politics peaked in the 1950s and 1960s with the emergence, most strongly in the USA, of a form of political analysis that drew heavily upon **behaviouralism.** For the first time, this gave politics reliably scientific credentials, because it provided what had previously been lacking: objective and quantifiable data against which hypotheses could be tested. Political analysts such as David Easton proclaimed that politics could adopt the methodology of the natural sciences, and this gave rise to a proliferation of studies in areas best suited to the use of quantitative research methods, such as voting behaviour, the behaviour of legislators, and the behaviour of municipal politicians and lobbyists.

Behaviouralism: The belief that social theories should be constructed only on the basis of observable behaviour, providing quantifiable data for

Behaviouralism, however, came under growing pressure from the 1960s onwards. In the first place, it was claimed that behaviouralism had significantly constrained the scope of political analysis, preventing it from going beyond what was directly observable. Although behavioural analysis undoubtedly produced, and continues to

produce, invaluable insights in fields such as voting studies, a narrow obsession with quantifiable data threatens to reduce the discipline of politics to little else. More worryingly, it inclined a generation of political scientists to turn their backs upon the entire tradition of normative political thought. Concepts such as 'liberty', 'equality', 'justice' and 'rights' were sometimes discarded as being meaningless because they were not **empirically** verifiable entities. Dissatisfaction with behaviouralism grew as interest in normative questions revived in the 1970s, as reflected in the writings of theorists such as John Rawls (see p. 58) and Robert Nozick (see p. 96).

Moreover, the scientific credentials of behaviouralism started to be called into question. The basis of the assertion that behaviouralism is objective and reliable is the claim that it is 'value-free': that is, that it is not contaminated by ethical or normative beliefs. However, if the focus of analysis is observable behaviour, it is difficult to do much more than describe the existing political arrangements, which implicitly means that the *status quo* is legitimized. This conservative value bias was demonstrated by the fact that 'democracy' was, in effect, redefined in terms of observable behaviour. Thus, instead of meaning 'popular self-government' (literally, government *by* the people), democracy came to stand for a struggle between competing elites to win power through the mechanism of popular election. In other words, democracy came to mean what goes on in the so-called democratic political systems of the developed West.

Recent developments

Amongst recent theoretical approaches to politics is what is called formal political theory, variously known as 'political economy', 'public-choice theory' (see p. 276) and 'rational-choice theory'. This approach to analysis draws heavily upon the example of economic theory in building up models based upon procedural rules, usually about the rationally self-interested behaviour of the individuals involved. Most firmly established in the USA, and associated in particular with the so-called Virginia School, formal political theory provides at least a useful analytical device, which may provide insights into the actions of voters, lobbyists, bureaucrats and politicians, as well as into the behaviour of states within the international system. This approach has had its broadest impact on political analysis in the form of what is called institutional public-choice theory. The use of such techniques by writers such as Anthony Downs, Mancur Olson and William Niskanen, in fields such as party competition, interest-group behaviour and the policy influence of bureaucrats, is discussed in later chapters. The approach has also been applied in the form of game theory, which has been developed more from the field of mathematics than from economics. It entails the use of first principles to analyse puzzles about individual behaviour. The best known example in game theory is the 'prisoners' dilemma' (see Figure 1.2).

By no means, however, has the rational-choice approach to political analysis been universally accepted. While its supporters claim that it introduces greater rigour into the discussion of political phenomena, critics have questioned its basic assumptions. It may, for instance, overestimate human rationality in that it ignores the fact that people seldom possess a clear set of preferred goals and rarely make decisions in the light of full and accurate knowledge. Furthermore, in proceeding from an abstract model of the individual, rational-choice theory pays insufficient attention to social and historical factors, failing to recognize, amongst other things, that human self-interestedness may be socially conditioned, and not merely innate. As a result, a variety

Empirical: Based on observation and experiment; empirical knowledge is derived from sense data and experience.

Concept

Science, scientism

Science (from the Latin *scientia*, meaning 'knowledge') is a field of study that aims to develop reliable explanations of phenomena through repeatable experiments, observation and deduction. The 'scientific method', by which hypotheses are verified (proved true) by testing them against the available evidence, is therefore seen as a means of disclosing value-free and objective truth. Karl Popper (1902–94), however, suggested that science can only falsify hypotheses, since 'facts' may always be disproved by later experiments. Scientism is the belief that the scientific method is the only source of reliable knowledge, and so should be applied to fields such as philosophy, history and politics, as well as the natural sciences. Doctrines such as Marxism, utilitarianism (see p. 401) and racialism (see p. 116) are scientistic in this sense.

Focus on . . .

The prisoners' dilemma

Two criminals, held in separate cells, are faced with the choice of 'squealing' or 'not squealing' on one another. If only one of them confesses, but he provides evidence to convict the other, he will be released without charge, while his partner will take the whole blame and be jailed for ten years. If both criminals confess, they will each be jailed for six years. If both refuse to confess, they will only be convicted of a minor crime, and they will each receive a one-year sentence. The options are shown in Figure 1.2.

In view of the dilemma confronting them it is likely that both criminals will confess, fearing that if they do not the other will 'squeal' and they will receive the maximum sentence. Ironically, the game shows that rational behaviour can result in the least favourable outcome (in which the prisoners jointly serve a total of 12 years in jail). In effect, they are punished for their failure to cooperate or trust one another. However, if the game is repeated several times, it is possible that the criminals will learn that self-interest is advanced by cooperation, which will encourage both to refuse to confess.

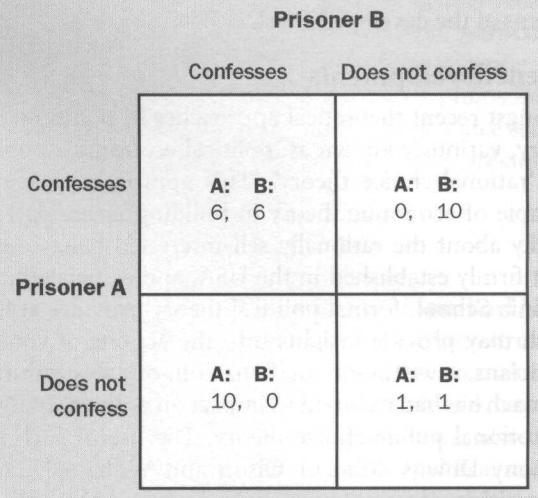


Fig. 1.2 Options in prisoners' dilemma

of approaches have come to be adopted for the study of politics as an academic discipline.

This has made modern political analysis both richer and more diverse. To traditional normative, institutional and behavioural approaches have been added not only rational-choice theory but also a wide range of more recent ideas and themes. Feminism has, particularly since the 1970s, raised awareness of the significance of gender differences and patriarchal structures, questioning, in the process, established notions of 'the political'. What is called 'new institutionalism' has shifted attention away from the formal, structural aspects of **institutions** to, for instance, their significance within a larger context, their actual behaviour and the outcomes of the policy process. Green politics has challenged the anthropocentric (human-centred) emphasis of established political and social theory and championed holistic approaches to political and social understanding. Critical theory, which is rooted

Institution: A well-established body with a formal role and status; more broadly, a set of rules that ensure regular and predictable behaviour, 'the rules of the game'.

in the neo-Marxism (see p. 92) of the Frankfurt School, established in 1923, has extended the notion of critique to all social practices drawing on a wide range of influences, including Freud and Weber (see p. 211). Postmodernism (see p. 65) has questioned the idea of absolute and universal truth and helped to spawn, amongst other things, **discourse** theory. Finally, a general but profoundly important shift is that political philosophy and political science are now less likely to be seen as distinct modes of enquiry, and still less as rivals. Instead, they have come to be accepted simply as contrasting ways of disclosing political knowledge.

Can the study of politics be scientific?

Although it is widely accepted that the study of politics should be scientific in the broad sense of being rigorous and critical, some have argued, as has been pointed out, that it can be scientific in a stricter sense: that is, that it can use the methodology of the natural sciences. This claim has been advanced by Marxists and by positivist social scientists, and it was central to the 'behavioural revolution' of the 1950s. The attraction of a science of politics is clear. It promises an impartial and reliable means of distinguishing 'truth' from 'falsehood', thereby giving us access to objective knowledge about the political world. The key to achieving this is to distinguish between 'facts' (empirical evidence) and 'values' (normative or ethical beliefs). Facts are objective in the sense that they can be demonstrated reliably and consistently; they can be proved. Values, by contrast, are inherently subjective, a matter of opinion.

However, any attempt to construct a science of politics must confront three difficulties. The first of these is the problem of data. For better or worse, human beings are not tadpoles that can be taken into a laboratory or cells that can be observed under a microscope. We cannot get 'inside' a human being, or carry out repeatable experiments on human behaviour. What we can learn about individual behaviour is therefore limited and superficial. In the absence of exact data, we have no reliable means of testing our hypotheses. The only way round the problem is to ignore the thinking subject altogether by subscribing to the doctrine of **determinism.** One example would be behaviourism (as opposed to behaviouralism), the school of psychology associated with John B. Watson (1878-1958) and B. F. Skinner (1904-90). This holds that human behaviour can ultimately be explained in terms of conditioned reactions or reflexes. Another example is 'dialectical materialism', the crude form of Marxism that dominated intellectual enquiry in the USSR.

Second, there are difficulties that stem from the existence of hidden values. The idea that models and theories of politics are entirely value-free is difficult to sustain when examined closely. Facts and values are so closely intertwined that it is often impossible to prise them apart. This is because theories are invariably constructed on the basis of assumptions about human nature, human society, the role of the state and so on that have hidden political and ideological implications. A conservative value **bias,** for example, can be identified in behaviouralism, rational-choice theories and systems theory (see pp. 19-20). Similarly, feminist political theories are rooted in assumptions about the nature and significance of gender divisions.

Third, there is the myth of neutrality in the social sciences. Whereas natural scientists may be able to approach their studies in an objective and impartial manner, holding no presuppositions about what they are going to discover, this is difficult and perhaps impossible to achieve in politics. However politics is defined, it addresses questions relating to the structure and functioning of the society in which

Discourse: Human interaction, especially communication; discourse may disclose or illustrate power relationships.

Determinism: The belief that human actions and choices are entirely conditioned by external factors; determinism implies that free will is a myth.

Bias: Sympathies or prejudices that (often unconsciously) affect human judgement; bias implies distortion.

Concept

Ideal type

An ideal type (sometimes 'pure type') is a mental construct in which an attempt is made to draw out meaning from an otherwise almost infinitely complex reality through the presentation of a logical extreme. Ideal types were first used in economics, for instance, in the notion of perfect competition. Championed in the social sciences by Max Weber, ideal types are explanatory tools, not approximations of reality; they neither 'exhaust reality' nor offer an ethical ideal. Weberian examples include types of authority (see p. 5) and bureaucracy (see p. 359).

we live and have grown up. Family background, social experience, economic position, personal sympathies and so on thus build into each and every one of us a set of preconceptions about politics and the world around us. This means that scientific objectivity, in the sense of absolute impartiality or neutrality (see p. 305), must always remain an unachievable goal in political analysis, however rigorous our research methods may be. Perhaps the greatest threat to the accumulation of reliable knowledge thus comes not from bias as such, but from the failure to acknowledge bias, reflected in bogus claims to political neutrality.

Concepts, models and theories

Concepts, models and theories are the tools of political analysis. However, as with most things in politics, the analytical tools must be used with care. First, let us consider concepts. A concept is a general idea about something, usually expressed in a single word or a short phrase. A concept is more than a proper noun or the name of a thing. There is, for example, a difference between talking about a cat (a particular and unique cat) and having a concept of a 'cat' (the idea of a cat). The concept of a cat is not a 'thing' but an 'idea', an idea composed of the various attributes that give a cat its distinctive character: 'a furry mammal', 'small', 'domesticated', 'catches rats and mice', and so on. The concept of 'equality' is thus a principle or ideal. This is different from using the term to say that a runner has 'equalled' a world record, or that an inheritance is to be shared 'equally' between two brothers. In the same way, the concept of 'presidency' refers not to any specific president, but rather to a set of ideas about the organization of executive power.

What, then, is the value of concepts? Concepts are the tools with which we think, criticize, argue, explain and analyse. Merely perceiving the external world does not in itself give us knowledge about it. In order to make sense of the world we must, in a sense, impose meaning upon it, and this we do through the construction of concepts. Quite simply, to treat a cat as a cat, we must first have a concept of what it is. Concepts also help us to classify objects by recognizing that they have similar forms or similar properties. A cat, for instance, is a member of the class of 'cats'. Concepts are therefore 'general': they can relate to a number of objects, indeed to any object that complies with the characteristics of the general idea itself. It is no exaggeration to say that our knowledge of the political world is built up through developing and refining concepts that help us make sense of that world. Concepts, in that sense, are the building blocks of human knowledge.

Nevertheless, concepts can also be slippery customers. In the first place, the political reality we seek to understand is constantly shifting and is highly complex. There is always the danger that concepts such as 'democracy', 'human rights' and 'capitalism' will be more rounded and coherent than the unshapely realities they seek to describe. Max Weber tried to overcome this problem by recognizing particular concepts as 'ideal types'. This view implies that the concepts we use are constructed by singling out certain basic or central features of the phenomenon in question, which means that other features are downgraded or ignored altogether. The concept of 'revolution' can be regarded as an ideal type in this sense, in that it draws attention to a process of fundamental and usually violent political change. It thus helps us make sense of, say, the 1789 French Revolution and the eastern European revolutions of 1989-91 by highlighting important parallels between them. The concept must nevertheless be used with care because it can also conceal vital differences, and

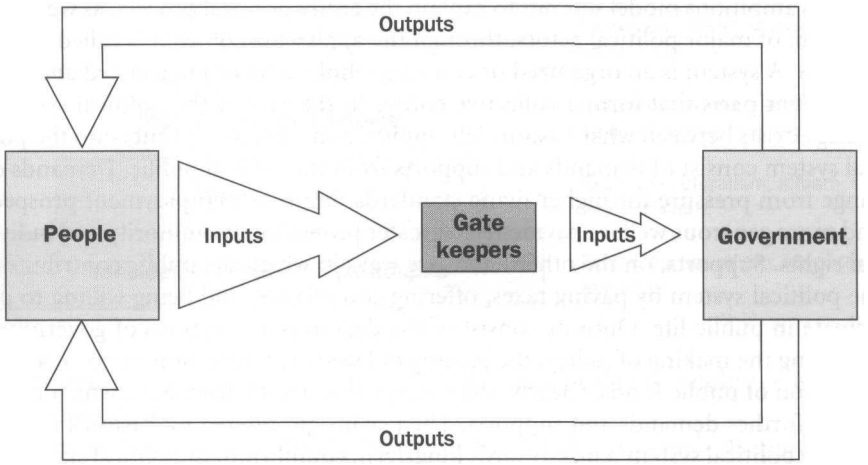


Fig. 1.3 The political system

thereby distort understanding - in this case, for example, about the ideological and social character of revolution. For this reason, it is better to think of concepts or ideal types not as being 'true' or 'false', but merely as more or less 'useful'.

A further problem is that political concepts are often the subject of deep ideological controversy. Politics is, in part, a struggle over the legitimate meaning of terms and concepts. Enemies may argue, fight and even go to war, all claiming to be 'defending freedom', 'upholding democracy' or 'having justice on their side'. The problem is that words such as 'freedom', 'democracy' and 'justice' have different meanings to different people. How can we establish what is 'true' democracy, 'true' freedom or 'true' justice? The simple answer is that we cannot. Just as with the attempt to define 'politics' above, we have to accept that there are competing versions of many political concepts. Such concepts are best regarded as 'essentially contested' concepts (Gallie, 1955/56), in that controversy about them runs so deep that no neutral or settled definition can ever be developed. In effect, a single term can represent a number of rival concepts, none of which can be accepted as its 'true' meaning. For example, it is equally legitimate to define politics as what concerns the state, as the conduct of public life, as debate and conciliation, and as the distribution of power and resources.

Models and theories are broader than concepts; they comprise a range of ideas rather than a single idea. A **model** is usually thought of as a representation of something, usually on a smaller scale, as in the case of a doll's house or a toy aeroplane. In this sense, the purpose of the model is to resemble the original object as faithfully as possible. However, conceptual models need not in any way resemble an object. It would be absurd, for instance, to insist that a computer model of the economy should bear a physical resemblance to the economy itself. Rather, conceptual models are analytical tools; their value is that they are devices through which meaning can be imposed upon what would otherwise be a bewildering and disorganized collection of facts. The simple point is that facts do not speak for themselves: they must be interpreted, and they must be organized. Models assist in the accomplishment of this task because they include a network of relationships that highlight the meaning and significance of relevant empirical data. The best way of understanding this is through an example. One of the most influential models in political analysis is the model of the political system developed by David Easton (1979, 1981). This can be represented diagrammatically (see Figure 1.3).

Model: A theoretical representation of empirical data that aims to advance understanding by highlighting significant relationships and interactions.

Concept

Paradigm

A paradigm is, in a general sense, a pattern or model that highlights relevant features of a particular phenomenon, rather in the manner of an ideal type. As used by Kuhn (1962), however, it refers to an intellectual framework comprising interrelated values, theories and assumptions, within which the search for knowledge is conducted. 'Normal' science is therefore conducted within the established intellectual framework; in 'revolutionary' science, an attempt is made to replace the old paradigm with a new.

This ambitious model sets out to explain the entire political process, as well as the function of major political actors, through the application of what is called systems analysis. A system is an organized or complex whole, a set of interrelated and interdependent parts that form a collective entity. In the case of the political system, a linkage exists between what Easton calls 'inputs' and 'outputs'. Inputs into the political system consist of demands and supports from the general public. Demands can range from pressure for higher living standards, improved employment prospects, and more generous welfare payments to greater protection for minority and individual rights. Supports, on the other hand, are ways in which the public contributes to the political system by paying taxes, offering compliance, and being willing to participate in public life. Outputs consist of the decisions and actions of government, including the making of policy, the passing of laws, the imposition of taxes, and the allocation of public funds. Clearly, these outputs generate 'feedback', which in turn shapes further demands and supports. The key insight offered by Easton's model is that the political system tends towards long-term equilibrium or political stability, as its survival depends on outputs being brought into line with inputs.

However, it is vital to remember that conceptual models are at best simplifications of the reality they seek to explain. They are merely devices for drawing out understanding; they are not reliable knowledge. In the case of Easton's model, for example, political parties and interest groups are portrayed as 'gatekeepers', the central function of which is to regulate the flow of inputs into the political system. Although this may be one of their significant functions, parties and interest groups also manage public perceptions, and thereby help to shape the nature of public demands. In short, these are in reality more interesting and more complex institutions than the systems model suggests. In the same way, Easton's model is more effective in explaining how and why political systems respond to popular pressures than it is in explaining why they employ repression and coercion, as, to some degree, all do.

The terms **theory** and model are often used interchangeably in politics. Theories and models are both conceptual constructs used as tools of political analysis. However, strictly speaking, a theory is a proposition. It offers a systematic explanation of a body of empirical data. In contrast, a model is merely an explanatory device; it is more like a hypothesis that has yet to be tested. In that sense, in politics, while theories can be said to be more or less 'true', models can only be said to be more or less 'useful'. Clearly, however, theories and models are often interlinked: broad political theories may be explained in terms of a series of models. For example, the theory of pluralism (discussed in Chapters 4 and 5) encompasses a model of the state, a model of electoral competition, a model of group politics, and so on.

Theory: A systematic explanation of empirical data, usually (unlike a hypothesis) presented as reliable knowledge.

However, virtually all conceptual devices, theories and models contain hidden values or implicit assumptions. This is why it is difficult to construct theories that are purely empirical; values and normative beliefs invariably intrude. In the case of concepts, this is demonstrated by people's tendency to use terms as either 'hurrah! words' (for example 'democracy', 'freedom' and 'justice') or 'boo! words' (for example 'conflict', 'anarchy', 'ideology', and even 'politics'. Models and theories are also 'loaded' in the sense that they contain a range of biases. It is difficult, for example, to accept the claim that rational-choice theories (examined above) are value-neutral. As they are based on the assumption that human beings are basically egoistical and self-regarding, it is perhaps not surprising that they have often pointed to policy conclusions that are politically conservative. In the same way, class theories of politics, advanced by Marxists, are based on broader theories about

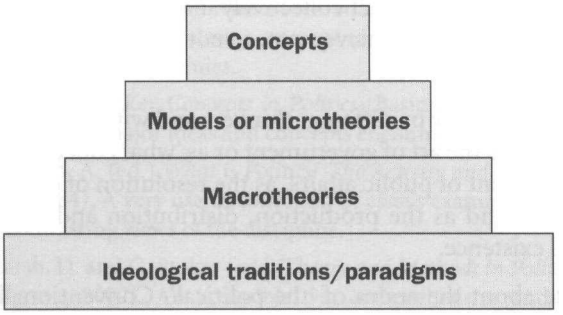


Fig. 1.4 Levels of conceptual analysis

history and society and, indeed, they ultimately rest upon the validity of an entire social philosophy.

There is therefore a sense in which analytical devices, such as models and microtheories, are constructed on the basis of broader macrotheories. These major theoretical tools of political analysis are those that address the issues of power and the role of the state: pluralism (see p. 78), elitism (see p. 80), class analysis, and so on. These theories are examined in Chapters 4 and 5. At a still deeper level, however, many of these macrotheories reflect the assumptions and beliefs of one or other of the major ideological traditions. These traditions operate rather like what Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) called paradigms. A paradigm is a related set of principles, doctrines and theories that help to structure the process of intellectual enquiry. In effect, a paradigm constitutes the framework within which the search for knowledge is conducted. In economics, this can be seen in the replacement of Keynesianism by monetarism (and perhaps the subsequent shift back to neo-Keynesianism); in transport policy it is shown in the rise of Green ideas.

According to Kuhn, the natural sciences are dominated at any time by a single paradigm; science develops through a series of 'revolutions' in which an old paradigm is replaced by a new one. Political and social enquiry is, however, different, in that it is a battleground of contending and competing paradigms. These paradigms take the form of broad social philosophies, usually called political ideologies: liberalism, conservatism, socialism, fascism, feminism and so on. Each presents its own account of social existence; each offers a particular view of the world. To portray these ideologies as theoretical paradigms is not, of course, to say that most, if not all, political analysis is narrowly ideological in the sense that it advances the interests of a particular group or class. Rather, it merely acknowledges that political analysis is usually carried out on the basis of a particular ideological tradition. Much of academic political science, for example, has been constructed according to liberal-rationalist assumptions, and thus bears the imprint of its liberal heritage.

The various levels of conceptual analysis are shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.4.

Summary

• Politics is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. As such, it is an essentially social activity, inextricably linked, on the one hand, to the existence of diversity and conflict, and

on the other to a willingness to cooperate and act collectively. Politics is better seen as a search for conflict resolution than as its achievement, as not all conflicts are, or can be, resolved.

• Politics has been understood differently by different thinkers and within different traditions. Politics has been viewed as the art of government or as 'what concerns the state', as the conduct and management of public affairs, as the resolution of conflict through debate and compromise, and as the production, distribution and use of resources in the course of social existence.

• There is considerable debate about the realm of 'the political'. Conventionally, politics has narrowly been seen as embracing institutions and actors operating in a 'public' sphere concerned with the collective organization of social existence. However, when politics is understood in terms of power-structured relationships, it may be seen to operate in the 'private' sphere as well.

• A variety of approaches have been adopted to the study of politics as an academic discipline. These include political philosophy or the analysis of normative theory, an empirical tradition particularly concerned with the study of institutions and structures, attempts to introduce scientific rigour through behavioural analysis, and a variety of modern approaches including the use of rational-choice theory.

• The study of politics is scientific to the extent that it is possible to gain objective knowledge about the political world by distinguishing between facts and values. This task is nevertheless hampered by the difficulty of gaining access to reliable data, by values that are implicit in political models and theories, and by biases that operate within all students of politics.

• Concepts, models and theories are the tools of political analysis, providing the building blocks of knowledge. However, they are only analytical devices. Although they help to advance understanding, they are more rounded and coherent than the unshapely and complex realities they seek to describe. Ultimately, all political and social enquiry is conducted within a particular intellectual framework or ideological paradigm.

Questions for discussion

- If politics is essentially social, why is not all social activity political?
- Why has politics so often carried negative associations?
- How could you defend politics as a worthwhile and ennobling activity?
- Is politics inevitable? Could politics ever be brought to an end?
- Why has the idea of a science of politics been so attractive?
- Is it possible to study politics objectively and without bias?

Further reading

Ball, A. and B. Guy Peters *Modern Politics and Government* (5th ed.) (Basingstoke: Palgrave and New York: Chatham House Publishers Inc., 2000). A popular short introduction to politics that covers a wide variety of themes and issues.

Crick, B. *In Defence of Politics* (rev. ed.) (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 2000). A thoughtful and stimulating attempt to justify politics (understood in a distinctively liberal sense) against its enemies.

Heywood, A. *Key Concepts in Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000). A clear and accessible guide to the major ideas and concepts encountered in political analysis.

Leftwich, A. (ed.) *What is Politics? The Activity and Its Study* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1984). A very useful collection of essays examining different concepts of politics as well as contrasting views of the discipline.

Marsh, D. and G. Stoker (eds) *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (2nd ed.) (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). An accessible, yet comprehensive and sophisticated, exploration of the nature and scope of the discipline of political science.

Governments, Systems and Regimes

CHAPTER 2

'That government is best which governs not at all.'

HENRY DAVID THOREAU *Civil Disobedience* (1849)

Classifying the various forms of government has been one of the principal concerns of political analysis through the ages. This process can be traced back to the fourth century BCE, when Aristotle made the first recorded attempt to describe the political regimes then in existence, using terms such as 'democracy', 'oligarchy' and 'tyranny' that are still commonly employed today. From the eighteenth century onwards, governments were increasingly classified as monarchies or republics, or as autocratic or constitutional regimes. During the twentieth century, these distinctions were further sharpened. The 'three worlds' classification of political systems, which was particularly fashionable during the Cold War period, created an image of world politics dominated by a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism. However, in the light of modern developments, such as the collapse of communism, the rise of East Asia, and the emergence of political Islam, all such classifications appear outdated. Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear what these shifts mean. Some interpret them as indications of the triumph of western liberal democracy; others see evidence of the modern world becoming politically more diffuse and fragmented.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- What is the difference between governments, political systems and regimes?
- What is the purpose of classifying systems of government?
- On what basis have, and should, regimes be classified?
- What are the major regimes of the modern world?
- Has western liberal democracy triumphed worldwide?

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Concept

Government

In its broadest sense, to govern means to rule or control others. Government can therefore be taken to include any mechanism through which ordered rule is maintained, its central features being the ability to make collective decisions and the capacity to enforce them. A form of government can thus be identified in almost all social institutions: families, schools, businesses, trade unions and so on. However, 'government', as opposed to 'governance' (see p. 6), is more commonly understood to refer to the formal and institutional processes that operate at the national level to maintain public order and facilitate collective action. The core functions of government are thus to make law (legislation), implement law (execution) and interpret law (adjudication). In some cases, the political executive (see p. 316) alone is referred to as 'the Government', making it equivalent to 'the Administration' in presidential systems.

Traditional systems of classification

Before we examine how different systems of rule have been classified, it is necessary for us to reflect on both *what* is being classified, and *why* such classifications have been undertaken. First, what is 'government', and how do governments differ from 'political systems' or 'regimes'? 'Government' refers to the institutional processes through which collective and usually binding decisions are made; its various institutions constitute the subject matter of Part 4 of this book. A **political system** or regime, on the other hand, is a broader term that encompasses not only the mechanisms of government and the institutions of the state, but also the structures and processes through which these interact with the larger society.

A political system is, in effect, a subsystem of the larger social system. It is a 'system' in that there are interrelationships within a complex whole, and 'political' in that these interrelationships relate to the distribution of power, wealth and resources in society. Political regimes can thus be characterized as effectively by the organization of economic life as they are by the governmental processes through which they operate. A regime is therefore a 'system of rule' that endures despite the fact that governments come and go. Whereas governments can be changed by elections, through dynastic succession, as a result of *coups d'etat* (see p. 387), and so on, regimes can be changed only by military intervention from without or by some kind of revolutionary upheaval from within.

Why classify political systems?

The interest in classifying political systems stems from two sources. First, classification is an essential aid to the *understanding* of politics and government. As in most social sciences, understanding in politics is acquired largely through a process of comparison, particularly as experimental methods are generally inapplicable. It is not possible, for instance, to devise experiments to test whether, say, US government would be less susceptible to institutional **government gridlock** if it abandoned the separation of powers (see p. 315), or whether communism could have survived in the USSR had reforms been instigated a generation earlier. In consequence, we look to comparison to throw into relief what we are studying. Through the highlighting of similarities and differences between what might otherwise be bewildering collections of facts, comparison helps us to distinguish between what is significant and meaningful, and what is not. In this process, we are able both to develop theories, hypotheses and concepts, and, to some extent, to test them. As Alexis de Tocqueville (see p. 218) put it, 'without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed'. The attempt to classify systems of rule is therefore merely a device for making the process of comparison more methodical and systematic.

The second purpose of classification is to facilitate *evaluation* rather than analysis. Since Aristotle (see p. 7), those who have sought to understand political regimes have often been as keen to 'improve' government as to understand it. In other words, descriptive understanding is closely tied up with normative judgements: questions about what *is* are linked to questions about what *should* be. In its extreme form, this process may involve a search for an 'ideal' system of rule, or even a Utopia, and this can be seen in works such as Plato's (see p. 13) *Republic*, Thomas More's *Utopia* ([1516] 1965), and Peter Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1912). In a more

Political system: A network of relationships through which government generates 'outputs' (policies) in response to 'inputs' (demands or support) from the general public.

Government gridlock: Paralysis resulting from institutional rivalry within government or the attempt to respond to conflicting public demands.

modest form, this type of classification allows for qualitative judgements to be made in relation to political structures and governmental forms. Only a comparative approach, for instance, enables us to consider questions such as 'should the transition to liberal democracy in Russia and other former communist states be welcomed and encouraged?', 'should India abandon federalism in favour of either a unitary system or regional independence?', and 'should the UK adopt a "written" constitution?'

All systems of classification have their drawbacks, however. In the first place, as with all analytical devices, there is a danger of simplification. The classification of regimes under the same heading draws attention to the similarities that they share, but there is a risk that the differences that divide them will be ignored or disguised. A related problem is a possible failure to see that a phenomenon may have different meanings in different contexts. For instance, in Japan and throughout East Asia, 'the state' may be different in kind and significance from 'the state' as generally understood in the context of the West. Comparative analysis is therefore hampered by the constant danger of **ethnocentrism.** Second, value biases tend to intrude into the classification process. This can be seen in the tendency to classify communist and fascist regimes as 'totalitarian', implying that western liberal democracies were fighting the *same* enemy in the Cold War as they had done in the Second World War. Finally, all systems of classification have the drawback that they are necessarily state-bound: they treat individual countries as coherent or independent entities in their own right. Although this approach is by no means invalid, it is now widely viewed as incomplete in the light of the phenomenon of globalization (see p. 138).

Concept

Utopia, utopianism

A utopia (from the Greek *outopia*, meaning 'nowhere', or the Greek *eutopia*, meaning 'good place') is literally an ideal or perfect society. Although utopias of various kinds can be envisaged, most are characterized by the abolition of want, the absence of conflict, and the avoidance of violence and oppression. Utopianism is a style of political theorizing that develops a critique of the existing order by constructing a model of an ideal or perfect alternative. Good examples are anarchism and Marxism. Utopian theories are usually based on assumptions about the unlimited possibilities of human self-development. Utopianism is often used as a pejorative term to imply deluded or fanciful thinking, and a belief in an unrealistic and unachievable goal.

Classical typologies

Without doubt, the most influential system of classification was that devised by Aristotle in the fourth century BCE, which was based on his analysis of the 158 Greek city-states then in existence. This system dominated thinking on the subject for roughly the next 2500 years. Aristotle held that governments could be categorized on the basis of two questions: 'who rules?', and 'who benefits from rule?'. Government, he believed, could be placed in the hands of a single individual, a small group, or the many. In each case, however, government could be conducted either in the selfish interests of the rulers or for the benefit of the entire community. He thus identified the six forms of government shown in Figure 2.1.

Aristotle's purpose was to evaluate forms of government on normative grounds in the hope of identifying the 'ideal' constitution. In his view, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy were all debased or perverted forms of rule in which a single person, a small group and the masses, respectively, governed in their own interests and there-

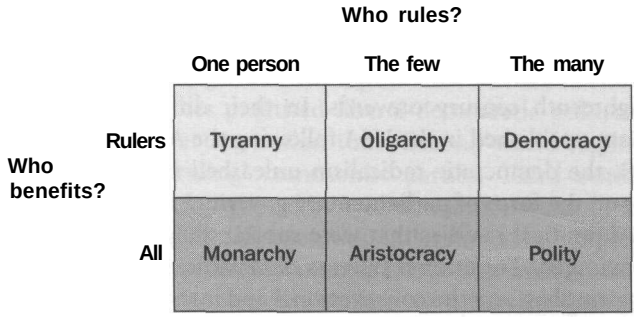

Fig. 2.1 Aristotle's six forms of government

Ethnocentrism: The application of values and theories drawn from one's own culture to other groups and peoples; ethnocentrism implies bias or distortion (see p. 403).

Concept

Absolutism

Absolutism is the theory or practice of absolute government, most commonly associated with an absolute monarchy (see p. 342). Government is 'absolute' in the sense that it possesses unfettered power: government cannot be constrained by a body external to itself. The absolutist principle nevertheless resides in the *claim* to an unlimited right to rule (as in Divine Right), rather than in the *exercise* of unchallengeable power. Rationalist theories of absolute power generally advance the belief that only absolute government can guarantee order and social stability. Absolutism should, however, be distinguished from autocracy and dictatorship (see p. 381). As it is based on a principled claim, whether religious or rational, it does not invest government with arbitrary and unlimited power.

fore at the expense of others. In contrast, monarchy, aristocracy and polity were to be preferred, because in these forms of government the individual, small group and the masses, respectively, governed in the interests of all. Aristotle declared tyranny to be the worst of all possible constitutions, as it reduced citizens to the status of slaves. Monarchy and aristocracy were, on the other hand, impractical, because they were based on a God-like willingness to place the good of the community before the rulers' own interests. Polity (rule by the many in the interests of all) was accepted as the most practicable of constitutions. Nevertheless, in a tradition that endured through to the twentieth century, Aristotle criticized popular rule on the grounds that the masses would resent the wealth of the few, and too easily fall under the sway of a **demagogue.** He therefore advocated a 'mixed' constitution that combined elements of both democracy and aristocracy, and left the government in the hands of the 'middle classes', those who were neither rich nor poor.

The Aristotelian system was later developed by thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes (see p. 303) and Jean Bodin (1530-96). Their particular concern was with the principle of sovereignty (see p. 129), viewed as the basis for all stable political regimes. Sovereignty was taken to mean the 'most high and perpetual' power, a power that alone could guarantee orderly rule. Bodin's *The Six Books of the Commonweal* ([1576] 1962) offered a wider-ranging account of the locus of sovereignty in political regimes, both contemporary and classical. He concluded that absolutism was the most defensible of regimes, as it established a sovereign who makes law but is not bound by those laws. The overriding merit of vesting sovereignty in a single individual was that it would then be indivisible: sovereignty would be expressed in a single voice that could claim final authority. Bodin nevertheless argued that absolute monarchs were constrained by the existence of higher law in the form of the will of God or natural law. On the other hand, in *Leviathan* ([1651] 1968), Hobbes portrayed sovereignty as a monopoly of coercive power, implying that the sovereign was entirely unconstrained.

These ideas were later revised by early liberals such as John Locke (see p. 45) and Montesquieu (see p. 312), who championed the cause of constitutional government. Locke, in *Two Treatises of Government* ([1690] 1965), argued that sovereignty resided with the people, not the monarch, and he advocated a system of limited government to provide protection for natural rights, notably the rights to life, liberty and property. In his epic *The Spirit of the Laws* ([1734] 1949), Montesquieu attempted to develop a 'scientific' study of human society, designed to uncover the constitutional circumstances that would best protect individual liberty. A severe critic of absolutism and an admirer of the English parliamentary tradition, he proposed a system of checks and balances in the form of a 'separation of powers' between the executive, legislative and judicial institutions. This principle was incorporated into the US constitution (1787), and it later came to be seen as one of the defining features of liberal democratic government.

The 'classical' classification of regimes, stemming from the writings of Aristotle, was rendered increasingly redundant by the development of modern constitutional systems from the late eighteenth century onwards. In their different ways, the constitutional **republicanism** established in the USA following the American War of Independence of 1775-83, the democratic radicalism unleashed in France by the 1789 French Revolution, and the form of parliamentary government that gradually emerged in the UK created political realities that were substantially more complex than early thinkers had envisaged. Traditional systems of classification were therefore displaced by a growing emphasis on the constitutional and institutional features

Demagogue: A political leader whose control over the masses is based on the ability to whip up hysterical enthusiasm.

Republicanism: The principle that political authority stems ultimately from the consent of the people; the rejection of monarchical and dynastic principles.

of political rule. In many ways, this built on Montesquieu's work in that particular attention was paid to the relationships between the various branches of government. Thus monarchies were distinguished from republics, parliamentary systems (see p. 313) were distinguished from presidential ones (see p. 338), and unitary systems were distinguished from federal ones (see p. 161).

The 'three worlds' typology

During the twentieth century, historical developments once again altered the basis of political classification. The appearance in the interwar period of new forms of authoritarianism (see p. 38), particularly in Stalinist Russia, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, encouraged the view that the world was divided into two kinds of regime: democratic states and totalitarian states. The stark contrast between democracy and totalitarianism dominated attempts at regime classification through much of the 1950s and 1960s, despite the fact that the fascist and Nazi regimes had collapsed at the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, there was a growing awareness that this approach was shaped by the antagonisms of the Cold War, and that it could perhaps be seen as a species of Cold War ideology, and this stimulated the search for a more value-neutral and ideologically impartial system of classification. This led to the growing popularity of the so-called 'three worlds' approach - the belief that the political world could be divided into three distinct blocs:

- a capitalist 'first world'
- a communist 'second world'
- a developing 'third world'.

The three-worlds classification had economic, ideological, political and strategic dimensions. Industrialized western regimes were 'first' in economic terms, in that their populations enjoyed the highest levels of mass affluence. In 1983, these countries generated 63 per cent of the world's **gross domestic product** (GDP) while having only 15 per cent of the world's population (World Bank, 1985). Communist regimes were 'second', insofar as they were largely industrialized and capable of satisfying the population's basic material needs. These countries produced 19 per cent of the world's GDP with 33 per cent of the world's population. The less developed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America were 'third' in the sense that they were economically dependent and often suffered from widespread poverty. They produced 18 per cent of the world's GDP with 52 per cent of the world's population.

The first and second worlds were further divided by fierce ideological rivalry. The first world was wedded to 'capitalist' principles, such as the desirability of private enterprise, material incentives, and the free market; the second world was committed to 'communist' values such as social equality, collective endeavour, and the need for centralized planning. Such ideological differences had clear political manifestations. First-world regimes practised liberal-democratic politics based on a competitive struggle for power at election time. Second-world regimes were one-party states, dominated by 'ruling' communist parties. Third-world regimes were typically authoritarian, and governed by traditional monarchs, dictators or simply the army. The three-worlds classification was underpinned by a bipolar world order, in which a USA-dominated West confronted a USSR-dominated East. This order was sustained by the emergence of two rival military camps in the form of NATO and the Warsaw

Concept

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is an all-encompassing system of political rule that is typically established by pervasive ideological manipulation and open terror and brutality. Totalitarianism differs from both autocracy and authoritarianism in that it seeks 'total power' through the politicization of every aspect of social and personal existence. Autocratic and authoritarian regimes have the more modest goal of a monopoly of political power, usually achieved by excluding the masses from politics. Totalitarianism thus implies the outright abolition of **civil society**: the abolition of 'the private'. Totalitarian regimes are sometimes identified through a 'six-point syndrome' (Friedrich and Brzezinski, 1963):

- an official ideology
- a one-party state, usually led by an all-powerful leader
- a system of terroristic policing
- a monopoly of the means of mass communication
- a monopoly of the means of armed combat
- state control of all aspects of economic life.

Civil society: The realm of autonomous groups and associations; a private sphere independent from public authority (see p. 8).

Gross domestic product: The total financial value of final goods and services produced in an economy over one year.

Concept

Liberal democracy

Liberal democracy is a form of democratic rule that balances the principle of limited government against the ideal of popular consent. Its 'liberal' features are reflected in a network of internal and external checks on government that are designed to guarantee liberty and afford citizens protection against the state. Its 'democratic' character is based on a system of regular and competitive elections, conducted on the basis of universal suffrage and political equality (see p. 69). Although it may be used to describe a political principle, the term 'liberal democracy' is more commonly used to describe a particular type of regime. The defining features of this type of regime are as follows:

- constitutional government based on formal, usually legal, rules
- guarantees of civil liberties and individual rights
- institutionalized fragmentation and a system of checks and balances
- regular elections that respect the principle of 'one person, one vote; one vote, one value'
- party competition and political pluralism
- the independence of organized groups and interests from government
- a private-enterprise economy organized along market lines.

Pact. Not infrequently, the 'nonaligned' third world was the battleground upon which this geopolitical struggle was conducted, a fact that did much to ensure its continued political and economic subordination.

Since the 1970s, however, this system of classification has been increasingly difficult to sustain. New patterns of economic development have brought material affluence to parts of the third world, notably the oil-rich states of the Middle East and the newly industrialized states of East Asia, South East Asia, and, to some extent, Latin America. In contrast, poverty has, if anything, become more deeply entrenched in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, which now constitutes a kind of 'fourth world'. Moreover, the advance of democratization (see p. 81) in Asia, Latin America and Africa, especially during the 1980s and 1990s, has meant that third-world regimes are no longer uniformly authoritarian. Indeed, the phrase 'third world' is widely resented as being demeaning, because it implies entrenched disadvantage. The term 'developing world' is usually seen as preferable.

Without doubt, however, the most catastrophic single blow to the three-worlds model resulted from the eastern European revolutions of 1989-91. These led to the collapse of orthodox communist regimes in the USSR and elsewhere, and unleashed a process of political liberalization and market reform. Indeed, Francis Fukuyama went as far as to proclaim that this development amounted to the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1989). He meant by this that ideological debate had effectively ended with the worldwide triumph of western liberal democracy. Quite simply, second-world and third-world regimes were collapsing as a result of the recognition that only the capitalist first world offered the prospect of economic prosperity and political stability.

Regimes of the modern world

Since the late 1980s, the regime-classification industry has been in a limbo. Older categories, particularly the 'three worlds' division, were certainly redundant, but the political contours of the new world were far from clear. Moreover, the 'end of history' scenario was only fleetingly attractive, having been sustained by the wave of

democratization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and drawing impetus in particular from the collapse of communism. In some senses, this liberal-democratic triumphalism reflected the persistence of a western-centric viewpoint, and it may, anyway, have been a hangover from the days of the Cold War. The image of a 'world of liberal democracies' suggested the superiority of a specifically western model of development, based perhaps especially on the USA, and it implied that values such as individualism, rights and choice are universally applicable. One result of this was a failure to recognize the significance, for instance, of Islamic and Confucian political forms, which tended to be dismissed as mere aberrations, or simply as evidence of resistance to the otherwise unchallenged advance of liberal democracy.

However, one of the difficulties of establishing a new system of classification is that there is no consensus about the criteria upon which such a system should be based. No system of classification relies on a single all-important factor. Nevertheless, particular systems have tended to prioritize different sets of criteria. Among the parameters most commonly used are the following:

- Who rules? Is political participation confined to an elite body or privileged group, or does it encompass the entire population?
- How is compliance achieved? Is government obeyed as a result of the exercise or threat of force, or through bargaining and compromise?
- Is government power centralized or fragmented? What kinds of check and balance operate in the political system?
- How is government power acquired and transferred? Is a regime open and competitive, or is it monolithic?
- What is the balance between the state and the individual? What is the distribution of rights and responsibilities between government and citizens?
- What is the level of material development? How materially affluent is the society, and how equally is wealth distributed?
- How is economic life organized? Is the economy geared to the market or to planning, and what economic role does government play?
- How stable is a regime? Has the regime survived over time, and does it have the capacity to respond to new demands and challenges?

A *constitutional-institutional* approach to classification that was influenced by 'classical' typologies was adopted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

between 1828 and 1926 and involved countries such as the USA, France and the UK; the second occurred between 1943 and 1962 and involved ones such as West Germany, Italy, Japan and India. Although polyarchies have in large part evolved through moves towards democratization and **liberalization,** the term 'polyarchy' is preferable to 'liberal democracy' for two reasons. First, liberal democracy is sometimes treated as a political ideal, and is thus invested with broader normative implications. Second, the use of 'polyarchy' acknowledges that these regimes fall short, in important ways, of the goal of democracy.

The term 'polyarchy' was first used to describe a system of rule by Dahl (p. 274) and Lindblom in *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (1953), and it was later elaborated in Dahl's *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1971). In the view of these authors, polyarchical regimes are distinguished by the combination of two general features. In the first place, there is a relatively high tolerance of opposition that is sufficient at least to check the arbitrary inclinations of government. This is guaranteed in practice by a competitive party system, by institutionally guaranteed and protected civil liberties, and by a vigorous and healthy civil society. The second feature of polyarchy is that the opportunities for participating in politics should be sufficiently widespread to guarantee a reliable level of popular responsiveness. The crucial factor here is the existence of regular and competitive elections operating as a device through which the people can control and, if necessary, displace their rulers. In this sense, there is a close resemblance between polyarchy and the form of democratic elitism described by Joseph Schumpeter (see p. 229) in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942). Both Lindblom (1977) and Dahl (1985) have nevertheless acknowledged the impact on polyarchies of the disproportional power of major corporations. For this reason, they have sometimes preferred the notion of 'deformed polyarchy'.

Thus defined, the term 'polyarchy' may be used to describe a large and growing number of regimes throughout the world. All states that hold multiparty elections have polyarchical features. Nevertheless, western polyarchies have a more distinctive and particular character. They are marked not only by representative democracy and a capitalist economic organization, but also by a cultural and ideological orientation that is largely derived from western liberalism. The most crucial aspect of this inheritance is the widespread acceptance of liberal individualism. Individualism (see p. 190), often seen as the most distinctive of western values, stresses the uniqueness of each human individual, and suggests that society should be organized so as to best meet the needs and interests of the individuals who compose it. The political culture of western polyarchies is influenced by liberal individualism in a variety of ways. It generates, for example, a heightened sensitivity to individual rights (perhaps placed above duties), the general perception that choice and competition (in both political and economic life) are healthy, and a tendency to fear government and regard the state as at least a potential threat to liberty.

Western polyarchies are not all alike, however. Some of them are biased in favour of centralization and majority rule, and others tend towards fragmentation and pluralism. Lijphart (1990, 1999) highlighted this fact in distinguishing between 'majority' democracies and 'consensus' democracies. Majority democracies are organized along parliamentary lines according to the so-called **Westminster model.** The clearest example of this is the UK system, but the model has also, in certain respects, been adopted by New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Israel and India. Majoritarian tendencies are associated with any, or all, of the following features:

Concept

Polyarchy

Polyarchy (literally 'rule by many') refers generally to the institutions and political processes of modern representative democracy. As a regime type, a polyarchy can be distinguished from all

Liberalization: The introduction of internal and external checks on government power and/or shifts towards private enterprise and the market.

Westminster model: A system of government in which the executive is drawn from, and (in theory) accountable to, the assembly or parliament.

- single-party government
- a lack of separation of powers between the executive and the assembly
- an assembly that is either unicameral or weakly bicameral
- a two-party system
- a single-member plurality or first-past-the-post electoral system (see p. 233)
- unitary and centralized government
- an uncodified constitution and a sovereign assembly.

In contrast, other western polyarchies are characterized by a diffusion of power throughout the governmental and party systems. The US model of pluralist democracy is based very largely on institutional fragmentation enshrined in the provisions of the constitution itself. Elsewhere, particularly in continental Europe, consensus is underpinned by the party system and a tendency towards bargaining and power sharing. In states such as Belgium, Austria and Switzerland, a system of **consociational democracy** has developed that is particularly appropriate to societies that are divided by deep religious, ideological, regional, cultural or other differences. Consensual or pluralistic tendencies are often associated with the following features:

- coalition government (see p. 264)
- a separation of powers between the executive and the assembly
- an effective bicameral system
- a multiparty system
- proportional representation (see p. 232)
- federalism or devolution
- a codified constitution and a bill of rights.

On another level, of course, each polyarchical regime, and, indeed, every regime, is unique, and therefore exceptional. US **exceptionalism,** for instance, is often linked to the absence of a feudal past and the experience of settlement and frontier expansion. This may explain the USA's deeply individualist political culture, which, uniquely amongst western polyarchies, does not accommodate a socialist party or movement of any note. The USA is also the most overtly religious of western regimes, and it is the only one, for instance, in which Christian fundamentalism has developed into a major political force.

India is a still more difficult case. It is certainly not part of the West in cultural, philosophical or religious terms. In contrast to the 'developed' polyarchies of Europe and North America, it also has a largely rural population and a literacy rate of barely 50 per cent. Nevertheless, India has functioned as an effective polyarchy since it became independent in 1947, even surviving Indira Gandhi's 'state of emergency' in the late 1970s. Political stability in India was undoubtedly promoted by the crosscaste appeal of the Congress Party and the mystique of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. However, the decline of the former and the end of the latter has perhaps transformed the India of the 1990s into something approaching a consociational democracy.

Consociational democracy: A form of democracy that operates through power-sharing and a close association amongst a number of parties or political formations.

Exceptionalism: The features of a political system that are unique or particular to it, and thus restrict the application of broader categories.

New democracies

A third wave of democratization began, according to Huntington (1991), in 1974. It witnessed the overthrow of right-wing dictatorships in Greece, Portugal and Spain,

Concept

Communism

the retreat of the generals in Latin America, and, most significantly, the collapse of communism. The collapse of communism in the eastern European revolutions of 1989-91 unleashed a process of democratization that drew heavily on the western liberal model. The central features of this process were the adoption of multiparty elections and the introduction of market-based economic reforms. In that sense, it can be argued that most (some would say all) former communist regimes are undergoing a transition that will eventually make them indistinguishable from western polyarchies. Nevertheless, for the time being at least, there are reasons for treating these systems as distinct. In the first place, the heritage of their communist past cannot be discarded overnight, especially when, as in Russia, the communist system had endured for over 70 years. Second, the process of transition itself has unleashed forces and generated problems quite different from those that confront western polyarchies. For these reasons they are perhaps better classified as **new democracies** or **semi-democracies.**

One feature of postcommunist regimes is the need to deal with the politico-cultural consequences of communist rule, especially the ramifications of Stalinist totalitarianism. The ruthless censorship and suppression of opposition that underpinned the communist parties' monopoly of power guaranteed that a civic culture emphasizing participation, bargaining and consensus failed to develop. In Russia this has produced a weak and fragmented party system that is apparently incapable of articulating or aggregating the major interests of Russian society. As a result, communist parties or former communist parties have often continued to provide a point of stability. In Romania and Bulgaria, for example, the institutions of the communist past have survived into the postcommunist era, while in states such as Hungary, Poland and Russia communist parties, now embracing, if with differing degrees of conviction, the principles of social democracy, have made an electoral comeback.

A second set of problems stem from the process of economic transition. The 'shock therapy' transition from central planning to *laissez-faire* capitalism, advocated by the International Monetary Fund, unleashed deep insecurity because of the growth of unemployment and inflation, and it significantly increased social inequality. Since

New democracies: Regimes in which the process of democratic consolidation is incomplete; democracy is not yet the 'only game in town' (Przeworski, 1991).

Semi-democracy: A regime in which democratic and authoritarian features operate alongside one another in a stable combination.

Concept

Confucianism

Confucianism is a system of ethics formulated by Confucius (551–479 BCE) and his disciples that was primarily outlined in *The Analects*. Confucian thought has concerned itself with the twin themes of human relations and the cultivation of the self. The emphasis on *ren* (humanity or love) has usually been interpreted as implying support for traditional ideas and values, notably filial piety, respect, loyalty and benevolence. The stress on *junzi* (the virtuous person) suggests a capacity for human development and potential for perfection realized in particular through education. Confucianism has been seen, with Taoism and Buddhism, as one of the three major Chinese systems of thought, although many take Confucian ideas to be coextensive with Chinese civilization itself.

the heady days of the early 1990s, the pace of economic liberalization has sometimes been greatly reduced as a consequence of a backlash against market reforms, often expressed in growing support for communist or nationalist parties. A final set of problems result from the weakness of state power, particularly when the state is confronted by centrifugal forces effectively suppressed during the communist era. This has been most clearly demonstrated by the reemergence of ethnic and nationalist tensions. The collapse of communism in the USSR was accompanied by the breakup of the old Soviet empire and the construction of 15 new independent states, several of which (including Russia) continue to be afflicted by ethnic conflict. Czechoslovakia ceased to exist in 1992 with the creation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Ethnic conflict has been most dramatic in Yugoslavia, where it precipitated full-scale war between Serbia and Croatia in 1991, and led to civil war in Bosnia in 1992-96.

Important differences between postcommunist states can also be identified. The most crucial of these is that between the more industrially advanced and westernized countries of 'central' Europe, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, and the more backward, 'eastern' states such as Romania, Bulgaria and, in certain respects, Russia. In the former group, market reform has proceeded swiftly and relatively smoothly; in the latter, it has either been grudging and incomplete or it has given rise to deep political tensions. The former group of states is also eager to join the European Union at the earliest opportunity, providing further evidence of democratic consolidation. Another distinction is between the states upon which communism was 'imposed' by the Soviet Red Army at the end of the Second World War and those that were once part of the USSR. With the exception of the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), the former Soviet republics are marked both by their longer history of communist rule and by the fact that they were part of the Russian empire in Tsarist times as well as the Soviet period. There is, of course, a strong argument as well for Russian exceptionalism. This may be based on Russia's imperial past and the tendency for Russian nationalism to have an authoritarian and expansionist character, or on the fact that, since the time of Peter the Great, Russia has been divided by competing western and Slavic identities, and so is unclear about both its cultural inheritance and its political destiny.

East Asian regimes

The rise of East Asia in the late twentieth century may ultimately prove to be a more important world-historical event than the collapse of communism. Certainly, the balance of the world's economy shifted markedly from the West to the East in this period. In the final two decades of the twentieth century, economic growth rates on the western rim of the Pacific Basin were between two and four times higher than those in the 'developed' economies of Europe and North America. However, the notion that there is a distinctively East Asian political form is a less familiar one. The widespread assumption has been that modernization means westernization. Translated into political terms, this means that industrial capitalism is always accompanied by liberal democracy. Those who advance this position cite, for example, the success of Japan's 1946 constitution, bequeathed by the departing USA, and the introduction of multiparty elections in countries such as Thailand, South Korea and Taiwan in the 1980s and 1990s. However, this interpretation fails to take account of the degree to which polyarchical institutions operate differently in an Asian context from the way they do in a western one. Most importantly, it ignores the difference between cultures

influenced by Confucian ideas and values and ones shaped by liberal individualism. This has led to the idea that there are a specific set of **Asian values** that are distinct from western ones.

East Asian regimes tend to have similar characteristics. First, they are orientated more around economic goals than around political ones. Their overriding priority is to boost growth and deliver prosperity, rather than to enlarge individual freedom in the western sense of civil liberty. This essentially practical concern is evident in the 'tiger' economies of East and South East Asia (those of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia), but it has also been demonstrated in the construction of a thriving market economy in China since the late 1970s, despite the survival there of monopolistic communist rule. Second, there is broad support for 'strong' government. Powerful 'ruling' parties tend to be tolerated, and there is general respect for the state. Although, with low taxes and relatively low public spending (usually below 30 per cent of GDP), there is little room for the western model of the welfare state, there is nevertheless general acceptance that the state as a 'father figure' should guide the decisions of private as well as public bodies, and draw up strategies for national development. This characteristic is accompanied, third, by a general disposition to respect leaders because of the Confucian stress on loyalty, discipline and duty. From a western viewpoint, this invests East Asian regimes with an implicit, and sometimes explicit, authoritarianism. Finally, great emphasis is placed on community and social cohesion, embodied in the central role accorded to the family. The resulting emphasis on what the Japanese call 'group think' tends to restrict the scope for the assimilation of ideas such as individualism and human rights, at least as these are understood in the West.

There is also differentiation between East Asian regimes. In part, this stems from cultural differences between overwhelmingly Chinese states such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, and Japan and ethnically mixed states such as Singapore and Malaysia. For example, plans to introduce Confucian principles in Singapore schools were dropped for fear of offending the Malay and Indian populations. Similarly, Malaysian development has been based on a deliberate attempt to reduce Chinese influence and emphasize the distinctively Islamic character of Malay culture. An additional factor is that, although China's acceptance of capitalism has blurred the distinction between it and other East Asian regimes, this has certainly not eradicated the differentiation altogether. This is demonstrated, for instance, by the stark contrast between the 'market Stalinism' that prevails in China and the entrenched and successful electoral democracy of Japan. Moreover, whereas other East Asian regimes are now industrialized and increasingly urbanized, China is still predominantly agricultural. To some extent, this also explains different modes of economic development. In Japan and 'tiger' economies such as Taiwan and Singapore, growth is now based largely on technological innovation and an emphasis on education and training, whereas China continues, in certain respects, to rely on her massive rural population to provide cheap and plentiful labour.

Islamic regimes

The rise of Islam as a political force has had a profound effect on politics in North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia. In some cases, militant Islamic groups have challenged existing regimes, often articulating the interests of an urban poor since the 1970s disillusionment with Marxism-Leninism. In other cases, however,

Concept

Theocracy

Theocracy (literally 'rule by God') is the principle that religious authority should prevail over political authority. A theocracy is therefore a regime in which government posts are filled on the basis of the person's position in the religious hierarchy. This contrasts with a secular state, in which political au

Asian values: Values that supposedly reflect the history, culture and religious backgrounds of Asian societies; examples include social harmony, respect for authority and a belief in the family.

Concept

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is a belief in, or practice of, government 'from above', in which authority is exercised regardless of popular consent. Authoritarianism thus differs from authority. The latter rests on legitimacy (see p. 210), and in that sense it arises 'from below'. Authoritarian regimes therefore emphasize the claims of authority over those of individual liberty. However, authoritarianism is usually distinguished from totalitarianism. The practice of government 'from above' associated with monarchical absolutism, traditional dictatorships, and most forms of military rule is concerned with the repression of opposition and political liberty, rather than with the more radical goal of obliterating the distinction between the state and civil society. Authoritarian regimes may thus tolerate a significant range of economic, religious and other freedoms.

regimes have been constructed or reconstructed on Islamic lines. Since its inception in 1932, Saudi Arabia has been an Islamic state. The Iranian revolution of 1979 led to the establishment of an Islamic republic under Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-89), an example later followed in the Sudan and Pakistan. In countries such as Gaddafi's Libya, more idiosyncratic and disputed interpretations of Islam have been translated into political practice.

Islam is not, however, and never has been, simply a religion. Rather, it is a complete way of life, defining correct moral, political and economic behaviour for individuals and nations alike. The 'way of Islam' is based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (570-632) as revealed in the Koran, regarded by all Moslems as the revealed word of God, and the Sunna, or 'beaten path', the traditional customs observed by a devout Moslem that are said to be based on the Prophet's own life. Political Islam thus aims at the construction of a theocracy in which political and other affairs are structured according to 'higher' religious principles. Nevertheless, political Islam has assumed clearly contrasting forms, ranging from fundamentalist to pluralist extremes.

The fundamentalist version of Islam is most commonly associated with Iran. Until his death in 1989, Khomeini presided over a system of institutionalized clerical rule, operating through the Islamic Revolutionary Council, a body of 15 senior clerics. Although a popularly elected parliament has been established in the form of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, all legislation is ratified by the Council for the Protection of the Constitution, which ensures conformity to Islamic principles. Although a more pragmatic and less ideological approach was adopted in the 1990s under Hashemi Rafsanjani, ***Shari'a*** law continues to be strictly enforced throughout Iran as both a legal and a moral code. The forces of revolutionary fundamentalism nevertheless reasserted themselves through the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, 1997-2001, which was characterized by the imposition of strict theocratic rule and the exclusion of women from education, the economy and public life in general. Fundamentalism (see p. 63) is no less significant in Saudi Arabia, where it has similarly absolutist implications, although the temper of the essentially conservative Sunni regime in Saudi Arabia differs markedly from the revolutionary populism (see p. 354) of Shi'ite Iran.

Moslems themselves, however, have often objected to the classification of any Islamic regime as 'fundamentalist', on the grounds that this perpetuates long-established western prejudices against an 'exotic' or 'repressive' East. Evidence that Islam is compatible with a form of political pluralism can be found in Malaysia. Although Islam is the official state religion of Malaysia, with the Paramount Ruler serving as both religious leader and head of state, a form of 'guided' democracy operates through the dominance of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), headed by Prime Minister Dr Mahathir, within a multiparty framework. Mahathir's government has, since 1981, pursued a narrowly Islamic and pro-Malay strategy fused with an explicitly Japanese model of economic development. Authoritarian tendencies have nevertheless reemerged since 1988, when the independence of the judiciary effectively collapsed following a wave of political arrests and the imposition of press censorship.

Shari'a: Islamic law, believed to be based on divine revelation, and derived from the Koran, the Hadith (the teachings of Muhammad), and other sources.

Military regimes

Whereas most regimes are shaped by a combination of political, economic, cultural and ideological factors, some survive through the exercise, above all, of military

power and systematic repression. In this sense, military regimes belong to a broader category of authoritarianism. Military authoritarianism has been most common in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and South East Asia, but it also emerged in the post-1945 period in Spain, Portugal and Greece. The key feature of a military regime is that the leading posts in the government are filled on the basis of the person's position within the military chain of command. Normal political and constitutional arrangements are usually suspended, and institutions through which opposition can be expressed, such as elected assemblies and a free press, are either weakened or abolished.

Although all forms of military rule are deeply repressive, this classification encompasses a number of regime types. In some military regimes, the armed forces assume direct control of government. The classical form of this is the military **junta,** most commonly found in Latin America. This operates as a form of collective military government centred on a command council of officers who usually represent the three armed services: the army, navy and air force. Junta regimes are often characterized by rivalry between the services and between leading figures, the consequence being that formal positions of power tend to change hands relatively frequently.

The second form of military regime is a military-backed personalized dictatorship (see p. 381). In these cases, a single individual gains preeminence within the junta or regime, often being bolstered by a cult of personality (see p. 351) designed to manufacture charismatic authority. Examples are Colonel Papadopoulos in Greece in 1974-80, General Pinochet in Chile after the 1973 military coup, and General Abacha in Nigeria, 1993-98. In the final form of military regime, the loyalty of the armed forces is the decisive factor that upholds the regime, but the military leaders content themselves with 'pulling the strings' behind the scenes. This, for example, occurred in post-1945 Brazil, as the armed forces generally recognized that the legitimacy of the regime would be strengthened by the maintenance of a distinction between political and military offices and personnel. Such a distinction, however, may fuel an appetite for constitutional and representative politics, and reduce the scope for direct military intervention, thereby, over time, encouraging polyarchical tendencies. The character of military regimes is discussed at greater length in Chapter 18.

Summary

• Government is any mechanism through which ordered rule is maintained, its central feature being its ability to make collective decisions and enforce them. A political system, or regime, however, encompasses not only the mechanisms of government and institutions of the state, but also the structures and processes through which these interact with the larger society.

• The classification of political systems serves two purposes. First, it aids understanding by making comparison possible and helping to highlight similarities and differences between otherwise shapeless collections of facts. Second, it helps us to evaluate the effectiveness or success of different political systems.

• Regimes have been classified on a variety of bases. 'Classical' typologies, stemming from Aristotle, concentrated on constitutional arrangements and institutional structures, while the 'three worlds' approach highlighted material and ideological

Junta: Literally, a council; a (usually military) clique that seizes power through a revolution or *coup d'etat.*

differences between the systems found in 'first world' capitalist, 'second world' communist and 'third world' developing states.

• The collapse of communism and advance of democratization has made it much more difficult to identify the political contours of the modern world, making conventional systems of classification redundant. It is nevertheless still possible to distinguish between regimes on the basis of how their political, economic and cultural characteristics interlock in practice, even though all systems of classification are provisional.

• 'End of history' theorists have proclaimed that history has ended, or is destined to end, with the worldwide triumph of western liberal democracy. Indeed, the most common form of regime in the modern world is now some form of democracy. However, there is evidence that regime types have become both more complex and more diverse. Significant differences can be identified among western polyarchies, new democracies, East Asian regimes, Islamic regimes and military regimes.

I Questions for discussion

- Does Aristotle's system of political classification have any relevance to the modern world?
- Is there any longer such a thing as the 'third world'?
- To what extent have postcommunist regimes discarded their communist past?
- Why have liberal-democratic structures proved to be so effective and successful?
- How democratic are western polyarchies?
- Do Confucianism and Islam constitute viable alternatives to western liberalism as a basis for a modern regime?

Further reading

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Political Ideologies

CHAPTER 3

'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point is to change it.'

KARL MARX *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845)

No one sees the world as it is. All of us look at the world through a veil of theories, presuppositions and assumptions. In this sense, observation and interpretation are inextricably bound together: when we look at the world we are also engaged in imposing meaning upon it. This has important implications for the study of politics. In particular, it highlights the need to uncover the presuppositions and assumptions that we bring to political enquiry. At their deepest level, these assumptions are rooted in broad political creeds or traditions that are usually termed 'political ideologies'. Each of these 'isms' (liberalism, socialism, conservatism, feminism, fascism, and so on) constitutes a distinctive intellectual framework or paradigm, and each offers its own account of political reality- its own world view. However, there is deep disagreement both about the nature of ideology and about the role, for good or ill, that it plays in political life.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- What is political ideology?
- What are the characteristic themes, theories and principles of each of the major ideologies?
- What rival traditions or internal tensions does each ideology encompass?
- How have the major ideologies changed over time?
- How can the rise and fall of ideologies be explained?
- Has ideology come to an end? Could ideology come to an end?

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What is political ideology?

Ideology is one of the most controversial concepts encountered in political analysis. Although the term now tends to be used in a neutral sense, to refer to a developed social philosophy or world view, it has in the past had heavily negative or pejorative connotations. During its sometimes tortuous career, the concept of ideology has commonly been used as a political weapon to condemn or criticize rival creeds or doctrines.

The term 'ideology' was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836). He used it to refer to a new 'science of ideas' (literally an idea-ology) that set out to uncover the origins of conscious thought and ideas. De Tracy's hope was that ideology would eventually enjoy the same status as established sciences such as zoology and biology. However, a more enduring meaning was assigned to the term in the nineteenth century in the writings of Karl Marx (see p. 53). For Marx, ideology amounted to the ideas of the 'ruling class', ideas that therefore uphold the class system and perpetuate exploitation. In their early work *The German Ideology,* Marx and Engels wrote the following:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force in society, is at the same time the ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of mental production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production. (Marx and Engels, [1846] 1970:64)

The defining feature of ideology in the Marxist sense is that it is false: it mystifies and confuses subordinate classes by concealing from them the contradictions upon which all class societies are based. As far as capitalism is concerned, the ideology of the property-owning bourgeoisie (bourgeois ideology) fosters delusion or 'false consciousness' amongst the exploited proletariat, preventing them from recognizing the fact of their own exploitation. Nevertheless, Marx did not believe that all political views had an ideological character. He held that his own work, which attempted to uncover the process of class exploitation and oppression, was scientific. In his view, a clear distinction could be drawn between science and ideology, between truth and falsehood. This distinction tended, however, to be blurred in the writings of later Marxists such as Lenin (see p. 77) and Gramsci (see p. 203). These referred not only to 'bourgeois ideology' but also to 'socialist ideology' or 'proletarian ideology', terms that Marx would have considered absurd.

Alternative uses of the term have also been developed by liberals and conservatives. The emergence of totalitarian dictatorships in the interwar period encouraged writers such as Karl Popper (1902-94), J. L. Talmon and Hannah Arendt (see p. 9) to view ideology as an instrument of social control to ensure compliance and subordination. Relying heavily on the examples of fascism and communism, this Cold War liberal use of the term treated ideology as a 'closed' system of thought, which, by claiming a monopoly of truth, refuses to tolerate opposing ideas and rival beliefs. In contrast, liberalism, based as it is on a fundamental commitment to individual freedom, and doctrines such as conservatism and democratic socialism that broadly subscribe to liberal principles are clearly not ideologies. These doctrines are 'open' in the sense that they permit, and even insist upon, free debate, opposition and criticism.

Rationalism: The belief that the world can be understood and explained through the exercise of human reason, based on assumptions about its rational structure.

A distinctively conservative use of the term 'ideology' has been developed by thinkers such as Michael Oakeshott (see p. 209). This view reflects a characteristically conservative scepticism about the value of **rationalism** that is born out of the belief

that the world is largely beyond the capacity of the human mind to fathom. As Oakeshott put it, in political activity 'men sail a boundless and bottomless sea'. From this perspective, ideologies are seen as abstract 'systems of thought': that is, as sets of ideas that distort political reality because they claim to explain what is, frankly, incomprehensible. This is why conservatives have traditionally dismissed the notion that they subscribe to an ideology, preferring instead to describe conservatism as a disposition, or an 'attitude of mind', and placing their faith in **pragmatism,** tradition (see p. 212) and history.

The drawback of each of these usages, however, is that, as they are negative or pejorative, they restrict the application of the term. Certain political doctrines, in other words, are excluded from the category of 'ideologies'. Marx, for instance, insisted that his ideas were scientific, not ideological, liberals have denied that liberalism should be viewed as an ideology, and conservatives have traditionally claimed to embrace a pragmatic rather than ideological style of politics. Moreover, each of these definitions is loaded with the values and orientation of a particular political doctrine. An inclusive definition of 'ideology' (one that applies to all political traditions) must therefore be neutral: it must reject the notion that ideologies are 'good' or 'bad', true or false, or liberating or oppressive. This is the virtue of the modern, social-scientific meaning of the term, which treats ideology as an action-orientated belief system, an interrelated set of ideas that in some way guides or inspires political action.

Concept

Ideology

From a social-scientific viewpoint, an ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power relationships. All ideologies therefore (a) offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a 'world view', (b) provide a model of a desired future, a vision of the Good Society, and (c) outline how political change can and should be brought about. Ideologies are not, however, hermetically sealed systems of thought: rather, they are fluid sets of ideas that overlap with one another at a number of points. At a 'fundamental' level, ideologies resemble political philosophies; at an 'operative' level, they take the form of broad political movements (Seliger, 1976).

Liberalism

Any account of political ideologies must start with liberalism. This is because liberalism is, in effect, the ideology of the industrialized West, and is sometimes portrayed as a **meta-ideology** that is capable of embracing a broad range of rival values and beliefs. Although liberalism did not emerge as a developed political creed until the early nineteenth century, distinctively liberal theories and principles had gradually been developed during the previous 300 years. Liberalism was the product of the break-down of feudalism and the growth, in its place, of a market or capitalist society. Early liberalism certainly reflected the aspirations of a rising industrial middle class, and liberalism and capitalism have been closely linked (some have argued intrinsically linked) ever since. In its earliest form, liberalism was a political doctrine. It attacked absolutism (see p. 28) and feudal privilege, instead advocating constitutional and, later, representative government. By the early nineteenth century, a distinctively liberal economic creed had developed that extolled the virtues of *laissez-faire* capitalism (see p. 183) and condemned all forms of government intervention. This became the centrepiece of classical, or nineteenth-century, liberalism. From the late nineteenth century onwards, however, a form of social liberalism emerged that looked more favourably on welfare reform and economic intervention. Such an emphasis became the characteristic theme of modern, or twentieth-century, liberalism.

Pragmatism: A theory or practice that places primary emphasis on practical circumstances and goals; pragmatism implies a distrust of abstract ideas.

Meta-ideology: A higher or second-order ideology that lays down the grounds on which ideological debate can take **place.**

Elements of liberalism

• Individualism: Individualism (see p. 190) is the core principle of liberal ideology. It reflects a belief in the supreme importance of the human individual as opposed to any social group or collective body. Human beings are seen, first and foremost, as individuals. This implies both that they are of equal moral worth and

that they possess separate and unique identities. The liberal goal is therefore to construct a society within which individuals can flourish and develop, each pursuing 'the good' as he or she defines it, to the best of his or her abilities. This has contributed to the view that liberalism is morally neutral, in the sense that it lays down a set of rules that allow individuals to make their own moral decisions.

• **Freedom:** Individual freedom (see p. 300), or liberty (the two terms are interchangeable), is the core value of liberalism; it is given priority over, say, equality, justice or authority. This arises naturally from a belief in the individual and the desire to ensure that each person is able to act as he or she pleases or chooses. Nevertheless, liberals advocate 'freedom under the law', as they recognize that one person's liberty may be a threat to the liberty of others; liberty may become licence. They therefore endorse the ideal that individuals should enjoy the maximum possible liberty consistent with a like liberty for all.

• **Reason:** Liberals believe that the world has a rational structure, and that this can be uncovered through the exercise of human reason and by critical enquiry. This inclines them to place their faith in the ability of individuals to make wise judgements on their own behalf, being, in most cases, the best judges of their own interests. It also encourages liberals to believe in **progress** and the capacity of human beings to resolve their differences through debate and argument rather than bloodshed and war.

• **Equality:** Individualism implies a belief in foundational equality: that is, the belief that individuals are 'born equal', at least in terms of moral worth. This is reflected in a liberal commitment to equal rights and entitlements, notably in the form of legal equality ('equality before the law') and political equality ('one person, one vote; one vote, one value'). However, as individuals do not possess the same levels of talent or willingness to work, liberals do not endorse social equality or an equality of outcome. Rather, they favour equality of opportunity (a 'level playing field') that gives all individuals an equal chance to realize their unequal potential. Liberals therefore support the principle of **meritocracy,** with merit reflecting, crudely, talent plus hard work.

• **Toleration:** Liberals believe that toleration (that is, forbearance: the willingness of people to allow others to think, speak and act in ways of which they disapprove) is both a guarantee of individual liberty and a means of social enrichment. They believe that pluralism (see p. 78), in the form of moral, cultural and political diversity, is positively healthy: it promotes debate and intellectual progress by ensuring that all beliefs are tested in a free market of ideas. Liberals, moreover, tend to believe that there is a balance or natural harmony between rival views and interests, and thus usually discount the idea of irreconcilable conflict.

• **Consent:** In the liberal view, authority and social relationships should always be based on consent or willing agreement. Government must therefore be based on the 'consent of the governed'. This is a doctrine that encourages liberals to favour representation (see p. 224) and democracy. Similarly, social bodies and associations are formed through contracts willingly entered into by individuals intent on pursuing their own self-interest. In this sense, authority arises 'from below' and is always grounded in legitimacy (see p. 210).

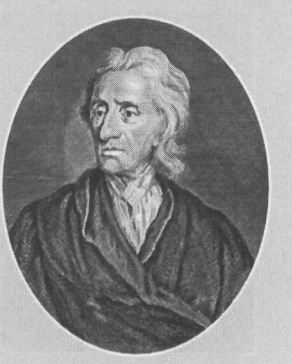
Progress: Moving forwards; the belief that **history is** characterized by human advancement based on **the** accumulation of knowledge and wisdom.

Meritocracy: Rule by the talented; the principle that rewards and positions should be distributed on the basis of ability.

• **Constitutionalism:** Although liberals see government as a vital guarantee of order and stability in society, they are constantly aware of the danger that government may become a tyranny against the individual ('power tends to corrupt' (Lord Acton)).

John Locke (1632–1704)

English philosopher and politician. Locke was born in Somerset in the UK. He studied medicine at Oxford University before becoming secretary to Anthony Ashley Cooper, First Earl of Shaftsbury, in 1661. Locke's political views were developed against the backdrop of the English Revolution, and they are often seen as providing a justification for the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, which ended absolutist rule and established a constitutional monarchy in Britain under William of Orange. Locke was a key thinker in the development of early liberalism, placing particular emphasis upon 'natural' or God-given rights, identified as the rights to life, liberty and property. As he was an exponent of representative government and toleration, his views had a considerable impact upon the American Revolution. Locke's most important political works are *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) and *Two Treatises of Government* ([1690] 1965).



They therefore believe in limited government. This goal can be attained through the fragmentation of government power, by the creation of checks and balances amongst the various institutions of government, and through the establishment of a codified or 'written' constitution embodying a bill of rights that defines the relationship between the state and the individual.

Classical liberalism

The central theme of classical liberalism is a commitment to an extreme form of individualism. Human beings are seen as egoistical, self-seeking and largely self-reliant creatures. In what C. B. Macpherson (1962) termed 'possessive individualism', they are taken to be the proprietors of their own persons and capacities, owing nothing to society or to other individuals. This **atomist** view of society is underpinned by a belief in 'negative' liberty, meaning noninterference, or the absence of external constraints upon the individual. This implies a deeply unsympathetic attitude towards the state and all forms of government intervention.

In Tom Paine's (see p. 226) words, the state is a 'necessary evil'. It is 'necessary' in that, at the very least, it establishes order and security and ensures that contracts are enforced. However, it is 'evil' in that it imposes a collective will upon society, thus limiting the freedom and responsibilities of the individual. The classical liberal ideal is therefore the establishment of a minimal or 'nightwatchman' state, with a role that is limited to the protection of citizens from the encroachments of fellow citizens. In the form of **economic liberalism,** this position is underpinned by a deep faith in the mechanisms of the free market and the belief that the economy works best when left alone by government. *Laissez-faire* capitalism is thus seen as guaranteeing prosperity, upholding individual liberty, and, as this allows individuals to rise and fall according to merit, ensuring social justice.

Modern liberalism

Modern liberalism is characterized by a more sympathetic attitude towards state intervention. Indeed, in the USA, the term 'liberal' is invariably taken to imply support for **big government** rather than 'minimal' government. This shift was born out of the recognition that industrial capitalism had merely generated new forms of

Atomism: The belief that society is made up of a collection of largely self-sufficient individuals who owe little or nothing to one another.

Economic liberalism: A belief in the market as a self-regulating mechanism tending naturally to deliver general prosperity and opportunities for all.

Big government: Interventionist government, usually understood to imply economic management and social regulation.



John Stuart Mill (1806–73)

UK philosopher, economist and politician. Mill was subject to an intense and austere regime of education by his father, the utilitarian theorist James Mill (1773–1836). This resulted in a mental collapse at the age of 20, after which he developed a more human philosophy influenced by Coleridge and the German Idealists. His major writings, including *On Liberty* (1859), *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) and *The Subjection of Women* (1869), had a powerful influence on the development of liberal thought. In many ways, Mill's varied and complex work straddled the divide between classical and modern liberalism. His distrust of state intervention was firmly rooted in nineteenth-century principles, but his emphasis upon the quality of individual life (reflected in a commitment to 'individuality'), as well as his sympathy for causes such as female suffrage and workers' cooperatives, clearly looked forward to twentieth-century developments.

injustice and left the mass of the population subject to the vagaries of the market. Influenced by the work of J. S. Mill, the so-called New Liberals (figures such as T. H. Green (1836-82), L. T. Hobhouse (1864-1929) and J. A. Hobson (1858-1940)) championed a broader, 'positive' view of freedom. From this perspective, freedom does not just mean being left alone, which might imply nothing more than the freedom to starve. Rather, it is linked to personal development and the flourishing of the individual: that is, the ability of the individual to gain fulfilment and achieve self-realization.

This view provided the basis for social or welfare liberalism. This is characterized by the recognition that state intervention, particularly in the form of social welfare (see p. 413), can enlarge liberty by safeguarding individuals from the social evils that blight individual existence. These evils were identified in the UK by the 1942 Beveridge Report as the 'five giants': want, ignorance, idleness, squalor and disease. In the same way, modern liberals abandoned their belief in *laissez-faire* capitalism, largely as a result of J. M. Keynes' (see p. 184) insight that growth and prosperity could be maintained only through a system of managed or regulated capitalism, with key economic responsibilities being placed in the hands of the state. Nevertheless, modern liberals' support for collective provision and government intervention has always been conditional. Their concern has been with the plight of the weak and vulnerable, those who are literally not able to help themselves. Their goal is to raise individuals to the point where they are able, once again, to take responsibility for their own circumstances and make their own moral choices. The most influential modern attempt to reconcile the principles of liberalism with the politics of welfare and **redistribution** was undertaken by John Rawls (see p. 58).

Redistribution: A narrowing of material inequalities brought about through a combination c progressive taxation and welfare provision.

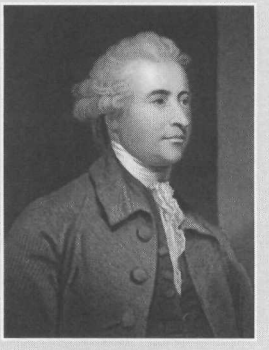
Ancien regime: *{French)* Literally, old order; usually linked with the absolutist structures that predated the French Revolution.

Conservatism

Conservative ideas and doctrines first emerged in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. They arose as a reaction against the growing pace of economic and political change, which was in many ways symbolized by the French Revolution. In this sense, conservatism harked back to the ***ancien regime.*** In trying to resist the pressures unleashed by the growth of liberalism, socialism and nationalism, conservatism stood in defence of an increasingly embattled traditional social order. However, from the outset, divisions in conservative thought were apparent. In

Edmund Burke (1729–97)

Dublin-born UK statesman and political theorist who is often seen as the father of the Anglo-American conservative tradition. Burke's enduring reputation is based on a series of works, notably *Reflections on the Revolution in France* ([1790] 1968), that were critical of the French Revolution. Though sympathetic to the American Revolution, Burke was deeply critical of the attempt to recast French politics in accordance with abstract principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity, arguing that wisdom resided largely in experience, tradition and history. Nevertheless, he held that the French monarchy was in part responsible for its own fate since it had obstinately refused to 'change in order to conserve'. Burke had a gloomy view of government, recognizing that it could prevent evil but rarely promote good. He regarded market forces as 'natural law'.



continental Europe, a form of conservatism emerged that was characterized by the work of thinkers such as Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). This conservatism was starkly autocratic and reactionary, rejecting out of hand any idea of reform. A more cautious, more flexible, and ultimately more successful form of conservatism nevertheless developed in the UK and the USA that was characterized by Edmund Burke's belief in 'change in order to conserve'. This stance enabled conservatives in the nineteenth century to embrace the cause of social reform under the paternalistic banner of 'One Nation'. The high point of this tradition in the UK came in the 1950s as the Conservative Party came to accept the postwar settlement and espouse its own version of Keynesian social democracy. However, such ideas increasingly came under pressure from the 1970s onwards as a result of the emergence of the New Right. The New Right's radically antistatist and antipaternalist brand of conservatism draws heavily on classical liberal themes and values.

Elements of conservatism

• **Tradition:** The central theme of conservative thought, 'the desire to conserve', is closely linked to the perceived virtues of tradition, respect for established customs, and institutions that have endured through time. In this view, tradition reflects the accumulated wisdom of the past, and institutions and practices that have been 'tested by time', and it should be preserved for the benefit of the living and for generations yet to come. Tradition also has the virtue of promoting stability and security, giving individuals a sense of social and historical belonging.

• Pragmatism: Conservatives have traditionally emphasized the limitations of human rationality, which arise from the infinite complexity of the world in which we live. Abstract principles and systems of thought are therefore distrusted, and instead faith is placed in experience, history and, above all, pragmatism: the belief that action should be shaped by practical circumstances and practical goals, that is, by 'what works'. Conservatives have thus preferred to describe their own beliefs as an 'attitude of mind' or an 'approach to life', rather than as an ideology, although they reject the idea that this amounts to unprincipled opportunism.

• **Human imperfection:** The conservative view of human nature is broadly pessimistic. In this view, human beings are limited, dependent, and security-seeking

creatures, drawn to the familiar and the tried and tested, and needing to live in stable and orderly communities. In addition, individuals are morally corrupt: they are tainted by selfishness, greed and the thirst for power. The roots of crime and disorder therefore reside within the human individual rather than in society. The maintenance of order (see p. 389) therefore requires a strong state, the enforcement of strict laws, and stiff penalties.

• **Organicism:** Instead of seeing society as an artefact that is a product of human ingenuity, conservatives have traditionally viewed society as an organic whole, or living entity. Society is thus structured by natural necessity, with its various institutions, or the 'fabric of society' (families, local communities, the nation and so on), contributing to the health and stability of society. The whole is more than a collection of its individual parts. Shared (often 'traditional') values and a common culture are also seen as being vital to the maintenance of the community (see p. 172) and social cohesion.

• **Hierarchy:** In the conservative view, gradations of social position and status are natural and inevitable in an organic society. These reflect the differing roles and responsibilities of, for example, employers and workers, teachers and pupils, and parents and children. Nevertheless, in this view, hierarchy and inequality do not give rise to conflict, because society is bound together by mutual obligations and reciprocal duties. Indeed, as a person's 'station in life' is determined largely by luck and the accident of birth, the prosperous and privileged acquire a particular responsibility of care for the less fortunate.

• **Authority:** Conservatives hold that, to some degree, authority is always exercised 'from above', providing leadership (see p. 348), guidance and support for those who lack the knowledge, experience or education to act wisely in their own interests (an example being the authority of parents over children). Although the idea of a **natural aristocracy** was once influential, authority and leadership are now more commonly seen as resulting from experience and training. The virtue of authority is that it is a source of social cohesion, giving people a clear sense of who they are and what is expected of them. Freedom must therefore coexist with responsibility; it therefore consists largely of a willing acceptance of obligations and duties.

• Property: Conservatives see property ownership as being vital because it gives people security and a measure of independence from government, and it encourages them to respect the law and the property of others. Property is also an exteriorization of people's personalities, in that they 'see' themselves in what they own: their houses, their cars, and so on. However, property ownership involves duties as well as rights. In this view, we are, in a sense, merely custodians of property that has either been inherited from past generations ('the family silver'), or may be of value to future ones.

Paternalistic conservatism

Natural aristocracy: The idea that talent and leadership are innate or inbred qualities that cannot be acquired through effort or self-advancement.

The paternalistic strand in conservative thought is entirely consistent with principles such as organicism, hierarchy and duty, and it can therefore be seen as an outgrowth of traditional conservatism. Often traced back to the early writings of Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81), paternalism draws upon a combination of prudence and principle. In warning of the danger of the UK being divided into 'two nations: the Rich and the Poor', Disraeli articulated a widespread fear of social revolution. This warning amounted to an

appeal to the self-interest of the privileged, who needed to recognize that 'reform from above' was preferable to 'revolution from below'. This message was underpinned by an appeal to the principles of duty and social obligation rooted in neofeudal ideas such as ***noblesse oblige.*** In effect, in this view, duty is the price of privilege; the powerful and propertied inherit a responsibility to look after the less well-off in the broader interests of social cohesion and unity. The resulting one-nation principle, the cornerstone of what can properly be termed a **Tory** position, reflects not so much the ideal of social equality as the vision of organic balance, a cohesive and stable hierarchy.

The one-nation tradition embodies not only a disposition towards social reform, but also an essentially pragmatic attitude towards economic policy. This is clearly seen in the 'middle way' approach adopted in the 1950s by UK Conservatives such as Harold Macmillan (1894-1986), R. A. Butler (1902-82) and Iain MacLeod (1913-70). This approach eschewed the two ideological models of economic organization: *laissez-faire* capitalism on the one hand, and state socialism and central planning on the other. The former was rejected on the grounds that it results in a free for all, which makes social cohesion impossible, and penalizes the weak and vulnerable. The latter was dismissed because it produces a state monolith and crushes all forms of independence and enterprise. The solution therefore lies in a blend of market competition and government regulation ('private enterprise without selfishness' (H. Macmillan)), within which the balance between the state and the individual can be adjusted pragmatically according to 'what works'. Very similar conclusions were drawn after 1945 by continental European conservatives, who embraced the principles of Christian Democracy, most rigorously developed in the 'social market' philosophy (see p. 182) of the German Christian Democrats (the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU)). This philosophy embraces a *market* strategy insofar as it highlights the virtues of private enterprise and competition, but it is *social* in that it believes that the prosperity so gained should be employed for the broader benefit of society.

The New Right

The New Right represents a departure in conservative thought that amounted to a kind of counter-revolution against both the post-1945 drift towards state intervention and the spread of liberal or progressive social values. New Right ideas can be traced back to the 1970s and the conjunction between the apparent failure of Keynesian social democracy, signalled by the end of the postwar boom, and growing concern about social breakdown and the decline of authority. Such ideas had their greatest impact in the UK and the USA, where they were articulated in the 1980s in the form of Thatcherism and Reaganism, respectively. They have also had a wider, even worldwide, influence in bringing about a general shift from state- to market-orientated forms of organization. However, the New Right does not so much constitute a coherent and systematic philosophy as attempt to marry two distinct traditions, usually termed 'neoliberalism' and 'neoconservatism'. Although there is political and ideological tension between these two, they can be combined in support of the goal of a strong but minimal state: in Andrew Gamble's (1981) words, 'the free economy and the strong state'.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is an updated version of classical political economy that was developed in the writings of free-market economists such as Friedrich Hayek and

Noblesse oblige: *(French)* Literally, the obligations of the nobility; in general terms, the responsibility to guide or protect those less fortunate or less privileged.

Toryism: An ideological stance within conservatism characterized by a belief in hierarchy, an emphasis on tradition, and support for duty and organicism.



Friedrich von Hayek (1899–1992)

Austrian economist and political philosopher. An academic who taught at the London School of Economics and the Universities of Chicago, Freiburg and Salzburg, Hayek was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1974. As an exponent of the so-called Austrian School, he was a firm believer in individualism and market order, and an implacable critic of socialism. *The Road to Serfdom* (1948) was a pioneering work that attacked economic interventionism; later works such as *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) and *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (1979) developed themes in political philosophy. Hayek's writings had a considerable impact on the emergent New Right.

Milton Friedman (see p. 185) and philosophers such as Robert Nozick (see p. 96). The central pillars of neoliberalism are the market and the individual. The principal neoliberal goal is to 'roll back the frontiers of the state', in the belief that unregulated market capitalism will deliver efficiency, growth and widespread prosperity. In this view, the 'dead hand' of the state saps initiative and discourages enterprise; government, however well intentioned, invariably has a damaging effect upon human affairs. This is reflected in the liberal New Right's concern with the politics of ownership, and its preference for private enterprise over state enterprise or nationalization: in short, 'private, good; public, bad'. Such ideas are associated with a form of rugged individualism, expressed in Margaret Thatcher's famous assertion that 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families'. The **nanny state** is seen to breed a culture of dependence and to undermine freedom, which is understood as freedom of choice in the marketplace. Instead, faith is placed in self-help, individual responsibility and entrepreneurialism. Such ideas are widely seen to be advanced through the process of globalization (see p. 138), viewed by some as neoliberal globalization.

Neoconservatism

Neoconservatism reasserts nineteenth-century conservative social principles. The conservative New Right wishes, above all, to restore authority and return to traditional values, notably those linked to the family, religion and the nation. Authority is seen as guaranteeing social stability, on the basis that it generates discipline and respect, while shared values and a common culture are believed to generate social cohesion and make civilized existence possible. The enemies of neoconservatism are therefore **permissiveness,** the cult of the self and 'doing one's own thing', thought of as the values of the 1960s. Indeed, many of those who style themselves neoconservatives in the USA are former liberals who grew disillusioned with the progressive reforms of the Kennedy-Johnson era. Another aspect of neoconservatism is the tendency to view the emergence of multicultural and multireligious societies with concern, on the basis that they are conflict-ridden and inherently unstable. This position also tends to be linked to an insular form of nationalism that is sceptical about both multiculturalism (see p. 119) and the growing influence of supranational bodies such as the United Nations and the European Union.

Nanny state: A state with extensive social responsibilities; the term implies that welfare programmes are unwarranted and demeaning to the individual.

Permissiveness: The willingness to allow people to make their own moral choices permissiveness suggests that there are no authoritative values.

Socialism

Although socialist ideas can be traced back to the Levellers and Diggers of the seventeenth century, or to Thomas More's *Utopia* ([1516] 1965), or even Plato's *Republic*, socialism did not take shape as a political creed until the early nineteenth century. It developed as a reaction against the emergence of industrial capitalism. Socialism first articulated the interests of artisans and craftsmen threatened by the spread of factory production, but it was soon being linked to the growing industrial working class, the 'factory fodder' of early industrialization. In its earliest forms, socialism tended to have a fundamentalist (see p. 63), Utopian and revolutionary character. Its goal was to abolish a capitalist economy based on market exchange, and replace it with a qualitatively different socialist society, usually to be constructed on the principle of common ownership. The most influential representative of this brand of socialism was Karl Marx, whose ideas provided the foundations for twentieth-century communism.

From the late nineteenth century onwards, however, a reformist socialist tradition emerged that reflected the gradual integration of the working classes into capitalist society through an improvement in working conditions and wages and the growth of trade unions and socialist political parties. This brand of socialism proclaimed the possibility of a peaceful, gradual and legal transition to socialism, brought about through the adoption of the 'parliamentary road'. Reformist socialism drew upon two sources. The first was a humanist tradition of ethical socialism, linked to thinkers such as Robert Owen (1771-1858), Charles Fourier (1772-1837) and William Morris (1854-96). The second was a form of **revisionist** Marxism developed primarily by Eduard Bernstein (see p. 57).

During much of the twentieth century, the socialist movement was thus divided into two rival camps. Revolutionary socialists, following the example of Lenin (see p. 77) and the Bolsheviks, called themselves communists, while reformist socialists, who practised a form of constitutional politics, embraced what increasingly came to be called social democracy. This rivalry focused not only on the most appropriate means of achieving socialism, but also on the nature of the socialist goal itself. Social democrats turned their backs upon fundamentalist principles such as common ownership and planning, and recast socialism in terms of welfare, redistribution and economic management. Both forms of socialism, however, experienced crises in the late twentieth century that encouraged some to proclaim the 'death of socialism' and the emergence of a postsocialist society. The most dramatic event in this process was the collapse of communism brought about by the eastern European revolutions of 1989-91, but there was also a continued retreat of social democracy from traditional principles, making it, some would argue, indistinguishable from modern liberalism.

Elements of socialism

• Community: The core of socialism is the vision of human beings as social creatures linked by the existence of a common humanity. As the poet John Donne put it, 'no man is an Island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main'. This refers to the importance of community (see p. 172), and it highlights the degree to which individual identity is fashioned by social interaction and membership of social groups and collective bodies. Socialists are inclined to

Revisionism: The modification of original or established beliefs; revisionism can imply the abandonment of principle or a loss of conviction.

emphasize nurture over nature, and to explain individual behaviour mainly in terms of social factors rather than innate qualities.

• **Fraternity:** As human beings share a common humanity, they are bound together by a sense of comradeship or fraternity (literally meaning 'brotherhood', but broadened in this context to embrace all humans). This encourages socialists to prefer cooperation to competition, and to favour collectivism over individualism (see p. 190). In this view, cooperation enables people to harness their collective energies and strengthens **the** bonds of community, while competition pits individuals against each other, breeding resentment, conflict and hostility.

• **Social equality:** Equality (see p. 414) is the central value of socialism. Socialism is sometimes portrayed as a form of egalitarianism, the belief in the primacy of equality over other values. In particular, socialists emphasize the importance of social equality, an equality of outcome as opposed to equality of opportunity. They believe that a measure of social equality is the essential guarantee of social stability and cohesion, encouraging individuals to identify with their fellow human beings. It also provides the basis for the exercise of legal and political rights.

• Need: Sympathy for equality also reflects the socialist belief that material benefits should be distributed on the basis of need, rather than simply on the basis of merit or work. The classic formulation of this principle is found in Marx's communist principle of distribution: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'. This reflects the belief that the satisfaction of basic needs (hunger, thirst, shelter, health, personal security and so on) is a prerequisite for a worthwhile human existence and participation in social life. Clearly, however, distribution according to need requires people to be motivated by moral incentives, rather than just material ones.

• **Social class:** Socialism has often been associated with a form of class politics. First, socialists have tended to analyse society in terms of the distribution of income or wealth, and they have thus seen class as a significant (usually the most significant) social cleavage. Second, socialism has traditionally been associated with the interests of an oppressed and exploited working class (however defined), and it has traditionally regarded the working class as an agent of social change, even social revolution (see p. 215). Nevertheless, class divisions are remediable: the socialist goal is either the eradication of economic and social inequalities or their substantial reduction.

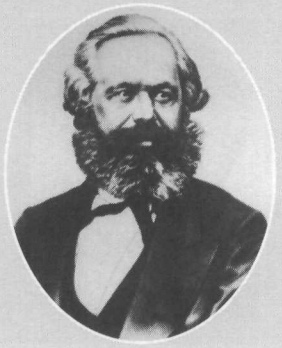
• **Common ownership:** The relationship between socialism and common ownership has been deeply controversial. Some see it as the *end* of socialism itself, and others see it instead as simply a *means* of generating broader equality. The socialist case for common ownership (in the form of either Soviet-style state collectivization, or selective nationalization (a 'mixed economy')) is that it is a means of harnessing material resources to the common good, with private property being seen to promote selfishness, acquisitiveness and social division. Modern socialism, however, has moved away from this narrow concern with the politics of ownership.

Marxism

As a theoretical system, Marxism has constituted the principal alternative to the liberal rationalism that has dominated western culture and intellectual enquiry in the modern period. As a political force, in the form of the international communist

Karl Marx (1818–83)

German philosopher, economist and political thinker, usually portrayed as the father of twentieth-century communism. After a brief career as a university teacher, Marx took up journalism and became increasingly involved with the socialist movement. He moved to Paris in 1843. He finally settled in London after being expelled from Prussia, and worked for the rest of his life as an active revolutionary and writer supported by his friend and lifelong collaborator Friedrich Engels. In 1864 Marx helped to found the First International, which collapsed in 1871 because of growing antagonism between Marx's supporters and anarchists led by Bakunin. Although much of his voluminous writings remained unpublished at his death, Marx's classic work was the three-volume *Capital* ([1867, 1885, 1894] 1970). His best-known and most accessible work is the *Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1967).



movement, Marxism has also been seen as the major enemy of western capitalism, at least in the period 1917-91. This highlights a central difficulty in dealing with Marxism: the difference between Marxism as a social philosophy derived from the classic writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-95), and the phenomenon of twentieth-century communism, which in many ways departed from and revised classical principles. Thus the collapse of communism at the end of the twentieth century need not betoken the death of Marxism as a political ideology; indeed, it may give Marxism, now divorced from the vestiges of Leninism and Stalinism, a fresh lease of life.

To some extent, the problem stems from the wide range and complex nature of Marx's own writings, which have allowed him to be interpreted by some as an economic determinist, but by others as a humanist socialist. A distinction has also been drawn between the character of his early writings and that of his late writings. This is often portrayed as the distinction between the 'young Marx' and the 'mature Marx'. What is clear, however, is that Marx believed that he had developed a new brand of socialism that was scientific, in the sense that it was concerned primarily with disclosing the nature of social and historical development rather than with advancing an essentially ethical critique of capitalism. Marx's ideas and theories reached a wider audience after his death, largely through the writings of his lifelong collaborator Engels, the German socialist leader Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), and the Russian theoretician Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918). A form of orthodox Marxism, usually termed **dialectical materialism** (a term coined by Plekhanov, not Marx), came into existence that was later used as the basis for Soviet communism. This 'vulgar' Marxism undoubtedly placed a heavier stress on mechanistic theories and historical determinism than did Marx's own writings.

Elements of Marxism

• Historical materialism: The cornerstone of Marxist philosophy is what Engels called 'the materialist conception of history'. This highlighted the importance of economic life and the conditions under which people produce and reproduce their means of subsistence. Marx held that the economic 'base', consisting essentially of the 'mode of production', or economic system, conditions or determines the ideological and political 'superstructure'. This suggests that social and historical development can be explained in terms of economic and class factors. Later Marxists

Dialectical materialism: The crude and deterministic form of Marxism that dominated intellectual life in orthodox communist states.

portrayed this as a mechanical relationship, implying that immutable economic 'laws' drive history forwards regardless of the human agent.

• Dialectical change: Following Hegel (see p. 86), Marx believed that the driving force of historical change was the dialectic, a process of interaction between competing forces that results in a higher stage of development. In its materialist version, this model implies that historical change is a consequence of internal contradictions within a 'mode of production' reflected in class antagonism. Orthodox Marxism ('dialectical materialism') portrayed the dialectic as an impersonal force shaping both natural and human processes.

• **Alienation: Alienation** was a central principle of Marx's early writings. It is the process whereby, under capitalism, labour is reduced to being a mere commodity, and work becomes a depersonalized activity. In this view, workers are alienated from the product of their labour, from the process of labour, from fellow workers, and, ultimately, from themselves as creative and social beings. Unalienated labour is thus an essential source of human fulfilment and self-realization.

• Class struggle: The central contradiction within a capitalist society arises from the existence of private property. This creates a division between the bourgeoisie or capitalist class, the owners of the 'means of production', and the proletariat, who do not own property and thus subsist through selling their labour (literally 'wage slaves'). The bourgeoisie is a 'ruling class'. It not only has economic power through the ownership of wealth, but also exercises political power through the agency of the state and possesses ideological power because its ideas are the 'ruling ideas' of the age.

• **Surplus value:** The relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is one of irreconcilable conflict, reflecting the fact that the proletariat is necessarily and systematically exploited under capitalism. Marx believed that all value derives from the labour expended in the production of goods. This means that the quest for profit forces capitalist enterprises to extract 'surplus value' from their workers by paying them less than the value of their labour. Capitalism is therefore inherently unstable, because the proletariat cannot be permanently reconciled to exploitation and oppression.

• **Proletarian revolution:** Marx believed that capitalism was doomed, and that the proletariat was its 'grave digger'. According to his analysis, capitalism would pass through a series of increasingly serious crises of overproduction. This would bring the proletariat to revolutionary **class consciousness.** Marx proclaimed that proletarian revolution was inevitable, and predicted that it would occur through a spontaneous uprising aimed at seizing control of the means of production. In his later years, however, he speculated about the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism.

Alienation: A state or process of depersonalization; separation from one's genuine or essential nature.

Class consciousness: A Marxist term, denoting an accurate awareness of class interests and a willingness to pursue them; a class-conscious class is a class for-itself(seep. 216).

• Communism: Marx predicted that proletarian revolution would usher in a transitionary 'socialist' period during which a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would be required to contain a counter-revolution mounted by the dispossessed bourgeoisie. However, as class antagonism faded and a fully communist society came into existence, this proletarian state would simply 'wither away'. A communist (see p. 35) society would be classless in the sense that wealth would be owned in common by all, and the system of 'commodity production' would be replaced by one of 'production for use' geared to the satisfaction of genuine human needs. With this, the 'prehistory of man' would come to an end, allowing human beings for the first time to shape

Joseph Stalin (1879–1953)

USSR political leader 1924–53. Stalin (an adopted n

by an elaborate cult of personality. His

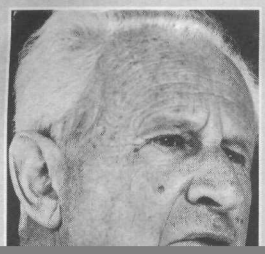


their own destinies and realize their full potential ('the free development of each : the precondition for the free development of all' (Marx)).

Orthodox communism

Marxism in practice is inextricably linked to the experience of Soviet communism, and especially to the contribution of the first two Soviet leaders, V. I. Lenin (see p. 77) and Joseph Stalin. Indeed, twentieth-century communism is best understood as a form of Marxism-Leninism: that is, as orthodox Marxism modified by a set of Leninist theories and doctrines. Lenin's central contribution to Marxism was his theory of the revolutionary or vanguard party. This reflected Lenin's fear that the proletariat, deluded by bourgeois ideas and beliefs, would not realize its revolutionary potential because it could not develop beyond 'trade-union consciousness': a desire to improve working and living conditions rather than to overthrow capitalism. A revolutionary party, armed with Marxism, was therefore needed to serve as the 'vanguard of the working class'. This was to be a party of a new kind: not a mass party, but a tightly knit party of professional and dedicated revolutionaries capable of exercising ideological leadership. Its organization was to be based on the principle of democratic centralism, a belief in freedom of debate married to unity of action. Thus, when Lenin's Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917, they did so as a vanguard party, claiming to act in the interests of the proletarian class. The dictatorship of the proletariat therefore became, in practice, a dictatorship of the Communist Party (the Bolshevik party was renamed the Communist Party in 1918), which acted as the 'leading and guiding force' within the Soviet one-party state.

The USSR was, however, more profoundly affected by Stalin's 'second revolution' in the 1930s than it had been by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. In reshaping Soviet society, Stalin created a model of orthodox communism that was followed in the post-1945 period by states such as China, North Korea and Cuba, and throughout eastern Europe. Stalin's changes stemmed largely from his most important ideological innovation, the doctrine of 'Socialism in One Country', which proclaimed that the USSR could 'build socialism' without the need for an international revolution. What can be called economic Stalinism was initiated with the launch in 1928 of the first Five Year Plan, which brought about the swift and total eradication of private enterprise. This was followed in 1929 by the collectivization of agriculture. All resources were brought under the control of the state, and a system of central



Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979)

German political philosopher and social theorist, and cofounder of the Frankfurt School. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, Marcuse lived in the USA from 1934. He developed a form of neo-Marxism that drew heavily upon Hegel and Freud. Marcuse came to prominence in the 1960s as a leading thinker of the New Left and a 'guru' of the opposition. His hopes rested not with the proletariat, but with marginalized groups such as students, ethnic minorities, women, and the countries of the Third World. His most important works include *Reason and Revolution* (1941), *Eros and Civilization* (1958) and *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*

planning dominated by the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) was established.

Stalin's political changes were no less dramatic. During the 1930s Stalin transformed the USSR into a personal dictatorship through a series of purges that eradicated all vestiges of opposition and debate from the Communist Party, the state bureaucracy and the military. In effect, Stalin turned the USSR into a totalitarian dictatorship, operating through systematic intimidation, repression and terror. Although the more brutal features of orthodox communism did not survive Stalin's death in 1953, the core principles of the Leninist party (hierarchical organization and discipline) and of economic Stalinism (state collectivization and central planning) stubbornly resisted pressure for reform. This was highlighted by Gorbachev's **perestroika** reform process (1985-91), which merely succeeded in exposing the failings of the planning system, and in releasing long-suppressed political forces. These eventually consigned Soviet communism to what Trotsky (see p. 361) had, in very different circumstances, called 'the dustbin of history'.

Modern Marxism

A more complex and subtle form of Marxism developed in western Europe. By contrast with the mechanistic and avowedly scientific notions of Soviet Marxism, western Marxism tended to be influenced by Hegelian ideas and by the stress upon 'Man the creator' found in Marx's early writings. In other words, human beings were seen as makers of history, and not simply as puppets controlled by impersonal material forces. By insisting that there was an interplay between economics and politics, between the material circumstances of life and the capacity of human beings to shape their own destinies, western Marxists were able to break free from the rigid 'base-superstructure' straightjacket. Their ideas have therefore sometimes been termed neo-Marxist (see p. 92). This indicates an unwillingness to treat the class struggle as the beginning and end of social analysis.

The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács (1885-1971) was one of the first to present Marxism as a humanistic philosophy. He emphasized the process of 'reification', through which capitalism dehumanizes workers by reducing them to passive objects or marketable commodities. In his *Prison Notebooks*, written in 1929-35, Antonio Gramsci (see p. 203) emphasized the degree to which capitalism was maintained not merely by economic domination, but also by political and cultural factors. He called this ideological 'hegemony'. A more overtly Hegelian brand of Marxism was

Perestroika: *{Russian)* Literally, restructuring; a slogan that refers to the attempt to liberalize and democratize the Soviet system within a communist framework.

Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932)

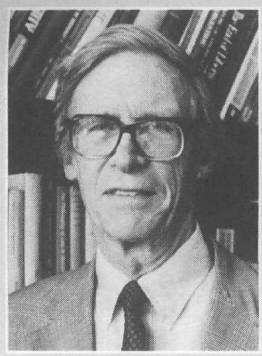
German socialist politician and theorist. An pro

developed by the so-called Frankfurt School, the leading members of which were Theodor Adorno (1903-69), Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Herbert Marcuse. Frankfurt theorists developed what was called 'critical theory', a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology, which had a considerable impact upon the New Left in the 1960s. A later generation of Frankfurt members included Jurgen Habermas (see p. 214).

Social democracy

Social democracy lacks the theoretical coherence of, say, classical liberalism or fundamentalist socialism. Whereas the former is ideologically committed to the market, and the latter champions the cause of common ownership, social democracy stands for a balance between the market and the state, a balance between the individual and the community. At the heart of social democracy there is a compromise between, on the one hand, an acceptance of capitalism as the only reliable mechanism for generating wealth and, on the other, a desire to distribute wealth in accordance with moral, rather than market, principles. For socialists, this conversion to the market was a difficult, and at times painful, process that was dictated more by practical circumstances and electoral advantage than by ideological conviction. In the early twentieth century, this process could be seen at work in the reformist drift of, for example, the German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD)), especially under the influence of revisionist Marxists such as Eduard Bernstein. At its 1959 Bad Godesburg congress, the SPD formally abandoned Marxism and accepted the principle 'competition where possible, planning where necessary'. A similar process took place within ethical or 'utopian' socialist parties that had never been anchored in the certainties of Marxism. For example, the UK Labour Party, committed from the outset to a belief in 'the inevitability of gradualism', had, by the 1950s, recast its socialism in terms of equality rather than nationalization (Crosland, 1956).

The chief characteristic of modern social democratic thought is a concern for the underdog in society, the weak and vulnerable. There is a sense, however, in which social democracy cannot simply be confined to the socialist tradition. It may draw on a socialist belief in compassion and a common humanity, a liberal commitment to positive freedom and equal opportunities, or, for that matter, a conservative sense of paternal duty and care. Whatever its source, it has usually been articulated on the



John Rawls (born 1921)

US academic and political philosopher. His major work, *A Theory of Justice* (1970), is regarded as the most important work of political philosophy written in English since the Second World War. It has influenced modern liberals and social democrats alike. Rawls proposed a theory of 'justice as fairness' that is based on the belief that social inequality can be justified only if it is of benefit to the least advantaged (in that it provides them with an incentive to work). This presumption in favour of equality is rooted in Rawls's belief that most people deprived of knowledge about their own talents and abilities would choose to live in an egalitarian society, rather than an inegalitarian one. As, for most people, the fear of being poor will outweigh the desire to be rich, redistribution and welfare can be defended on grounds of fairness. The universalist presumptions of his early work were modified to a certain degree in *Political Liberalism* (1993).

basis of principles such as welfarism, redistribution and social justice. In the form of Keynesian social democracy, which was widely accepted in the early period after the Second World War, it was associated with a clear desire to 'humanize' capitalism through state intervention. It was believed that Keynesian economic policies would secure full employment, a mixed economy would help government to regulate economic activity, and comprehensive welfare provision funded via progressive taxation would narrow the gap between rich and poor. However, declining economic growth and the emergence in advanced industrial societies at least of a 'contented majority' (Galbraith, 1992), have brought about a further process of revision.

To some extent, the socialist character of social democracy has long been questioned. Some socialists, for instance, used 'social democracy' as a term of abuse, implying unprincipled compromise or even betrayal. Others, such as Anthony Crosland (1918-77), argued that socialists had to come to terms with changing historical realities, and were thus happy to draw on the ideas of liberal theorists such as John Rawls. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, social democracy more obviously moved into retreat. This occurred for a variety of reasons. In the first place, changes in the class structure, and particularly the growth of professional and clerical occupations, meant that social-democratic policies orientated around the interests of the traditional working class were no longer electorally viable. Second, globalization (see p. 138) appeared to render all specifically national forms of economic management, such as Keynesianism, redundant. Third, nationalized industries and economic planning proved to be inefficient, at least in developed states. Fourth, the collapse of communism undermined the intellectual and ideological credibility not just of state collectivization but of all 'top-down' socialist models. In this context it became increasingly fashionable for politicians and political thinkers to embrace the idea of an ideological 'third way'.

Third way

The term 'third way' is imprecise and subject to a variety of interpretations. This occurs because third-way politics draws on various ideological traditions, including modern liberalism, one-nation conservatism and modernized social democracy. Different third-way projects have also developed in different countries, including those associated with the New Democrats and Bill Clinton in the USA and New

Labour and Tony Blair in the UK, as well as those that have emerged in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and New Zealand. Certain characteristic third-way themes can nevertheless be identified. The first of these is the belief that socialism, at least in the form of 'top-down' state intervention, is dead: there is no alternative to what Clause 4 of the UK Labour Party's constitution, rewritten in 1995, refers to as 'a dynamic market economy'. With this goes a general acceptance of globalization and the belief that capitalism has mutated into a 'knowledge economy', which places a premium on information technology, individual skills and both labour and business flexibility. The second feature of third-way politics is that, by contrast with neoliberalism, government is recognized as having a vital economic and social role. However, this role is a more focused one, concentrating on the promotion of international competitiveness by building up education and skills, and the strengthening of communities and civil society to contain the pressure generated by market capitalism. In this sense, the third-way stance is a form of liberal Communitarianism (see p. 173); its 'new individualism' calls for a balance between rights and **entrepreneurialism,** on the one hand, and social duty and moral responsibility on the other.

The final feature of third-way politics is that it has broken with socialist egalitarianism (which is seen as a form of 'levelling') and embraces instead the liberal ideas of equality of opportunity and meritocracy. Third-way politicians typically endorse welfare reform. They reject both the neoliberal emphasis on 'standing on your own two feet' and the social-democratic commitment to 'cradle to grave' welfare in favour of an essentially modern liberal belief in 'help people to help themselves', or as Clinton put it, giving people 'a hand up, not a hand out'. This has led to support for what has been called a 'workfare state', in which government support in terms of benefits or education is conditional on individuals seeking work and becoming self-reliant. Critics of the third way, on the other hand, argue either that it is contradictory, in that it simultaneously endorses the dynamism of the market and warns against its tendency to social disintegration, or that, far from being a centre-left project, it amounts to a shift to the right. It has, for instance, been condemned for accepting the framework of neoliberalism, particularly by endorsing global capitalism, and for supporting creeping authoritarianism in echoing communitarian calls for the strengthening of the family and in backing 'tough' law and order policies.

Concept

Third way

The 'third way' encapsulates the idea of an alternative to both capitalism and socialism. It draws attention to an ideological position that has attracted political thinkers from various traditions, including fascism, social democracy and, most recently, post-socialism. In its modern form, the 'third way' is an alternative to old-style social democracy and neoliberalism. The former is rejected because it is wedded to statist structures that are inappropriate to the modern knowledge-based and market-orientated economy. The latter is rejected because it generates a free-for-all that undermines the moral foundations of society. The key third-way values are opportunity, responsibility and community. Although the third way is sometime portrayed as 'new' or modernized social democracy, opponents suggest that it has entirely disengaged from the socialist tradition by embracing market and private-sector solutions.

Other ideological traditions

Fascism

Whereas liberalism, conservatism and socialism are nineteenth-century ideologies, fascism is a child of the twentieth century. Some would say that it is specifically an interwar phenomenon. Although fascist beliefs can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, they were fused together and shaped by the First World War and its aftermath, and in particular by the potent mixture of war and revolution that characterized the period. The two principal manifestations of fascism were Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship in Italy in 1922-43, and Hitler's Nazi dictatorship in Germany in 1933-45. Forms of neofascism and neo-Nazism also resurfaced in the final years of the twentieth century that took advantage of the combination of economic crisis and political instability that followed the collapse of communism.

Entrepreneurialism: Values or practices associated with commercial risk-taking and profit-orientated business activity.

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945)

German Nazi dictator. Hitler was the son of an Austrian customs official. He joined the German Worker's Party (later the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), or Nazi Party) in 1919, becoming its leader in 1921. He was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933, and declared himself Führer (Leader) the following year, by which time he had established a one-party dictatorship. The central feature of Hitler's world view, outlined in *Mein Kampf* ([1925] 1969), was his attempt to fuse expansionist German nationalism and virulent anti-Semitism into a theory of history in which there was an endless battle between the Germans and the Jews, who represented, respectively, the forces of good and evil. Hitler's policies contributed decisively to both the outbreak of the Second World War and the Holocaust.



In many respects, fascism constituted a revolt against the ideas and values that had dominated western political thought since the French Revolution: in the words of the Italian Fascist slogan, '1789 is dead'. Values such as rationalism, progress, freedom and equality were thus overturned in the name of struggle, leadership, power, heroism and war. In this sense, fascism has an 'anticharacter'. It is defined largely by what it opposes: it is a form of anticapitalism, antiliberalism, anti-individualism, anticommunism, and so on. A core theme that nevertheless runs throughout fascism is the image of an organically unified national community. This is reflected in a belief in 'strength through unity'. The individual, in a literal sense, is nothing; individual identity must be absorbed entirely into that of the community or social group. The fascist ideal is that of the 'new man', a hero, motivated by duty, honour and self-sacrifice, prepared to dedicate his life to the glory of his nation or race, and to give unquestioning obedience to a supreme leader.

Not all fascists, however, think alike. Italian Fascism was essentially an extreme form of Statism (see p. 98) that was based on unquestioning respect and absolute loyalty towards a 'totalitarian' state. As the Fascist philosopher Gentile (1875-1944) put it, 'everything for the state; nothing against the state; nothing outside the state'. German National Socialism, on the other hand, was constructed largely on the basis of racialism (see p. 116). Its two core theories were Aryanism (the belief that the German people constitute a 'master race' and are destined for world domination), and a virulent form of anti-Semitism (see p. 117) that portrayed the Jews as inherently evil, and aimed at their eradication. This latter belief found expression in the 'Final Solution'.

Anarchism

Anarchism is unusual amongst political ideologies in that no anarchist party has ever succeeded in winning power, at least at national level. Nevertheless, anarchist movements were powerful in, for example, Spain, France, Russia and Mexico through to the early twentieth century, and anarchist ideas continue to fertilize political debate by challenging the conventional belief that law, government and the state are either wholesome or indispensable. The central theme within anarchism is the belief that political authority in all its forms, and especially in the form of the state, is both evil and unnecessary (anarchy literally means 'without rule'). Nevertheless, the anarchist preference for a stateless society in which free individuals manage their own affairs

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97)

UK social theorist and feminist. Deeply influenced by the democratic radicalism of Rousseau, Wollstonecraft developed the first systematic feminist critique some 50 years before the emergence of the female-suffrage movement. Her most important work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* ([1792] 1985), was influenced by Lockian liberalism, and it stressed the equal rights of women, especially the right to education, on the basis of the notion of 'personhood'. However, the work developed a more complex analysis of womanhood itself that is relevant to the concerns of contemporary feminism. Wollstonecraft was married to the anarchist William Godwin, and she was the mother of Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*.



through voluntary agreement and cooperation has been developed on the basis of two rival traditions: liberal individualism, and socialist Communitarianism. Anarchism can thus be thought of as a point of intersection between liberalism and socialism: a form of both 'ultraliberalism' and 'ultrasocialism'.

The liberal case against the state is based on individualism and the desire to maximize liberty and choice. Unlike liberals, individualist anarchists such as William Godwin (1756-1836) believed that free and rational human beings would be able to manage their affairs peacefully and spontaneously, government being merely a form of unwanted coercion. Modern individualists have usually looked to the market to explain how society would be regulated in the absence of state authority, developing a form of anarchocapitalism, an extreme form of free-market economics. The more widely recognized anarchist tradition, however, draws upon socialist ideas such as community, cooperation, equality and common ownership. Collectivist anarchists therefore stress the human capacity for social solidarity that arises from our sociable, gregarious and essentially cooperative natures. On this basis, the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (see p. 160), for instance, developed what he called mutualism, the belief that small communities of independent peasants, craftsmen and artisans could manage their lives using a system of fair and equitable exchange, avoiding the injustices and exploitation of capitalism. Other anarchists, such as the Russian Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), advanced a form of anarcho-communism, the central principles of which were common ownership, decentralization and self-management.

Feminism

Although feminist aspirations have been expressed in societies dating back to Ancient China, they were not underpinned by a developed political theory until the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* ([1792] 1985). Indeed, it was not until the emergence of the women's suffrage movement in the 1840s and 1850s that feminist ideas reached a wider audience, in the form of so-called 'first-wave feminism'. The achievement of female suffrage in most western countries in the early twentieth century deprived the women's movement of its central goal and organizing principle. 'Second-wave feminism', however, emerged in the 1960s. This expressed the more radical, and sometimes revolutionary, demands of the growing Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). Feminist theories and

Concept

Ecology, ecologism

Ecology (from the Greek *oikos* and *logos*, and meaning 'study of the home') is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their environment. It thus draws attention to the network of relationships that sustain all forms of life, and highlights the interconnectedness of nature. Ecology (a term first used by Ernst Haeckel in 1873) can be regarded as a science, a descriptive principle, or even a moral value. Ecologism is a political doctrine or ideology that is constructed on the basis of ecological assumptions, notably about the essential link between humankind and the natural world: humans are part of nature, not its 'masters'. Ecologism is sometimes distinguished from environmentalism, in that the former implies the adoption of a biocentric or ecocentric perspective, while the latter is concerned with protecting nature, ultimately for human benefit.

doctrines are diverse, but their unifying feature is a common desire to enhance, through whatever means, the social role of women. The underlying themes of feminism are therefore, first, that society is characterized by sexual or gender inequality and, second, that this structure of male power can and should be overturned.

At least three contrasting feminist traditions can be identified. Liberal feminists, such as Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan (see p. 286), have tended to understand female subordination in terms of the unequal distribution of rights and opportunities in society. This 'equal-rights feminism' is essentially reformist. It is concerned more with the reform of the 'public' sphere, that is, with enhancing the legal and political status of women and improving their educational and career prospects, than with reordering 'private' or domestic life. In contrast, socialist feminists typically highlight the links between female subordination and the capitalist mode of production, drawing attention to the economic significance of women being confined to a family or domestic life where they, for example, relieve male workers of the burden of domestic labour, rear and help to educate the next generation of capitalist workers, and act as a reserve army of labour.

However, the distinctive flavour of second-wave feminism results mainly from the emergence of a feminist critique that is not rooted in conventional political doctrines, namely radical feminism. Radical feminists believe that gender divisions are the most fundamental and politically significant cleavages in society. In their view, all societies, historical and contemporary, are characterized by patriarchy (see p. 94), the institution whereby, as Kate Millett (1969) put it, 'that half of the population which is female is controlled by that half which is male'. Radical feminists therefore proclaim the need for a sexual revolution, a revolution that will, in particular, restructure personal, domestic and family life. The characteristic slogan of radical feminism is thus 'the personal is the political'. Only in its extreme form, however, does radical feminism portray men as 'the enemy', and proclaim the need for women to withdraw from male society, a stance sometimes expressed in the form of political lesbianism.

Environmentalism

Although environmentalism is usually seen as a new ideology that is linked to the emergence of the ecological, or Green, movement in the late twentieth century, its roots can be traced back to the nineteenth-century revolt against industrialization. Environmentalism therefore reflects concern about the damage done to the natural world by the increasing pace of economic development (exacerbated in the second half of the twentieth century by the advent of nuclear technology, acid rain, ozone depletion, global warming and so on), and anxiety about the declining quality of human existence and, ultimately, the survival of the human species. Such concerns are sometimes expressed through the vehicle of conventional ideologies. For instance, ecosocialism explains environmental destruction in terms of capitalism's rapacious desire for profit. Ecoconservatism links the cause of conservation to the desire to preserve traditional values and established institutions. And ecofeminism locates the origins of the ecological crisis in the system of male power, reflecting the fact that men are less sensitive than women to natural processes and the natural world.

However, what gives environmentalism its radical edge is the fact that it offers an alternative to the **anthropocentric** or human-centred stance adopted by all other ideologies; it does not see the natural world simply as a convenient resource available

Anthropocentrism: The belief that human needs and interests are of overriding moral and philosophical importance; the opposite of ecocentrism.

Concept

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism (from the Latin *fundamentum*, meaning 'base') is a style of thought in which certain principles are recognized as essential 'truths' that have unchallengeable and overriding authority, regardless of their content. Substantive fundamentalisms therefore have little or nothing in common, except that their supporters tend to evince an earnestness or fervour born out of doctrinal certainty. Although it is usually associated with religion and the literal truth of sacred texts, fundamentalism can also be found in political creeds. Even liberal scepticism can be said to incorporate the fundamental belief that all theories should be doubted (except for itself). Although the term is often used pejoratively to imply inflexibility, dogmatism and authoritarianism, fundamentalism may also give expression to selflessness and a devotion to principle.

to satisfy human needs. By highlighting the importance of ecology, environmentalism or, as some of its proponents would prefer to call it, ecologism develops an ecocentric world view that portrays the human species as merely part of nature. One of the most influential theories in this field is the Gaia hypothesis, advanced by James Lovelock (1979). This portrays the planet Earth as a living organism that is primarily concerned with its own survival. Others have expressed sympathy for Eastern religions that emphasize the oneness of life, such as Taoism and Zen Buddhism (Capra, 1983). 'Shallow' ecologists, or 'light Greens', such as those in some environmental pressure groups, believe that an appeal to self-interest and common sense will persuade humankind to adopt ecologically sound policies and lifestyles. 'Deep' ecologists, or 'dark Greens', on the other hand, insist that nothing short of a fundamental reordering of political priorities, and a willingness to place the interests of the ecosystem before those of any individual species, will ultimately secure planetary and human survival. Members of both groups can be found in the 'antiparty' Green parties that have sprung up in Germany, Austria and elsewhere in Europe since the 1970s.

Religious fundamentalism

Religion and politics overlap at a number of points, not least in the development of the major ideological traditions. Ethical socialism, for instance, has been grounded in a variety of religious creeds, giving rise to forms of Christian socialism, Islamic socialism and so on. Protestantism helped to shape the ideas of self-striving and individual responsibility that gained political expression in classical liberalism. Religious fundamentalism, however, is different, in that it views politics (and indeed all aspects of personal and social existence) as being secondary to the 'revealed truth' of religious doctrine. From this perspective, political and social life should be organized on the basis of what are seen as essential or original religious principles, commonly supported by a belief in the literal truth of sacred texts. As it is possible to develop such principles into a comprehensive world view, religious fundamentalism can be treated as an ideology in its own right.

Where does religious fundamentalism come from, and what explains its resurgence at the end of the twentieth century? Two contrasting explanations have been advanced. One views fundamentalism as essentially an aberration, a symptom of the adjustment that societies make as they become accustomed to a modern and secularized culture. The second suggests that fundamentalism is of enduring signifi-

cance, and believes that it is a consequence of the failure of **secularism** to satisfy the abiding human desire for 'higher' or spiritual truth.

Forms of religious fundamentalism have arisen in various parts of the world. The significance of Christian fundamentalism, for example, has increased in the USA since the 1970s as a result of the emergence of the 'New Christian Right', which campaigns against abortion, and for the introduction of prayers in US schools and a return to traditional family values. In Israel, Jewish fundamentalism, long represented by a collection of small religious parties, has grown in importance as a result of attempts to prevent parts of what are seen as the Jewish homeland being seceded to an emerging Palestinian state. Hindu fundamentalism in India has developed to resist the spread of western secularism, and to combat the influence of rival creeds such as Sikhism and Islam.

The most politically significant of modern fundamentalisms is undoubtedly Islamic fundamentalism. This was brought to prominence by the Iranian revolution of 1979, which led to the founding of the world's first Islamic state, under Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-89). It has subsequently spread throughout the Middle East, across North Africa, and into parts of Asia. Although the Shi'ite fundamentalism of Iran has generated the fiercest commitment and devotion, Islam in general has been a vehicle for expressing antiwesternism, through both antipathy towards the neocolonialism of western powers, and attempts to resist the spread of permissiveness and materialism. This was most clearly reflected in the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, 1997-2001. Islamic fundamentalism has, in particular, succeeded in articulating the aspirations of the urban poor in developing states, who until the 1970s were more likely to be attracted to socialism, in either its Islamic or its Marxist-Leninist form.

The end of ideology?

Much of the debate about ideology in the late twentieth century focused on predictions of its demise, or at least of its fading relevance. This came to be known as the 'end of ideology' debate. It was initiated in the 1950s, stimulated by the collapse of fascism at the end of the Second World War and the decline of communism in the developed West. In *The End of Ideology?: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the 1950s* (1960), the US sociologist Daniel Bell declared that the stock of political ideas had been exhausted. In his view, ethical and ideological questions had become irrelevant because in most western societies parties competed for power simply by promising higher levels of economic growth and material affluence. In short, economics had triumphed over politics. However, the process to which Bell drew attention was not so much an end of ideology as the emergence of a broad ideological consensus (see p. 10) amongst major parties that led to the suspension of ideological debate. The ideology that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s was a form of welfare capitalism, which in the UK and elsewhere took the form of a Keynesian-welfarist consensus.

Secularism: The belief that religion should not intrude into secular (worldly) affairs, usually reflected in a desire to separate church from state.

A more recent contribution to this debate was made by Francis Fukuyama (see p. 31) in his essay 'The End of History?' (1989). Fukuyama did not suggest that political ideology had become irrelevant, but rather that a single ideology, liberal democracy, had triumphed over all its rivals, and that this triumph was final. This essay was written against the background of the collapse of communism in eastern Europe, which Fukuyama interpreted as indicating the demise of Marxism-Leninism as an ideology

Concept

Postmodernism, postmodernity

Postmodernism is a controversial and confusing term that was first used to describe experimental movements in western arts, architecture and cultural development in general. As a tool of social and political analysis, postmodernism highlights the shift away from societies structured by industrialization and class solidarity to increasingly fragmented and pluralistic information societies (that is, to postmodernity) in which individuals are transformed from producers to consumers, and individualism replaces class, religious and ethnic loyalties. From this perspective, conventional political ideologies such as Marxism and liberalism tend to be rejected as irrelevant 'meta-narratives' that developed out of the process of modernization. Postmodernists argue that there is no such thing as certainty; the idea of absolute and universal truth must be discarded as an arrogant pretence. In this sense, postmodernism is an example of 'anti-foundationalism'. Emphasis is thus placed on the importance of discourse, debate and democracy.

of world-historical importance. Anthony Giddens (1994), by contrast, argued that conventional ideologies of both left and right have become increasingly redundant in a society characterized by globalization, the decline of tradition and the expansion of **social reflexivity.** An alternative way of interpreting these developments, however, is offered by postmodernism, which suggests that the major ideologies, or 'grand narratives', were essentially products of a period of modernization that has now passed. On the other hand, the very assertion of an end of ideology, an end of history, or an end of modernity can be seen as ideological in itself. Rather than heralding the final demise of ideology, such assertions may merely demonstrate that ideological debate is alive and well, and that the evolution of ideology is a continuing and perhaps unending process.

Summary

• Ideology is a controversial political term that has often carried pejorative implications. In the social-scientific sense, a political ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis for organized political action. Its central features are an account of existing power relationships, a model of a desired future, and an outline of how political change can and should be brought about.

• Ideologies link political theory with political practice. On one level, ideologies resemble political philosophies, in that they constitute a collection of values, theories and doctrines: that is, a distinctive world view. On another level, however, they take the form of broad political movements, and are articulated through the activities of political leaders, parties and groups.

• Every ideology can be associated with a characteristic set of principles and ideas. Although these ideas 'hang together' in the sense that they interlock in distinctive ways, they are systematic or coherent only in a relative sense. All ideologies thus embody a range of rival traditions and internal tensions. Conflict within ideologies is thus sometimes more passionate than that between ideologies.

• Ideologies are by no means hermetically sealed and unchanging systems of thought. They overlap with one another at a number of points, and they sometimes have shared concerns and a common vocabulary. They are also always subject to

Social reflexivity: Interaction between people who enjoy a high level of autonomy within a context of reciprocity and interdependence.

political or intellectual renewal, both because they interact with, and influence the development of, other ideologies, and because they change over time as they are applied to changing historical circumstances.

• The significance of particular ideologies rises and falls in relation to the ideology's relevance to political, social and economic circumstances, and its capacity for theoretical innovation. Ideological conflict in the twentieth century forced major ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism to reexamine their traditional principles, and it fostered the growth of new ideologies, such as feminism, ecologism and religious fundamentalism.

• Debate about the end of ideology has taken a number of forms. In the early post-Second-World-War period, it was linked to the declining appeal of fascism and communism and the view that economic issues had displaced ideological ones. The 'end of history' thesis suggests that liberal democracy has triumphed worldwide. Postmodernism implies that conventional ideologies are irrelevant, as they were intrinsically a product of an earlier period of modernization.

Questions for discussion

- Why has the concept of ideology so often carried negative associations?
- Is it any longer possible to distinguish between liberalism and socialism?
- To what extent do New Right ideas conflict with those of traditional conservatism?
- Is the 'third way' a meaningful and coherent ideological stance?
- Has Marxism a future?
- What circumstances are most conducive to the rise of fascism?
- Do anarchists demand the impossible?
- Why have feminism, ecologism and fundamentalism grown in significance? Do they have the potential to displace conventional political creeds?
- Is it possible to dispense with ideology?

Further reading

Heywood, A. *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (2nd ed.) (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave 1997). An accessible, up-to-date and comprehensive guide to the major ideological traditions.

McLellan, D. *Ideology* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). A short and clear yet thorough discussion of this elusive concept.

Good introductions to particular ideologies include the following: Arblaster (1984) on liberalism, O'Sullivan (1976) on conservatism, Wright (1987) on socialism, Giddens (2001) on the third way, Marshall (1991) on anarchism, Laqueur (1979) on fascism, Bryson (1992) on feminism, Dobson (1990) on ecologism, and Marty and Appleby (1993) on religious fundamentalism.

Democracy

CHAPTER 4

'Democracy is the worst form of government except all the other forms that have been tried from time to time.'

WINSTON CHURCHILL *Speech,* UK House of Commons (1947)

The mass conversion of politicians and political thinkers to the cause of democracy has been one of the most dramatic, and significant, events in political history. Even in Ancient Greece, often thought of as the cradle of the democratic idea, democracy tended to be viewed in negative terms. Thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle, for example, viewed democracy as a system of rule by the masses at the expense of wisdom and property. Well into the nineteenth century, the term continued to have pejorative implications, suggesting a system of 'mob rule'. Now, however, we are all democrats. Liberals, conservatives, socialists, communists, anarchists and even fascists are eager to proclaim the virtues of democracy and to demonstrate their own democratic credentials. Indeed, as the major ideological systems faltered and collapsed in the late twentieth century, the flame of democracy appeared to burn yet more strongly. As the attractions of socialism have faded, and the merits of capitalism have been called into question, democracy emerged as perhaps the only stable and enduring principle in the postmodern political landscape.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- How has the term 'democracy' been used?
- Around what issues has the debate about the nature of democracy revolved?
- What models of democratic rule have been advanced?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these models?
- How do democratic systems operate in practice?

Defining democracy

The origins of the term democracy can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Like other words ending in 'cracy' (for example, autocracy, aristocracy and bureaucracy), democracy is derived from the Greek word *kratos,* meaning power, or rule. Democracy thus means 'rule by the *demos'* (the *demos* referring to 'the people', although the Greeks originally used this to mean 'the poor' or 'the many'). However, the simple notion of 'rule by the people' does not get us very far. The problem with democracy has been its very popularity, a popularity that has threatened the term's undoing as a meaningful political concept. In being almost universally regarded as a 'good thing', democracy has come to be used as little more than a 'hurrah! word', implying approval of a particular set of ideas or system of rule. In Bernard Crick's (1993) words, 'democracy is perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs'. A term that can mean anything to anyone is in danger of meaning nothing at all. Amongst the meanings that have been attached to the word 'democracy' are the following:

- a system of rule by the poor and disadvantaged
- a form of government in which the people rule themselves directly and continuously, without the need for professional politicians or public officials
- a society based on equal opportunity and individual merit, rather than hierarchy and privilege
- a system of welfare and redistribution aimed at narrowing social inequalities
- a system of decision-making based on the principle of majority rule
- a system of rule that secures the rights and interests of minorities by placing checks upon the power of the majority
- a means of filling public offices through a competitive struggle for the popular vote
- a system of government that serves the interests of the people regardless of their participation in political life.

Perhaps a more helpful starting point from which to consider the nature of democracy is Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered in 1864 at the height of the American Civil War. Lincoln extolled the virtues of what he called 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'. What this makes clear is that democracy links government to the people, but that this link can be forged in a number of ways: government *of, by* and *for* the people. The precise nature of democratic rule has been the subject of fierce ideological and political debate. The next main section of this chapter looks at various models of democracy. This section, however, explores the terms of the 'democracy debate'. These boil down to the attempt to answer three central questions:

- Who are the people?
- In what sense should the people rule?
- How far should popular rule extend?

Who are the people?

One of the core features of democracy is the principle of political equality, the notion that political power should be distributed as widely and as evenly as possible.

However, within what body or group should this power be distributed? In short, who constitutes 'the people'? On the face of it, the answer is simple: 'the *demos'*, or 'the people', surely refers to *all* the people, that is, the entire population of the country. In practice, however, every democratic system has restricted political participation, sometime severely.

As noted above, early Greek writers usually used *demos* to refer to 'the many': that is, the disadvantaged and usually propertyless masses. Democracy therefore implied not political equality, but a bias towards the poor. In Greek city-states, political participation was restricted to a tiny proportion of the population, male citizens over the age of 20, thereby excluding all women, slaves and foreigners. Strict restrictions on voting also existed in most western states until well into the twentieth century, usually in the form of a property qualification or the exclusion of women. Universal suffrage was not established in the UK until 1928, when women gained full voting rights. In the USA it was not achieved until the early 1960s, when African-American people in many Southern states were able to vote for the first time, and in Switzerland it was established in 1971 when women were eventually enfranchised. Nevertheless, an important restriction continues to be practised in all democratic systems in the form of the exclusion of children from political participation, although the age of majority ranges from 21 down to as low as 15 (as in Iranian presidential elections). Technical restrictions are also often placed on, for example, the certifiably insane and imprisoned criminals.

Although 'the people' is now accepted as meaning virtually all adult citizens, the term can be construed in a number of different ways. The people, for instance, can be viewed as a single, cohesive body, bound together by a common or collective interest: in this sense, the people are one and indivisible. Such a view tends to generate a model of democracy that, like Rousseau's (see p. 75) theory, examined in the next main section, focuses upon the 'general will' or collective will, rather than the 'private will' of each individual. Alternatively, as division and disagreement exist within all communities, 'the people' may in practice be taken to mean 'the majority'. In this case, democracy comes to mean the strict application of the principle of majority rule, in which the will of the majority or numerically strongest overrides the will of the minority. This can nevertheless mean that democracy degenerates into 'the tyranny of the majority'. Finally, the people can be thought of as a collection of free and equal individuals, each of whom has a right to make autonomous decisions. Not only does this view clearly contradict any form of **majoritarianism,** but it also implies that, in the final analysis, only unanimous decisions can be binding upon the *demos*, and so dramatically restricts the application of democratic principles.

Concept

Political equality

In broad terms, political equality means an equal distribution of political power and influence. Political equality can thus be thought of as the core principle of democracy, in that it ensures that, however 'the people' is defined, each individual member carries the same weight: all voices are equally loud. This can be understood in two ways. In liberal-democratic theory, political equality implies an equal distribution of political rights: the right to vote, the right to stand for election and so on. This is often summed up as the principle 'one person, one vote; one vote, one value'. In contrast, socialists, amongst others, link political influence to factors such as the control of economic resources and access to the means of mass communication. From this perspective, political equality implies not merely equal voting rights, but also a significant level of social equality.

How should the people rule?

Most conceptions of democracy are based on the principle of 'government *by* the people'. This implies that, in effect, people govern themselves - that they participate in making the crucial decisions that structure their lives and determine the fate of their society. This participation can take a number of forms, however. In the case of direct democracy, popular participation entails direct and continuous involvement in decision-making, through devices such as referendums, mass meetings, or even interactive television. The alternative and more common form of democratic participation is the act of voting, which is the central feature of what is usually called representative democracy. When citizens vote, they do not so much make the decisions

Majoritarianism: A theory or practice in which priority is accorded to the will of the majority; majoritarianism implies insensitivity towards minorities and individuals.

Focus on . . .

Direct democracy and representative democracy

Direct democracy (sometimes 'participatory democracy') is based on the direct, unmediated and continuous participation of citizens in the tasks of government. Direct democracy thus obliterates the distinction between government and the governed and between the state and civil society; it is a system of popular self-government. It was achieved in ancient Athens through a form of government by mass meeting; its most common modern manifestation is the use of the referendum (see p. 226). The merits of direct democracy include the following:

- It heightens the control that citizens can exercise over their own destinies, as it



that structure their own lives as choose who will make those decisions on their behalf. What gives voting its democratic character, however, is that, provided that the election is competitive, it empowers the public to 'kick the rascals out', and it thus makes politicians publicly accountable.

There are also models of democracy that are built on the principle of 'government *for* the people', and that allow little scope for public participation of any kind, direct or indirect. The most grotesque example of this was found in the so-called **totalitarian democracies** that developed under fascist dictators such as Mussolini and Hitler. The democratic credentials of such regimes were based on the claim that the 'leader', and the leader alone, articulated the genuine interests of the people, thus implying that a 'true' democracy can be equated with an absolute dictatorship. In such cases,

Totalitarian democracy: An absolute dictatorship that masquerades as a democracy, typically based on the leader's claim to a monopoly of ideological wisdom.

popular rule meant nothing more than ritualized submission to the will of an all-powerful leader, orchestrated through rallies, marches and demonstrations. This was sometimes portrayed as Plebiscitary democracy. Although totalitarian democracies have proved to be a travesty of the conventional notion of democratic rule, they demonstrate the tension that can exist between 'government *by* the people' (or popular participation), and 'government *for* the people' (rule in the public interest). Advocates of representative democracy, for example, have wished to confine popular participation in politics to the act of voting, precisely because they fear that the general public lack the wisdom, education and experience to rule wisely on their own behalf.

Concept

Plebiscitary democracy

Plebiscitary democracy is a form of democratic rule that operates through an unmediated link between the rulers and the ruled, established by plebiscites (or referendums). These allow the public to express their views on political issues directly. This is thus a species of direct, or participatory, democracy. However, this type of democracy is often criticized because of the scope it offers for demagoguery (rule by political leaders who manipulate the masses through oratory, and appeal to their prejudices and passions). This type of democracy amounts to little more than a system of mass acclamation that gives dictatorship a populist (see p. 354) gloss. There is, nevertheless, a distinction between plebiscitary democracy and the use of referendums to supplement a system of representative democracy.

How far should popular rule extend?

Now that we have decided who the people are, and how they should rule, it is necessary to consider how far their rule should extend. What is the proper realm of democracy? What issues is it right for the people to decide, and what should be left to individual citizens? In many respects, such questions reopen the debate about the proper relationship between the public realm and the private realm that was discussed in Chapter 1. Models of democracy that have been constructed on the basis of liberal individualism have usually proposed that democracy be restricted to political life, with politics being narrowly defined. From this perspective, the purpose of democracy is to establish, through some process of popular participation, a framework of laws within which individuals can conduct their own affairs and pursue their private interests. Democratic solutions, then, are appropriate only for matters that specifically relate to the community; used in other circumstances, democracy amounts to an infringement of liberty. Not uncommonly, this fear of democracy is reflected in a rejection of direct or participatory forms of democracy.

However, an alternative view of democracy is often developed by, for example, socialists and radical democrats. In **radical democracy,** democracy is seen not as a means of laying down a framework within which individuals can go about their own business, but rather as a general principle that is applicable to all areas of social existence. People are seen as having a basic right to participate in the making of *any* decisions that affect their lives, with democracy simply being the collective process through which this is done. This position is evident in socialist demands for the collectivization of wealth and the introduction of workers' self-management, both of which are seen as ways of democratizing economic life. Instead of endorsing mere political democracy, socialists have therefore called for 'social democracy' or 'industrial democracy'. Feminists, similarly, have demanded the democratization of family life, understood as the right of all to participate in the making of decisions in the domestic or private sphere. From this perspective, democracy is regarded as a friend of liberty, not as its enemy. Only when such principles are ignored can oppression and exploitation flourish.

Models of democracy

All too frequently, democracy is treated as a single, unambiguous phenomenon. It is often assumed that what passes for democracy in most western societies (a system of regular and competitive elections based on a universal franchise) is the only, or the only legitimate, form of democracy. Sometimes this notion of democracy is qualified

Radical democracy: A form of democracy that favours decentralization and participation, the widest possible dispersal of political power.

by the addition of the term 'liberal', turning it into liberal democracy (see p. 30). In reality, however, there are a number of rival theories or models of democracy, each offering its own version of popular rule. This highlights not merely the variety of democratic forms and mechanisms, but also, more fundamentally, the very different grounds on which democratic rule can be justified. Even liberal democracy is a misleading term, as competing liberal views of democratic organization can be identified. Four contrasting models of democracy can be identified as follows:

- classical democracy
- protective democracy
- developmental democracy
- people's democracy.

Classical democracy

The classical model of democracy is based on the *polis,* or city-state, of Ancient Greece, and particularly on the system of rule that developed in the largest and most powerful Greek city-state, Athens. The form of direct democracy that operated in Athens during the fourth and fifth centuries BCE is often portrayed as the only pure or ideal system of popular participation. Nevertheless, although the model had considerable impact on later thinkers such as Rousseau (see p. 75) and Marx (see p. 53), Athenian democracy developed a very particular kind of direct popular rule, one that has only a very limited application in the modern world. Athenian democracy amounted to a form of government by mass meeting. All major decisions were made by the Assembly, or *Ecclesia,* to which all citizens belonged. This met at least 40 times a year. When full-time public officials were needed, they were chosen on a basis of lot or rota to ensure that they constituted a microcosm of the larger citizenry, and terms of office were typically short to achieve the broadest possible participation. A Council consisting of 500 citizens acted as the executive or steering committee of the Assembly, and a 50-strong Committee, in turn, made proposals to the Council. The President of the Committee held office for only a single day, and no Athenian could hold this honour more than once in his lifetime. The only concession made to the need for training and experience was in the case of the ten military generals, who, unlike other public officials, were eligible for reelection.

What made Athenian democracy so remarkable was the level of political activity of its citizens. Not only did they participate in regular meetings of the Assembly but they were, in large numbers, prepared to shoulder the responsibility of public office and decision-making. The most influential contemporaneous critic of this form of democracy was the philosopher Plato (see p. 13). Plato attacked the principle of political equality on the grounds that the mass of the people possess neither the wisdom nor the experience to rule wisely on their own behalf. His solution, advanced in *The Republic,* was that government be placed in the hands of a class of philosopher kings, the Guardians, whose rule would amount to a kind of enlightened dictatorship. On a practical level, however, the principal drawback of Athenian democracy was that it could operate only by excluding the mass of the population from political activity. Participation was restricted to Athenian-born males who were over 20 years of age. Slaves (the majority of the population), women and foreigners had no political rights whatsoever. Indeed, Athenian citizens were able to devote so much of their lives to politics only because slavery relieved them of the need to engage in

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832)



UK philosopher, legal reformer and founder of utilitarianism. Bentham developed a moral and philosophical system that was

government and economics in the UK in the nineteenth century. A supporter of *laissez-faire* econom

arduous labour, and the confinement of women to the private realm freed them from domestic responsibilities. In this light, in fact, the Athenian *polis* could be seen as the very antithesis of the democratic ideal. Nevertheless, the classical model of direct and continuous popular participation in political life has been kept alive in certain parts of the world, notably in the township meetings of New England in the USA and in the communal assemblies that operate in the smaller Swiss cantons. It is also the basis for the wider use of referendums, particularly in relation to constitutional issues, and for new experiments in democracy such as people's panels and electronic democracy.

Protective democracy

When democratic ideas were revived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they appeared in a form that was very different from the classical democracy of Ancient Greece. In particular, democracy was seen less as a mechanism through which the public could participate in political life, and more as a device through which citizens could protect themselves from the encroachments of government, hence protective democracy. This view appealed particularly to early liberal thinkers whose concern was, above all, to create the widest realm of individual liberty. The desire to protect the individual from over-mighty government was expressed in perhaps the earliest of all democratic sentiments, Aristotle's response to Plato: *'quis custodiet custodes?* ('who will guard the Guardians?').

This same concern with unchecked power was taken up in the seventeenth century by John Locke (see p. 45), who argued that the right to vote was based on the existence of **natural rights** and, in particular, on the right to property. If government, through taxation, possessed the power to expropriate property, citizens were entitled to protect themselves by controlling the composition of the tax-setting body: the legislature. In other words, democracy came to mean a system of 'government by consent' operating through a representative assembly. However, Locke himself was not a democrat by modern standards, as he believed that only property owners should vote, on the basis that only they had natural rights that could be infringed by government. The more radical notion of universal suffrage was advanced from the late eighteenth century onwards by utilitarian theorists such as Jeremy Bentham and James Mill (1773-1836). The utilitarian (see p. 401) case for democracy is also based on the need to protect or advance individual interests. Bentham came to believe that, since all individuals seek pleasure and the avoidance

Utility: Use value; satisfaction derived from material consumption.

Natural rights: God-given rights that are fundamental to human beings and are therefore inalienable (they cannot be taken away).

of pain, a universal franchise (conceived in his day as manhood suffrage) was the only way of promoting 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number'.

However, to justify democracy on protective grounds is to provide only a qualified endorsement of democratic rule. In short, protective democracy is but a limited and indirect form of democracy. In practice, the **consent** of the governed is exercised through voting in regular and competitive elections. This thereby ensures the accountability of those who govern. Political equality is thus understood in strictly technical terms to mean equal voting rights. Moreover, this is above all a system of constitutional democracy that operates within a set of formal or informal rules that check the exercise of government power. If the right to vote is a means of defending individual liberty, liberty must also be guaranteed by a strictly enforced separation of powers via the creation of a separate executive, legislature and judiciary, and by the maintenance of basic rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. Ultimately, protective democracy aims to give citizens the widest possible scope to live their lives as they choose. It is therefore compatible with *laissez-faire* capitalism (see p. 183) and the belief that individuals should be entirely responsible for their economic and social circumstances. Protective democracy has therefore particularly appealed to classical liberals and, in modern politics, to supporters of the New Right.

Developmental democracy

Although early democratic theory focused on the need to protect individual rights and interests, it soon developed an alternative focus: a concern with the development of the human individual and the community. This gave rise to quite new models of democratic rule that can broadly be referred to as systems of developmental democracy. The most novel, and radical, such model was developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In many respects, Rousseau's ideas mark a departure from the dominant, liberal conception of democracy, and they came to have an impact on the Marxist and anarchist traditions as well as, later, on the New Left. For Rousseau, democracy was ultimately a means through which human beings could achieve freedom (see p. 300) or autonomy, in the sense of 'obedience to a law one prescribes to oneself. In other words, citizens are 'free' only when they participate directly and continuously in shaping the life of their community. This is an idea that moves well beyond the conventional notion of electoral democracy and offers support for the more radical ideal of direct democracy. Indeed, Rousseau was a strenuous critic of the practice of elections used in England, arguing in *The Social Contract* ([1762] 1913) as follows:

> The English people believes itself to be free, it is gravely mistaken; it is only free when it elects its member of parliament; as soon as they are elected, the people are enslaved; it is nothing. In the brief moment of its freedom, the English people makes such use of its freedom that it deserves to lose it.

Consent: Assent or permission; in politics, usually an agreement to be governed or ruled.

General will: The genuine interests of a collective body, equivalent to the common good; the will of all provided each person acts selflessly.

However, what gives Rousseau's model its novel character is his insistence that freedom ultimately means obedience to the **general will.** Rousseau believed the general will to be the 'true' will of each citizen, in contrast to his or her 'private' or selfish will. By obeying the general will, citizens are therefore doing nothing more than obeying their own 'true' natures, the general will being what individuals would will if they were to act selflessly. In Rousseau's view, such a system of radical developmental democracy required not merely political equality but a relatively high level of

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78)

Geneva-born French moral and political philosopher, perhaps the principal intellectual influence upon the French Revolution. Rousseau was entirely self-taught. He moved to Paris in 1742, and became an intimate of leading members of the French Enlightenment, especially Diderot. His writings, ranging over education, the arts, science, literature and philosophy, reflect a deep belief in the corruption of 'social man'. Rousseau's political teaching, summarized in *Émile* (1762) and developed in *The Social Contract* ([1762] 1913), advocates a radical form of democracy that has influenced liberal, socialist, anarchist and, some would argue, fascist thought. His autobiography, *Confessions* (1770), examines his life with remarkable candour and dem



economic equality. Although not a supporter of common ownership, Rousseau nevertheless proposed that 'no citizen shall be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself' ([1762] 1913:96).

Rousseau's theories have helped to shape the modern idea of participatory democracy taken up by New Left thinkers in the 1960s and 1970s. This extols the virtues of a 'participatory society', a society in which each and every citizen is able to achieve self-development by participating in the decisions that shape his or her life. This goal can be achieved only through the promotion of openness, accountability (see p. 393) and decentralization within all the key institutions of society: within the family, the workplace and the local community just as much as within 'political' institutions such as parties, interest groups and legislative bodies. At the heart of this model is the notion of 'grass-roots democracy': that is, the belief that political power should be exercised at the lowest possible level. Nevertheless, Rousseau's own theories have been criticized for distinguishing between citizens' 'true' wills and their 'felt' or subjective wills. The danger of this is that, if the general will cannot be established by simply asking citizens what they want (because they may be blinded by selfishness), there is scope for the general will to be defined from above, perhaps by a dictator claiming to act in the 'true' interests of society. Rousseau is therefore sometimes seen as the architect of so-called totalitarian democracy (Talmon, 1952).

However, a more modest form of developmental democracy has also been advanced that is compatible with the liberal model of representative government. This view of developmental democracy is rooted in the writings of John Stuart Mill (see p. 46). For Mill, the central virtue of democracy was that it promotes the 'highest and harmonious' development of individual capacities. By participating in political life, citizens enhance their understanding, strengthen their sensibilities, and achieve a higher level of personal development. In short, democracy is essentially an educational experience. As a result, Mill proposed the broadening of popular participation, arguing that the franchise should be extended to all but those who are illiterate. In the process, he suggested (radically, for his time) that suffrage should also be extended to women. In addition, he advocated strong and independent local authorities in the belief that this would broaden the opportunities available for holding public office.

On the other hand, Mill, in common with all liberals, was also aware of the dangers of democracy. Indeed, Mill's views are out of step with mainstream liberal thought in that he rejected the idea of formal political equality. Following Plato, Mill did not

Concept

Parliamentary democracy

Parliamentary democracy is a form of democratic rule that operates through a popularly elected deliberative assembly, which establishes an indirect link between government and the governed. Democracy, in this sense, essentially means responsible and representative government. Parliamentary democracy thus balances popular participation against elite rule: government is accountable not directly to the public but to the public's elected representatives. The attraction of such a system is that representatives are, by virtue of their education and the opportunities that they have to deliberate and debate, supposedly better able than citizens themselves to define the citizens' best interests. In the classical form of parliamentary democracy, associated with J. S. Mill and Burke (see p. 47), parliamentarians are required to think for themselves on behalf of their constituents. Modern party politics, however, has fused the ideas of parliamentary democracy and mandate democracy (see p. 228).

believe that all political opinions are of equal value. Consequently, he proposed a system of plural voting: unskilled workers would have a single vote, skilled workers two votes, and graduates and members of the learned professions five or six votes. However, his principal reservation about democracy was derived from the more typical liberal fear of what Alexis de Tocqueville (see p. 218) famously described as 'the tyranny of the majority'. In other words, democracy always contains the threat that individual liberty and minority rights may be crushed in the name of the people. Mill's particular concern was that democracy would undermine debate, criticism and intellectual life in general by encouraging people to accept the will of the majority, thereby promoting uniformity and dull conformism. Quite simply, the majority is not always right; wisdom cannot be determined by the simple device of a show of hands. Mill's ideas therefore support the idea of **deliberative democracy** or parliamentary democracy.

People's democracy

The term 'people's democracy' is derived from the orthodox communist regimes that sprang up on the Soviet model in the aftermath of the Second World War. It is here used, however, to refer broadly to the various democratic models that the Marxist tradition has generated. Although they differ, these models offer a clear contrast to the more familiar liberal democratic ones. Marxists have tended to be dismissive of liberal or parliamentary democracy, seeing it as a form of 'bourgeois' or 'capitalist' democracy. Nevertheless, Marxists were drawn to the concept or ideal of democracy because of its clear egalitarian implications. The term was used in particular to designate the goal of social equality brought about through the common ownership of wealth ('social democracy' in its original sense), in contrast to 'political' democracy, which establishes only a facade of equality.

Marx believed that the overthrow of capitalism would be a trigger that would allow genuine democracy to flourish. In his view, a fully communist society would come into existence only after a transitionary period characterized by 'the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat'. In effect, a system of 'bourgeois' democracy would be replaced by a very different system of 'proletarian' democracy. Although Marx refused to describe in detail how this transitionary society would be organized, its broad shape can be discerned from his admiration for the Paris Commune of 1871, which was a short-lived experiment in what approximated to direct democracy. Marx predicted, however, that, as class antagonisms faded and a fully communist society came into existence, the proletarian state would simply 'wither away'. Not only would this bring an end to the need for government, law and even politics, but it would also, effectively, make democracy redundant.

The form of democracy that was developed in twentieth-century communist states, however, owed more to the ideas of V. I. Lenin than it did to those of Marx. Although Lenin's 1917 slogan 'All power to the Soviets' (the workers' and soldiers' and sailors' councils) had kept alive the notion of commune democracy, in reality power in Soviet Russia quickly fell into the hands of the Bolshevik party (soon renamed the Communist Party). In Lenin's view, this party was nothing less than 'the vanguard of the working class'. Armed with Marxism, the party claimed that it was able to perceive the genuine interests of the proletariat and thus guide it to the realization of its revolutionary potential. This theory became the cornerstone of 'Leninist democracy' in the USSR, and it was accepted by all other orthodox

Deliberative democracy: A form of democracy that emphasizes the need for discourse and debate to help define the public interest.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924)

Russian Marxist theorist and active revolutionary. As leader of the Bolsheviks, Lenin masterminded the 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution, and became the first leader of the USSR. His contributions to Marxism were his theory of the revolutionary or vanguard party, outlined in *What is to be Done?* ([1902] 1968), his analysis of colonialism as an economic phenomenon, described in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* ([1916] 1970), and his firm commitment to the 'insurrectionary road to socialism', developed in *State and Revolution* (1917). Lenin's reputation is inevitably tied up with the subsequent course of Soviet history; he is seen by some as the father of Stalinist oppression, but by others as a critic of bureaucracy and a defender of debate and argument.



communist regimes as one of the core features of Marxism-Leninism. However, the weakness of this model is that Lenin failed to build into it any mechanism for checking the power of the Communist Party (and particularly its leaders) and for ensuring that it remained sensitive and accountable to the proletarian class. To rephrase Aristotle, 'who will guard the Communist Party?'.

Democracy in practice: rival views

Although there continues to be controversy about which is the most desirable form of democracy, much of contemporary debate revolves around how democracy works in practice and what 'democratization' (see p. 81) implies. This reflects the fact that there is broad, even worldwide, acceptance of a particular model of democracy, generally termed liberal democracy. Despite the existence of competing tendencies within this broad category, certain central features are clear:

- Liberal democracy is an indirect and representative form of democracy in that political office is gained through success in regular elections that are conducted on the basis of formal political equality.
- Liberal democracy is based on competition and electoral choice. These are achieved through political pluralism, tolerance of a wide range of contending beliefs, and the existence of conflicting social philosophies and rival political movements and parties.
- In liberal democracy, there is a clear distinction between the state and civil society. This distinction is maintained through the existence of autonomous groups and interests, and the market or capitalist organization of economic life.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable amount of disagreement about the meaning and significance of liberal democracy. Does it, for instance, ensure a genuine and healthy dispersal of political power? Do democratic processes genuinely promote long-term benefits, or are they self-defeating? Can political equality coexist with economic inequality? In short, this form of democracy is interpreted in different ways by different theorists. The most important of these interpretations are advanced by:

- pluralism
- elitism

- corporatism
- the New Right
- Marxism.

Pluralist view

Pluralist ideas can be traced back to early liberal political philosophy, and notably to the ideas of Locke and Montesquieu (see p. 312). Their first systematic development, however, is found in the contributions of James Madison (see p. 302) to *The Federalist Papers* (Hamilton, Jay and Madison, [1787-89] 1961). In considering the transformation of America from a loose confederation of states into the federal USA, Madison's particular fear was the 'problem of factions'. In common with most liberals, Madison argued that unchecked democratic rule might simply lead to majoritarianism, to the crushing of individual rights and to the expropriation of property in the name of the people. What made Madison's work notable, however, was his stress upon the multiplicity of interests and groups in society, and his insistence that, unless each such group possessed a political voice, stability and order would be impossible. He therefore proposed a system of divided government based on the separation of powers, **bicameralism** and federalism (see p. 161), that offered a variety of access points to competing groups and interests. The resulting system of rule by multiple minorities is often referred to as 'Madisonian democracy'. Insofar as it recognizes both the existence of diversity or multiplicity in society, and the fact that such multiplicity is desirable, Madison's model is the first developed statement of pluralist principles.

The most influential modern exponent of pluralist theory is Robert Dahl (see p. 274). As described in *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (1961), Dahl carried out an empirical study of the distribution of power in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. He concluded that, although the politically privileged and economically powerful exerted greater power than ordinary citizens, no ruling or permanent elite was able to dominate the political process. His conclusion was that 'New Haven is an example of a democratic system, warts and all' (p. 311). Dahl recognized that modern democratic systems differ markedly from the classical democracies of Ancient Greece. With Charles Lindblom, he coined the term 'polyarchy' (see p. 33) to mean rule by the many, as distinct from rule by all citizens. The key feature of such a system of pluralist democracy is that competition between parties at election time, and the ability of interest or pressure groups to articulate their views freely, establishes a reliable link between the government and the governed, and creates a channel of communication between the two. While this may fall a long way short of the ideal of popular self-government, its supporters nevertheless argue that it ensures a sufficient level of accountability and popular responsiveness for it to be regarded as democratic.

However, the relationship between pluralism and democracy may not be a secure one. For instance, one of the purposes of the Madisonian system was, arguably, to constrain democracy in the hope of safeguarding property. In other words, the system of rule by multiple minorities may simply have been a device to prevent the majority (the propertyless masses) from exercising political power. A further problem is the danger of what has been called 'pluralist stagnation'. This occurs as organized groups and economic interests become so powerful that they create a log jam, resulting in the problem of government 'overload'. In such circumstances, a pluralist system may simply become ungovernable. Finally, there is the problem identified by

Concept

Pluralism

The term pluralism is used in two senses, one broad the other narrow. In its broader sense, pluralism is a belief in, or a commitment to, diversity or multiplicity (the existence of many things). As a descriptive term, pluralism may be used to denote the existence of party competition (political pluralism), a multiplicity of ethical values (moral pluralism), or a variety of *cultural norms* (*cultural* pluralism). As a normative term, it suggests that diversity is healthy and desirable, usually because it safeguards individual liberty and promotes debate, argument and understanding. More narrowly, pluralism is a theory of the distribution of political power. It holds that power is widely and evenly dispersed in society rather than concentrated in the hands of an elite or a ruling class. In this form, pluralism is usually seen as a theory of 'group politics' in which individuals are represented largely through their membership of organized groups, and all such groups have access to the policy process.

Bicameralism: The fragmentation of legislative power, established through the existence of two (co-equal) chambers in the assembly; a device of limited government (see p. 321).

Dahl in later works such as *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (1985), notably that the unequal ownership of economic resources tends to concentrate political power in the hands of the few, and deprive it from the many. This line of argument runs parallel to the conventional Marxist critique of pluralist democracy, and has given rise to neopluralism (see p. 90).

Elitist view

Elitism developed as a critique of egalitarian ideas such as democracy and socialism. It draws attention to the fact of elite rule, either as an inevitable and desirable feature of social existence, or as a remediable and regrettable one. Classical elitists, such as Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1857-1941) and Robert Michels (1876-1936), tended to take the former position. For them, democracy was no more than a foolish delusion, because political power is always exercised by a privileged minority: an elite. For example, in *The Ruling Class* ([1896] 1939), Mosca proclaimed that, in all societies, 'two classes of people appear - a class that rules and a class that is ruled'. In his view, the resources or attributes that are necessary for rule are always unequally distributed, and, further, a cohesive minority will always be able to manipulate and control the masses, even in a parliamentary democracy.

Pareto suggested that the qualities needed to rule are those of one of two psychological types: 'foxes' (who rule by cunning and are able to manipulate the consent of the masses), and 'lions' (whose domination is typically achieved through coercion and violence). Michels, however, developed an alternative line of argument based on the tendency within all organizations, however democratic they might appear, for power to be concentrated in the hands of a small group of dominant figures who can organize and make decisions, rather than being in the hands of an apathetic rank and file. He termed this 'the iron law of oligarchy' (see p. 256). This notion of bureaucratic power was later developed by James Burnham, who, in *The Managerial Revolution* (1941), argued that a 'managerial class' dominated all industrial societies, both capitalist and communist, by virtue of its technical and scientific knowledge and its administrative skills.

Whereas classical elitists strove to prove that democracy was always a myth, modern elitist theorists have tended to highlight how far particular political systems fall short of the democratic ideal. An example of this can be found in C. Wright Mills' influential account of the power structure in the USA. In contrast to the pluralist notion of a wide and broadly democratic dispersal of power, Mills, in *The Power Elite* (1956), offered a portrait of a USA dominated by a nexus of leading groups. In his view, this 'power elite' comprised a triumvirate of big business (particularly defence-related industries), the US military, and political cliques surrounding the President. Drawing on a combination of economic power, bureaucratic control, and access to the highest levels of the executive branch of government, the power elite is able to shape key 'history-making' decisions, especially in the fields of defence and foreign policy, as well as strategic economic policy. The power-elite model suggests that liberal democracy in the USA is largely a sham. Electoral pressures tend to be absorbed by the 'middle levels of power' (Congress, state governments and so on), and groups such as organized labour, small businesses and consumer lobbyists are able to exert influence only at the margins of the policy process. Elitists have, moreover, argued that empirical studies have supported pluralist conclusions only because Dahl and others have ignored the importance of non-decision-making as a manifestation of power (see p. 11).

Concept

Pluralist democracy

The term pluralist democracy is sometimes used interchangeably with liberal democracy to indicate a democratic system based on electoral competition between a number of political parties. More specifically, it refers to a form of democracy that operates through the capacity of organized groups and interests to articulate popular demands and ensure government responsiveness. As such, it can be seen as an alternative to parliamentary democracy and to any form of majoritarianism. The conditions for a healthy pluralist democracy include the following:

- There is a wide dispersal of political power amongst competing groups, and, specifically, elite groups are absent.
- There is a high degree of internal responsiveness, with group leaders being accountable to members.
- There is a neutral governmental machine that is sufficiently fragmented to offer groups a number of points of access.

Concept

Elite, elitism

The term elite originally meant, and can still mean, the highest, the best, or the excellent. Used in a neutral or empirical sense, however, it refers to a minority in whose hands power, wealth or privilege is concentrated, justifiably or otherwise. Elitism is a belief in, or practice of, rule by an elite or minority. *Normative* elitism suggests that elite rule is desirable: political power should be vested in the hands of a wise or enlightened minority. *Classical* elitism (developed by Mosca, Pareto and Michels) claimed to be empirical (although normative beliefs often intruded), and it saw elite rule as being inevitable, an unchangeable fact of social existence. *Modern* elitism has also developed an empirical analysis, but it is more critical and discriminating about the causes of elite rule. Modern elitists, such as C. Wright Mills (1916–62), have often been concerned to highlight elite rule in the hope of both explaining it and challenging it.

Certain elite theorists have nevertheless argued that a measure of democratic accountability is consistent with elite rule. Whereas the power-elite model portrays the elite as a cohesive body, bound together by common or overlapping interests, competitive elitism (sometimes called democratic elitism) highlights the significance of elite rivalry (see Figure 4.1). In other words, the elite, consisting of the leading figures from a number of competing groups and interests, is fractured. This view is often associated with Joseph Schumpeter's (see p. 229) 'realistic' model of democracy outlined in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942:269):

> The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.

The electorate can decide which elite rules, but cannot change the fact that power is always exercised by an elite. This model of competitive elitism was developed by Anthony Downs (1957) into the 'economic theory of democracy'. In effect, electoral competition creates a political market in which politicians act as entrepreneurs bent upon achieving government power, and individual voters behave like consumers, voting for the party with the policies that most closely reflect their own preferences. Downs argued that a system of open and competitive elections guarantees democratic rule because it places government in the hands of the party whose philosophy, values and policies correspond most closely to the preferences of the largest group of voters. As Schumpeter put it, 'democracy is the rule of the politician'.

As a model of democratic politics, competitive elitism at least has the virtue that it corresponds closely to the workings of the liberal-democratic political system. Indeed, it emerged more as an attempt to *describe* how the democratic process works than through a desire to *prescribe* certain values and principles - political equality, popular participation, freedom or whatever. Democracy, then, is seen simply as a political method: as a means of making political decisions by reference to a competitive struggle for the popular vote. To the extent that the model is accurate, its virtue is that it allows considerable scope for political leadership by placing decision-making in the hands of the best-informed, most-skilled, and most politically committed members of society. On the other hand, although competition for power undoubtedly creates a measure of accountability, competitive elitism must at best be considered a weak form of democracy. Not only can one elite only be removed by replacing it with another, but the role allotted to the general public (that of deciding every few years which elite will rule on its behalf) is likely to engender apathy, lack of interest, and even alienation.

Corporatist view

The origins of corporatism (see p. 275) date back to the attempt in Fascist Italy to construct a so-called 'corporate state' by integrating both managers and workers into the processes of government. Corporatist theorists, however, have drawn attention to parallel developments in the world's major industrialized states. In the form of **neocorporatism,** or liberal corporatism, this gave rise to the spectre of 'tripartite government', in which government is conducted through organizations that allow state officials, employers' groups and unions to deal directly with one another. To a large extent, this tendency to integrate economic interests into government (which was common in the post-1945 period, and particularly prominent in, for example,

Neocorporatism: A tendency found in western polyarchies for organized interests to be granted privileged and institutionalized access to policy formulation.

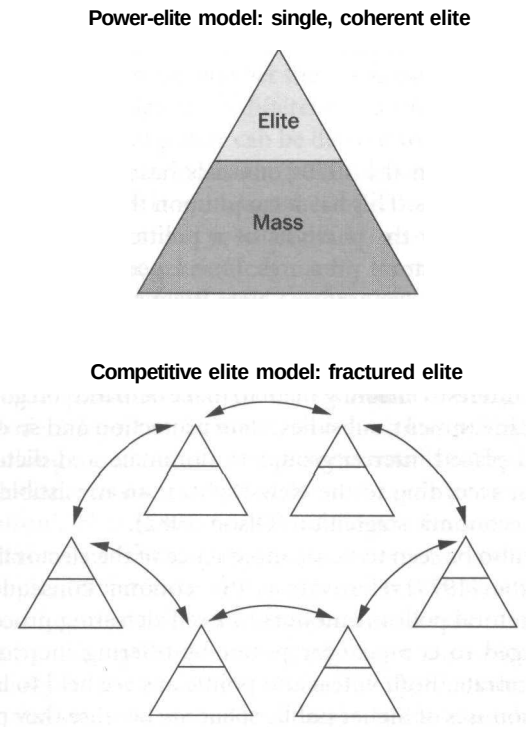


Fig. 4.1 Elite models

Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Austria) was a consequence of the drift towards economic management and intervention. As government sought to manage economic life and deliver an increasingly broad range of public services, it recognized the need for institutional arrangements designed to secure the cooperation and support of major economic interests. Where attempts have been made to shift economic policy away from state intervention and towards the free market (as in the UK since 1979), the impact of corporatism has markedly diminished.

The significance of corporatism in terms of democratic processes is clearly considerable. There are those who, like the British guild socialists, argue that corporatism makes possible a form of functional representation, in that individuals' views and interests are articulated more by the groups to which they belong than through the mechanism of competitive elections. What is called 'corporate pluralism' thus portrays tripartism as a mechanism through which the major groups and interests in society compete to shape government policy. Most commentators, however, see corporatism very much as a threat to democracy. In the first place, corporatism only advantages groups that are accorded privileged access to government. 'Insider' groups therefore possess a political voice, while 'outsider' groups are denied one. Second, corporatism can work to the benefit of the state rather than major economic interests, in that the **peak associations** that the government chooses to deal with can be used to exert discipline over their members and to filter out radical demands. Finally, corporatism threatens to subvert the processes of electoral or parliamentary democracy. Policy is made through negotiations between government officials and leaders of powerful economic interests rather than through the deliberations of a representative assembly. Interest-group leaders may thus exert considerable political

Concept

Democratization

Democratization refers to the transition from authoritarianism to liberal democracy. The most important features of this process are the granting of basic freedoms and particularly political rights, the establishment of popular and competitive elections, and (especially in postcommunist regimes) the introduction of market reforms. Democratization encompasses three, sometimes overlapping, processes. First, the old regime breaks down; this usually involves a loss of legitimacy (see p. 210), generally linked to economic failure and the faltering loyalty of the police and military. Second, 'democratic transition' witnesses the construction of new liberal-democratic structures and processes. Third, 'democratic consolidation' sees these new structures and processes becoming so embedded in the minds of elites and the masses that their removal becomes unthinkable. Democracy thus becomes 'the only game in town' (Przeworski, 1991).

Peak association: A group recognized by government as representing the general or collective interests of businesses or workers.

power, even though they are in no way publicly accountable and their influence is not subject to public scrutiny.

New Right view

The emergence of the New Right from the 1970s onwards has generated a very particular critique of democratic politics. This has focused upon the danger of what has been called 'democratic overload': the paralysis of a political system that is subject to unrestrained group and electoral pressures. One aspect of this critique has highlighted the unsavoury face of corporatism. New Right theorists are keen advocates of the free market, believing that economies work best when left alone by government. The danger of corporatism from this perspective is that it empowers sectional groups and economic interests, enabling them to make demands on government for increased pay, public investment, subsidies, state protection and so on. In effect, corporatism allows well-placed interest groups to dominate and dictate to government. The result of this, according to the New Right, is an irresistible drift towards state intervention and economic stagnation (Olson, 1982).

Government 'overload' can also be seen to be a consequence of the electoral process. This was what Samuel Brittan (1977) referred to as 'the economic consequences of democracy'. In this view, electoral politics amounts to a self-defeating process in which politicians are encouraged to compete for power by offering increasingly unrealistic promises to the electorate. Both voters and politicians are held to blame here. Voters are attracted by promises of higher public spending because they calculate that the cost (an increased tax burden) will be spread over the entire population. Politicians, consumed by the desire to win power, attempt to outbid one another by making ever more generous spending pledges to the electorate. According to Brittan, the economic consequences of unrestrained democracy are high levels of inflation fuelled by public borrowing, and a tax burden that destroys enterprise and undermines growth. As characterized by David Marquand (1988), the New Right view is that 'democracy is to adults what chocolate is to children: endlessly tempting; harmless in small doses; sickening in excess'. New Right theorists therefore tend to see democracy in strictly protective terms, regarding it essentially as a defence against arbitrary government rather than a means of bringing about social transformation.

Marxist view

As pointed out in relation to people's democracy, the Marxist view of democratic politics is rooted in class analysis. In this view, political power cannot be understood narrowly in terms of electoral rights, or in terms of the ability of groups to articulate their interests by lobbying and campaigning. Rather, at a deeper level, political power reflects the distribution of economic power and, in particular, the unequal ownership of productive wealth. The Marxist critique of liberal democracy thus focuses upon the inherent tension between democracy and capitalism: that is, between the political equality that liberal democracy proclaims and the social inequality that a capitalist economy inevitably generates. Liberal democracies are thus seen as 'capitalist' or 'bourgeois' democracies that are manipulated and controlled by the entrenched power of a **ruling class.**

Ruling class: A Marxist term, denoting a class that dominates other classes and society at large by virtue of its ownership of productive wealth.

Marxism thus offers a distinctive critique of pluralist democracy. Power cannot be widely and evenly dispersed in society as long as class power is unequally distributed.

Indeed, in many respects, the Marxist view parallels the elitist critique of pluralism. Both views suggest that power is ultimately concentrated in the hands of the few, the main difference being whether the few is conceived of as a 'power elite' or as a 'ruling class'. However, significant differences can also be identified. In the first place, whereas elitists suggest that power can be derived from a variety of sources (education, social status, bureaucratic position, political connections, wealth, and so on), Marxists emphasize the decisive importance of economic factors, notably the ownership and control of the means of production. Moreover, elitists are less clear about the significance of elite rule, acknowledging, for example, that when competition exists within a fractured elite policy may, to some extent, be shaped by democratic pressures. Marxists, in contrast, tend to argue that the ruling class is bent on pursuing its own economic interests, and that it makes concessions to other classes only in order to stabilize capitalism and perpetuate a system of unequal class power.

Modern Marxists, however, have been less willing to dismiss electoral democracy as nothing more than a sham. **Eurocommunists,** for example, abandoned the idea of revolution, embracing instead the notion of a peaceful, legal and democratic 'road to socialism'. Neo-Marxists such as Jürgen Habermas (see p. 214) and Claus Offe (1984) have nevertheless drawn attention to the contradictions, and perhaps inherent instability, of capitalist democracy. In this view, on the one hand, the democratic process forces government to respond to popular demands, leading to an inexorable rise of public spending and a progressive expansion of the state's responsibilities, especially in economic and social life. On the other hand, the long-term survival of capitalism is threatened by a fiscal crisis in which high taxes become a disincentive to enterprise, and ever-rising government borrowing leads to permanently high inflation. Forced either to resist democratic pressures or to risk economic collapse, capitalist democracy would, Habermas (1973) argued, find it increasingly difficult to maintain legitimacy. These issues are discussed at greater length in Chapter 10.

Summary

• The very popularity of democracy has threatened its use as a meaningful political term, and perhaps reduced it to a mere 'hurrah! word'. The meanings of the term have ranged from a system of rule by the masses and a form of government based on direct and popular continuous popular participation to rule by the majority and a system of party competition that operates through regular and popular elections.

• Debates about the nature of democracy have tended to focus on three central issues. First, who are the people, or how far should political power be distributed? Second, should the people in effect rule themselves, or should government be left in the hands of politicians and parties that claim to represent them? Third, what matters is it appropriate to decide collectively through the use of democratic processes?

• There are a number of rival models of democracy, each offering its own version of popular rule. These include: classical democracy, which is based on the principle of popular self-government; protective democracy, which is rooted in the individualist assumptions of liberalism; developmental democracy, which is concerned with broadening the scope for popular participation; and people's democracy, which pays particular attention to the distribution of class power.

Eurocommunism: A form of deradicalized communism that attempted to blend Marxism with liberal-democratic principles.

• Classical democracy, which is based on the political system in Athens in Ancient Greece, is defended on the grounds that it alone guarantees government *by* the people. Protective democracy gives citizens the greatest scope to live their lives as they choose. Developmental democracy has the virtue that, in extending participation, it widens liberty and fosters personal growth. People's democracy aims to achieve economic emancipation, rather than merely the extension of political rights.

• In practice, there is broad acceptance of a particular model of democracy, generally termed liberal democracy. Its central features are that it is an indirect and representative form of democracy that is based on regular elections. It operates through party competition and electoral choice, and it observes a clear distinction between the state and civil society, thus allowing for the existence of autonomous groups and private property.

• There is considerable controversy about how liberal-democratic systems work in practice. Pluralists praise their capacity to guarantee popular responsiveness and public accountability. Elitists highlight the tendency for political power to be concentrated in the hands of a privileged minority. Corporatists draw attention to the incorporation of groups into government. The New Right focuses on the dangers of 'democratic overload'. And Marxists point to tensions between democracy and capitalism.

Questions for discussion

- Why has democracy come to be so universally well regarded?
- Is direct democracy in any way applicable to modern circumstances?
- What are the principal virtues of democracy?
- What are the drawbacks or dangers of democracy?
- Which model of democracy is most attractive, and why?
- Do modern forms of representative democracy deserve to be described as democratic?
- What are the major threats to democracy in modern society?

Further reading

Arblaster, A. *Democracy* (2nd ed.) (Milton Keynes: Open University Press; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). A succinct and thoughtful introduction to the theory of democracy.

Dahl, R. *Democracy and its Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989) A wide-ranging and thorough discussion of the democratic ideal and democratic practices.

Gill, G. (2000) *The Dynamics of Democratization: Elite, Civil Society and the Transition Process* (Basingstoke: Palgrave). A clear and accessible overview of the scale, scope and character of democratization in the contemporary world.

Held, D. *Models of Democracy* (2nd ed.) (Oxford: Polity Press; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). A rigorous and stimulating examination of rival models of democracy and the present state of democratic theory.

Macpherson, C. B. *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). A short, lucid and perceptive discussion of important themes in liberal-democratic theory.

The State

CHAPTER 5

'The purpose of the State is always the same: to limit the individual, to tame him, to subordinate him, to subjugate him.'

MAX STIRNER *The Ego and His Own* (1845)

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The shadow of the state falls upon almost every human activity. From education to economic management, from social welfare to sanitation, and from domestic order to external defence, the state shapes and controls, and where it does not shape or control it regulates, supervises, authorises or proscribes. Even those aspects of life usually thought of as personal or private (marriage, divorce, abortion, religious worship and so on) are ultimately subject to the authority of the state. It is not surprising, therefore, that politics is often understood as the study of the state, the analysis of its institutional organizations, the evaluation of its impact on society, and so on. Ideological debate and party politics, certainly, tend to revolve around the proper function or role of the state: what should be done by the state and what should be left to private individuals and associations? The nature of state power has thus become one of the central concerns of political analysis. This debate (the so-called 'state debate') touches on some of the deepest and most abiding divisions in political theory.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- What is the state, and how can it be distinguished from government?
- How has state power been analysed and explained?
- Is the state a force for good or a force for evil?
- What roles have been assigned to the state? How have responsibilities been apportioned between the state and civil society?
- Is the modern state under threat, and, if so, how are its powers being usurped?



Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831)

German philosopher. Hegel was the founder of modern idealism and developed the notion that consciousness and material objects are in fact unified. In *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) he sought to develop a rational system that would substitute for traditional Christianity by interpreting the entire process of human history, and indeed the universe itself, in terms of the progress of absolute Mind towards self-realization. In his view, history is, in essence, a march of the human spirit towards a determinant endpoint. His major political work, *Philosophy of Right* (1821), portrayed the state as an ethical ideal and the highest expression of human freedom. Hegel's work had considerable impact upon Marx and other so-called 'young Hegelians', and it helped to shape the development of both liberal and fascist thought.

What is the state?

The term 'state' has been used to refer to a bewildering range of things: a collection of institutions, a territorial unit, a philosophical idea, an instrument of coercion or oppression, and so on. This confusion stems, in part, from the fact that the state has been understood in three very different ways, from an idealist perspective, a functionalist perspective and an organizational perspective. The *idealist* approach to the state is most clearly reflected in the writings of G. W. F. Hegel. Hegel identified three 'moments' of social existence: the family, civil society, and the state. Within the family, he argued, a 'particular altruism' operates that encourages people to set aside their own interests for the good of their children or elderly relatives. In contrast, civil society was seen as a sphere of 'universal egoism' in which individuals place their own interests before those of others. Hegel conceived of the state as an ethical community underpinned by mutual sympathy - 'universal altruism'. The drawback of idealism, however, is that it fosters an uncritical reverence for the state and, by defining the state in ethical terms, fails to distinguish clearly between institutions that are part of the state and those that are outside the state.

Functionalist approaches to the state focus on the role or purpose of state institutions. The central function of the state is invariably seen as the maintenance of social order (see p. 389), the state being defined as that set of institutions that uphold order and deliver social stability. Such an approach has, for example, been adopted by modern Marxists, who have been inclined to see the state as a mechanism through which class conflict is ameliorated to ensure the long-term survival of the capitalist system. The weakness of the functionalist view of the state, however, is that it tends to associate *any* institution that maintains order (such as the family, mass media, trade unions and the church) with the state itself. This is why, unless there is a statement to the contrary, an organizational approach to the definition of the state (see below) is adopted throughout this book

The *organizational* view defines the state as the apparatus of government in its broadest sense: that is, as that set of institutions that are recognizably 'public' in that they are responsible for the collective organization of social existence and are funded at the public's expense. The virtue of this definition is that it distinguishes clearly between the state and civil society (see p. 8). The state comprises the various

- Government is the *means* through which the authority of the state is brought into operation. In making and implementing state policy, government is 'the brains' of the state, and it perpetuates the state's existence.
- The state exercises *impersonal* authority. The personnel of state bodies is recruited and trained in a bureaucratic manner and is (usually) expected to be politically neutral, enabling state bodies to resist the ideological enthusiasms of the government of the day.
- The state, in theory at least, represents the permanent interests of society: that is, the *common* good or general will. Government, on the other hand, represents the *partisan* sympathies of those who happen to be in power at a particular time.

Rival theories of the state

Reaching an agreement about what we mean by 'the state' provides a basis upon which to examine a deeper problem: what is the nature of state power, and what interests does the state represent? From this perspective, the state is an 'essentially contested' concept. There are a number of rival theories of the state, each of which offers a different account of its origins, development and impact on society. Indeed, controversy about the nature of state power has increasingly dominated modern political analysis and goes to the heart of ideological and theoretical disagreements in the discipline. These relate to questions about whether, for example, the state is autonomous and independent of society, or whether it is essentially a product of society, a reflection of the broader distribution of power or resources. Moreover, does the state serve the common or collective good, or is it biased in favour of privileged groups or a dominant class? Similarly, is the state a positive or constructive force, with responsibilities that should be enlarged, or is it a negative or destructive entity that must be constrained or, perhaps, smashed altogether? Four contrasting theories of the state can be identified as follows:

- the pluralist state
- the capitalist state
- the leviathan state
- the patriarchal state.

The pluralist state

The pluralist theory of the state has a very clear liberal lineage. It stems from the belief that the state acts as an 'umpire' or 'referee' in society. This view has also dominated mainstream political analysis, accounting for a tendency, at least within Anglo-American thought, to discount the state and state organizations and focus instead on 'government'. Indeed, it is not uncommon in this tradition for 'the state' to be dismissed as an abstraction, with institutions such as the courts, the civil service and the military being seen as independent actors in their own right, rather than as elements of a broader state machine. Nevertheless, this approach is possible only because it is based on underlying, and often unacknowledged, assumptions about state neutrality. The state can be ignored only because it is seen as an impartial arbiter or referee that can be bent to the will of the government of the day.

The origins of this theory of the state can be traced back to the writings of seventeenth-century social-contract theorists such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (see p. 45). The principal concern of such thinkers was to examine the grounds of **political obligation,** the grounds upon which the individual is obliged to obey and respect the state. They argued that the state had arisen out of a voluntary agreement, or social contract, made by individuals who recognized that only the establishment of a sovereign power could safeguard them from the insecurity, disorder and brutality of the **state of nature.** Without a state, individuals abuse, exploit and enslave one another; with a state, order and civilized existence are guaranteed and liberty is protected. As Locke put it, 'where there is no law there is no freedom'.

In liberal theory, the state is thus seen as a neutral arbiter amongst the competing groups and individuals in society; it is an 'umpire' or 'referee' that is capable of protecting each citizen from the encroachments of fellow citizens. The neutrality of the state reflects the fact that the state acts in the interests of *all* citizens, and therefore represents the common good or public interest. In Hobbes' view, stability and order could be secured only through the establishment of an absolute and unlimited state, with power that could be neither challenged nor questioned. In other words, he held that citizens are confronted by a stark choice between absolutism (see p. 28) and **anarchy.** Locke, on the other hand, developed a more typically liberal defence of the limited state. In his view, the purpose of the state is very specific: it is restricted to the defence of a set of 'natural' or God-given individual rights, namely 'life, liberty and property'. This establishes a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the state (essentially the maintenance of domestic order and the protection of property) and the responsibilities an a sed

Concept

Neopluralism

Neopluralism is a style of social theorizing that remains faithful to pluralist values while recognizing the need to revise or update classical pluralism in the light of, for example, elite, Marxist and New Right theories. Although neopluralism embraces a broad range of perspectives and positions, certain central themes can be identified. First, it attempts to take account of modernizing trends, such as the emergence of postindustrial and postcapitalist society. Second, while capitalism is certainly preferred to socialism, free-market economic doctrines are usually regarded as obsolete. Third, western democracies are seen as 'deformed polyarchies', in which major corporations exert disproportionate influence.

uphold them, citizens must enjoy some form of protection against the state, which Locke believed could be delivered only through the mechanisms of constitutional and representative government.

These ideas were developed in the twentieth century into the pluralist theory of the state. As a theory of society, pluralism (see p. 78) asserts that, within liberal democracies, power is widely and evenly dispersed. As a theory of the state, pluralism holds that the state is neutral insofar as it is susceptible to the influence of various groups and interests and all social classes. The state is not biased in favour of any particular interest or group, and it does not have an interest of its own that is separate from those of society. As Schwarzmantel (1994:52) put it, the state is 'the servant of society and not its master'. The state can thus be portrayed as a 'pincushion' that passively absorbs pressures and forces exerted upon it. Two key assumptions underlie this view. The first is that the state is effectively subordinate to government. Nonelected state bodies (the civil service, the judiciary, the police, the military and so on) are strictly impartial and are subject to the authority of their political masters. The state apparatus is therefore thought to conform to the principles of public service and political accountability (see p. 393). The second assumption is that the democratic process is meaningful and effective. In other words, party competition and interest-group activity ensure that the government of the day remains sensitive and responsive to public opinion. Ultimately, therefore, the state is only a weather vane that is blown in whatever direction the public at large dictates.

Modern pluralists, however, have often adopted a more critical view of the state, termed the neopluralist theory of the state. Theorists such as Robert Dahl (see p. 274), Charles Lindblom and J. K. Galbraith (see p. 193) have come to accept that modern industrialized states are both more complex and less responsive to popular pressures than classical pluralism suggested. Neopluralists, for instance, have acknowledged that business enjoys a 'privileged position' in relation to government that other groups clearly cannot rival. In *Politics and Markets* (1977) Lindblom pointed out that, as the major investor and largest employer in society, business is bound to exercise considerable sway over any government, whatever its ideological leanings or manifesto commitments. Moreover, neopluralists have accepted that the state can and does forge its own sectional interests. In this way, a state elite, composed of senior civil servants, judges, police chiefs, military leaders and so on, may be seen to pursue either the bureaucratic interests of their sector of the state or the interests of client groups. Indeed, if the state is regarded as a political actor in its own right, it can be viewed as a powerful (perhaps the most powerful) interest group in society. This line of argument encouraged Eric Nordlinger (1981) to develop a state-centred model of liberal democracy, based on 'the autonomy of the democratic state'.

The capitalist state

The Marxist notion of a capitalist state offers a clear alternative to the pluralist image of the state as a neutral arbiter or umpire. Marxists have typically argued that the state cannot be understood separately from the economic structure of society. This view has usually been understood in terms of the classic formulation that the state is nothing but an instrument of class oppression: the state emerges out of, and in a sense reflects, the class system. Nevertheless, a rich debate has taken place within Marxist theory in recent years that has moved the Marxist theory of the state a long way from this classic formulation. In many ways, the scope to revise Marxist

attitudes towards the state stems from ambiguities that can be found in Marx's own writings.

Marx did not develop a systematic or coherent theory of the state. In a general sense, he believed that the state is part of a 'superstructure' that is determined or conditioned by the economic 'base', which can be seen as the real foundation of social life. However, the precise relationship between the base and the superstructure, and in this case that between the state and the capitalist mode of production, is unclear. Two theories of the state can be identified in Marx's writings. The first is expressed in his often-quoted dictum from *The Communist Manifesto* (1848:82): 'The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'. From this perspective, the state is clearly dependent upon society and entirely dependent upon its economically dominant class, which in capitalism is the **bourgeoisie.** Lenin thus described the state starkly as 'an instrument for the oppression of the exploited class'.

A second, more complex and subtle, theory of the state can nevertheless be found in Marx's analysis of the revolutionary events in France between 1848 and 1851, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* ([1852] 1963). Marx suggested that the state could enjoy what has come to be seen as 'relative autonomy' from the class system, the Napoleonic state being capable of imposing its will upon society, acting as an 'appalling parasitic body'. If the state did articulate the interests of any class, it was not those of the bourgeoisie, but those of the most populous class in French society, the smallholding peasantry. Although Marx did not develop this view in detail, it is clear that, from this perspective, the autonomy of the state is only *relative,* in that the state appears to mediate between conflicting classes, and so maintains the class system itself in existence.

Both these theories differ markedly from the liberal and, later, pluralist models of state power. In particular, they emphasize that the state cannot be understood except in a context of unequal class power, and that the state arises out of, and reflects, capitalist society, by acting either as an instrument of oppression wielded by the dominant class, or, more subtly, as a mechanism through which class antagonisms are ameliorated. Nevertheless, Marx's attitude towards the state was not entirely negative. He argued that the state could be used constructively during the transition from capitalism to communism in the form of the 'revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat'. The overthrow of capitalism would see the destruction of the bourgeois state and the creation of an alternative, proletarian one.

In describing the state as a proletarian 'dictatorship', Marx utilized the first theory of the state, seeing the state as an instrument through which the economically dominant class (by then the proletariat) could repress and subdue other classes. All states, from this perspective, are class dictatorships. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was seen as a means of safeguarding the gains of the revolution by preventing counter-revolution mounted by the dispossessed bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Marx did not see the state as a necessary or enduring social formation. He predicted that, as class antagonisms faded, the state would 'wither away', meaning that a fully communist society would also be stateless. Since the state emerged out of the class system, once the class system had been abolished, the state, quite simply, loses its reason for existence.

Marx's ambivalent heritage has provided modern Marxists, or neo-Marxists, with considerable scope to further the analysis of state power. This was also encouraged by the writings of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (see p. 203), who emphasized

Bourgeoisie: A Marxist term, denoting the ruling class of a capitalist society, the owners of productive wealth.

Concept

Neo-Marxism

Neo-Marxism (sometimes termed modern Marxism) refers to attempts to revise or recast the classical ideas of Marx while remaining faithful to certain Marxist principles or aspects of Marxist methodology. Neo-Marxists typically refuse to accept that Marxism enjoys a monopoly of the truth, and have thus looked to Hegelian philosophy, anarchism, liberalism, feminism, and even rational-choice theory. Two central themes can nevertheless be identified. First, neo-Marxists have tried to provide an alternative to the mechanistic and deterministic ideas of orthodox Marxism, refusing to accept the primacy of economics, or assign the proletariat a privileged role. Second, they have been concerned to explain the failure of Marx's predictions, looking, in particular, to the analysis of ideology and state power.

the degree to which the domination of the ruling class is achieved by ideological manipulation, rather than just open coercion. In this view, bourgeois domination is maintained largely through 'hegemony' (see p. 201): that is, intellectual leadership or cultural control, with the state playing an important role in the process. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Marxist theorizing about the state was dominated by the rival positions adopted by Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas (1936-79). Although this debate moved through a number of phases as each author revised his position, at the heart of it lay contrasting instrumentalist and structuralist views of the state.

In *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) Miliband portrayed the state as an agent or *instrument* of the ruling class, stressing the extent to which the state elite is disproportionately drawn from the ranks of the privileged and propertied. The bias of the state in favour of capitalism is therefore derived from the overlap of social backgrounds between, on the one hand, civil servants and other public officials, and, on the other, bankers, business leaders and captains of industry. Both groups, in other words, tend to be representatives of the capitalist class. Poulantzas, in *Political Power and Social Classes* (1968), dismissed this sociological approach, and emphasized instead the degree to which the *structure* of economic and social power exerts a constraint upon state autonomy. This view suggests that the state cannot but act to perpetuate the social system in which it operates. In the case of the capitalist state, its role is to serve the long-term interests of capitalism, even though these actions may be resisted by sections of the capitalist class itself. Examples of this are the extension of democratic rights and welfare reforms, both of which are concessions to the working class that nevertheless bind them to the capitalist system.

Developments within modern Marxism have brought about a significant convergence between pluralist and Marxist theories. Just as pluralists have increasingly recognized the importance of corporate power, neo-Marxists have been forced to abandon the idea that the state is merely a reflection of the class system. For one thing, neo-Marxists have recognized that, in modern circumstances, the classical two-class model (based on the bourgeoisie and the proletariat) is simplistic and often unhelpful. Following Poulantzas, neo-Marxists usually recognize that there are significant divisions within the ruling class (between financial and manufacturing capital, for instance) and that the emergence of electoral democracy has empowered interests and groups outside the ruling class. In addition, they have increasingly seen the state as the terrain upon which the struggle amongst interests, groups and classes is conducted. This is particularly clear in the case of Bob Jessop's (1982) 'strategic relational approach' to the state. Jessop saw the state not so much as a means of perpetuating capitalism through the dilution of class tensions, but as 'the crystallization of political strategies': that is, as an assemblage of institutions through which competing groups and interests struggle for domination or hegemony. In this view, the state is therefore not an 'instrument' wielded by a dominant group or ruling class. Rather, it is a dynamic entity that reflects the balance of power within society at any given time, and thus reflects the outcome of an ongoing hegemonic struggle.

The leviathan state

The image of the state as a 'leviathan' (in effect, a self-serving monster intent on expansion and aggrandizement) is one associated in modern politics with the New Right. Such a view is rooted in early or classical liberalism and, in particular, a commitment to a radical form of individualism (see p. 190). The New Right, or at least

its neoliberal wing, is distinguished by a strong antipathy towards state intervention in economic and social life, born out of the belief that the state is a parasitic growth that threatens both individual liberty and economic security. In this view, the state, instead of being, as pluralists suggest, an impartial umpire or arbiter, is an overbearing 'nanny', desperate to interfere or meddle in every aspect of human existence. The central feature of this view is that the state pursues interests that are separate from those of society (setting it apart from Marxism), and that those interests demand an unrelenting growth in the role or responsibilities of the state itself. New Right thinkers therefore argue that the twentieth-century tendency towards state intervention reflected not popular pressure for economic and social security, or the need to stabilize capitalism by ameliorating class tensions, but rather the internal dynamics of the state.

New Right theorists explain the expansionist dynamics of state power by reference to both demand-side and supply-side pressures. Demand-side pressures are ones that emanate from society itself, usually through the mechanism of electoral democracy. As discussed in Chapter 4, the New Right argue that electoral competition encourages politicians to 'outbid' one another by making promises of increased spending and more generous government programmes, regardless of the long-term damage that such policies inflict on the economy in the form of increased taxes, higher inflation and the 'crowding out' of investment. Supply-side pressures, on the other hand, are ones that are internal to the state. These can therefore be explained in terms of the institutions and personnel of the state apparatus. In its most influential form, this argument is known as the government oversupply thesis.

The oversupply thesis has usually been associated with public-choice theorists (see p. 276), who examine how public decisions are made on the assumption that the individuals involved act in a rationally self-interested fashion. William Niskanen (1971), for example, argued that, as budgetary control in legislatures such as the US Congress is typically weak, the task of budget-making is shaped largely by the interests of government agencies and senior bureaucrats. Insofar as this implies that government is dominated by the state (the state elite being able to shape the thinking of elected politicians), there are parallels between the public-choice model and the Marxist view discussed above. Where these two views diverge, however, is in relation to the interests that the state apparatus serves. While Marxists argue that the state reflects broader class and other social interests, the New Right portrays the state as an independent or autonomous entity that pursues its own interests. In this view, bureaucratic self-interest invariably supports 'big' government and state intervention, because this leads to an enlargement of the bureaucracy itself, which helps to ensure job security, improve pay, open up promotion prospects, and enhance the status of public officials. This image of self-seeking bureaucrats is plainly at odds with the pluralist notion of a state machine imbued with an ethic of public service and firmly subject to political control.

The patriarchal state

Modern thinking about the patriarchal state must, finally, take account of the implications of feminist theory. However, this is not to say that there is a systematic feminist theory of the state. As emphasized in Chapter 3, feminist theory encompasses a range of traditions and perspectives, and has thus generated a range of very different attitudes towards state power. Moreover, feminists have usually not

Concept

Patriarchy

Patriarchy literally means 'rule by the father', the domination of the husband–father within the family, and the subordination of his wife and his children. However, the term is usually used in the more general sense of 'rule by men', drawing attention to the totality of oppression and exploitation to which women are subject. The use of the term patriarchy thus implies that the system of male power in society at large both reflects and stems from the dominance of the father in the family. Patriarchy is a key concept in radical feminist analysis, in that it emphasizes that gender inequality is systematic, institutionalized and pervasive. Socialist feminists, in contrast, highlight links between gender inequality and private property, seeing patriarchy and capitalism as parallel systems of domination.

regarded the nature of state power as a central political issue, preferring instead to concentrate on the deeper structure of male power centred upon institutions such as the family and the economic system. Some feminists, indeed, may question conventional definitions of the state, arguing, for instance, that the idea that the state exercises a monopoly of legitimate violence is compromised by the routine use of violence and intimidation in family and domestic life. Nevertheless, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, feminists have helped to enrich the state debate by developing novel and challenging perspectives on state power.

Liberal feminists, who believe that sexual or gender (see p. 195) equality can be brought about through incremental reform, have tended to accept an essentially pluralist view of the state. They recognize that, if women are denied legal and political equality, and especially the right to vote, the state is biased in favour of men. However, their faith in the state's basic neutrality is reflected in the belief that any such bias can, and will, be overcome by a process of reform. In this sense, liberal feminists believe that all groups (including women) have potentially equal access to state power, and that this can be used impartially to promote justice and the common good. Liberal feminists have therefore usually viewed the state in positive terms, seeing state intervention as a means of redressing gender inequality and enhancing the role of women. This can be seen in campaigns for equal-pay legislation, the legalization of abortion, the provision of child-care facilities, the extension of welfare benefits, and so on. Nevertheless, a more critical and negative view of the state has been developed by **radical feminists,** who argue that state power reflects a deeper structure of oppression in the form of patriarchy.

There are a number of similarities between Marxist and radical-feminist views of state power. Both groups, for example, deny that the state is an autonomous entity bent upon the pursuit of its own interests. Instead, the state is understood, and its biases are explained, by reference to a 'deep structure' of power in society at large. Whereas Marxists place the state in an economic context, radical feminists place it in a context of gender inequality, and insist that it is essentially an institution of male power. In common with Marxism, distinctive instrumentalist and structuralist versions of this feminist position have been developed. The *instrumentalist* argument views the state as little more than an 'agent' or 'tool' used by men to defend their own interests and uphold the structures of patriarchy. This line of argument draws on the core feminist belief that patriarchy is upheld by the division of society into distinct 'public' and 'private' spheres of life. The subordination of women has traditionally been accomplished through their confinement to a 'private' sphere of family and domestic responsibilities, turning them into housewives and mothers, and through their exclusion from a 'public' realm centred upon politics and the economy. Quite simply, in this view, the state is run *by* men, and it is run *for* men.

Whereas instrumentalist arguments focus upon the personnel of the state, and particularly the state elite, *structuralist* arguments tend to emphasize the degree to which state institutions are embedded in a wider patriarchal system. Modern radical feminists have paid particular attention to the emergence of the welfare state, seeing it as the expression of a new kind of patriarchal power. Welfare (see p. 413) may uphold patriarchy by bringing about a transition from private dependence (in which women as 'home makers' are dependent on men as 'breadwinners') to a system of public dependence in which women are increasingly controlled by the institutions of the extended state. For instance, women have become increasingly dependent on the

Radical feminism: A form of feminism that holds gender divisions to be the most politically significant of social cleavages, and believes that they are rooted in the structure of domestic life.

state as clients or customers of state services (such as child-care institutions, nursery education and social work) and as employees, particularly in the so-called 'caring' professions (such as nursing, social work and education). Further, the extension of state responsibilities into traditionally female realms such as child rearing and caring has often merely created new forms of subordination. In particular, it has tended to reinforce the role of women as a **reserve army of labour,** with employers increasingly looking to women to provide a flexible, low-paid and usually submissive workforce.

The role of the state

Contrasting interpretations of state power have clear implications for the desirable role or responsibilities of the state. What should states do? What functions or responsibilities should the state fulfil, and which ones should be left in the hands of private individuals? In many respects, these are the questions around which electoral politics and party competition revolve. With the exception of anarchists, who dismiss the state as fundamentally evil and unnecessary, all political thinkers have regarded the state as, in some sense, worthwhile. Even revolutionary socialists, inspired by the Leninist slogan 'smash the state', have accepted the need for a temporary proletarian state to preside over the transition from capitalism to communism, in the form of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Nevertheless, there is profound disagreement about the exact role the state should play, and therefore about the proper balance between the state and civil society. Among the different state forms that have developed are the following:

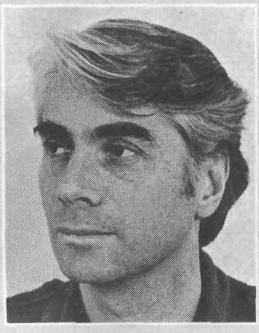
- the minimal state
- the developmental state
- the social-democratic state
- the collectivized state
- the totalitarian state.

Minimal states

The minimal state is the ideal of classical liberals, whose aim is to ensure that individuals enjoy the widest possible realm of freedom. This view is rooted in social-contract theory, but it nevertheless advances an essentially 'negative' view of the state. From this perspective, the value of the state is that it has the capacity to constrain human behaviour and thus to prevent individuals encroaching upon the **rights** and liberties of others. The state is merely a protective body, its core function being to provide a framework of peace and social order within which citizens can conduct their lives as they think best. In Locke's famous simile, the state acts as a night-watchman, whose services are called upon only when orderly existence is threatened. This nevertheless leaves the 'minimal' or 'nightwatchman' state with three core functions. First and foremost, the state exists to maintain domestic order. Second, it ensures that contracts or voluntary agreements made between private citizens are enforced, and third it provides protection against external attack. The institutional apparatus of a minimal state is thus limited to a police force, a court system and a military of some kind. Economic, social, cultural, moral and other responsibilities belong to the individual, and are therefore firmly part of civil society.

Reserve army of labour: An available supply of labour easily shed in times of recession; the 'army' enjoys no security and exercises little market power.

Rights: Legal or moral entitlements to act or be treated in a particular way; civil rights differ from human rights.



Robert Nozick (1938–2002)

US academic and political philosopher. Nozick's major work *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974) is widely seen as one of the most important contemporary works of political philosophy, and it has had a profound influence upon New Right theories and beliefs. He developed a form of libertarianism that was close to Locke's and clearly influenced by nineteenth-century US individualists such as Spooner (1808–87) and Tucker (1854–1939). He argued that property rights should be strictly upheld, provided that wealth has been justly acquired in the first place or has been justly transferred from one person to another. This position means support for minimal government and minimal taxation, and undermines the case for welfare and redistribution. Nozick's rights-based theory of justice was developed in response to the ideas of John Rawls (see p. 58). In later life, Nozick modified his extreme libertarianism.

The cause of the minimal state has been taken up in modern political debate by the New Right. Drawing on early liberal ideas, and particularly on free-market or classical economic theories, the New Right has proclaimed the need to 'roll back the frontiers of the state'. In the writings of Robert Nozick this amounts to a restatement of Lockean liberalism based on a defence of individual rights, especially property rights. In the case of free-market economists such as Friedrich von Hayek (see p. 50) and Milton Friedman (see p. 185) state intervention is seen as a 'dead hand' that reduces competition, efficiency and productivity. From the New Right perspective, the state's economic role should be confined to two functions: the maintenance of a stable means of exchange or 'sound money' (low or zero inflation), and the promotion of competition through controls on monopoly power, price fixing and so on. Many portray Asian states such as Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia as modern-day examples of minimal states. However, this ignores the degree to which these states engage in economic management through guiding investment and emphasizing education and training.

Developmental states

The best historical examples of minimal states were those in countries such as the UK and the USA during the period of early industrialization in the nineteenth century. As a general rule, however, the later a country industrializes, the more extensive will be its state's economic role. In Japan and Germany, for instance, the state assumed a more active 'developmental' role from the outset. A developmental state is one that intervenes in economic life with the specific purpose of promoting industrial growth and economic development. This does not amount to an attempt to replace the market with a 'socialist' system of planning (see p. 186) and control, but rather to an attempt to construct a partnership between the state and major economic interests, often underpinned by conservative and nationalist priorities.

The classic example of a developmental state is Japan. During the Meiji Period in 1868-1912 the Japanese state forged a close relationship with the *zaibutsu*, the great family-run business empires that dominated the Japanese economy up to the Second World War. Since 1945 the developmental role of the Japanese state has been assumed by the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), which, together with the Bank of Japan, helps to shape private investment decisions and steer the Japanese economy towards international competitiveness. A similar

model of developmental intervention has existed in France, where governments of both left and right have tended to recognize the need for economic planning, and the state bureaucracy has seen itself as the custodian of the national interest. In countries such as Austria and, to some extent, Germany, economic development has been achieved through the construction of a 'partnership state', in which an emphasis is placed on the maintenance of a close relationship between the state and major economic interests, notably big business and organized labour. More recently, economic globalization (see p. 138) has fostered the emergence of 'competition states', examples of which are found amongst the **tiger economies** of East Asia. Their role is to develop strategies for national prosperity in a context of intensifying transnational competition.

Social-democratic states

Whereas developmental states practise interventionism in order to stimulate economic progress, social-democratic states intervene with a view to bringing about broader social restructuring, usually in accordance with principles such as fairness, equality (see p. 414) and **social justice.** In countries such as Austria and Sweden, state intervention has been guided by both developmental and social-democratic priorities. Nevertheless, developmentalism and social democracy do not always go hand in hand. As David Marquand (1988) pointed out, although the UK state was significantly extended in the period immediately after the Second World War along social-democratic lines, it failed to evolve into a developmental state. The key to understanding the social-democratic state is that there is a shift from a 'negative' view of the state, which sees it as little more than a necessary evil, to a 'positive' view of the state, in which it is seen as a means of enlarging liberty and promoting justice. The social-democratic state is thus the ideal of both modern liberals and democratic socialists.

Rather than merely laying down the conditions of orderly existence, the social-democratic state is an active participant, helping in particular to rectify the imbalances and injustices of a market economy. It therefore tends to focus less upon the generation of wealth and more upon what is seen as the equitable or just distribution of wealth. In practice, this boils down to an attempt to eradicate poverty and reduce social inequality. The twin features of a social-democratic state are therefore Keynesianism and social welfare. The aim of Keynesian economic policies is to 'manage' or 'regulate' capitalism with a view to promoting growth and maintaining full employment. Although this may entail an element of planning, the classic Keynesian strategy involves 'demand management' through adjustments in fiscal policy: that is, in the levels of public spending and taxation. The adoption of welfare policies has led to the emergence of so-called welfare states, whose responsibilities have extended to the promotion of social well-being amongst their citizens. In this sense, the social-democratic state is an 'enabling state', dedicated to the principle of individual empowerment.

Tiger economies: Fast-growing and export-orientated economies modelled on Japan: for example, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore.

Social justice: A morally justifiable distribution of material rewards; social justice is often seen to imply a bias in favour of equality.

Collectivized states

While developmental and social-democratic states intervene in economic life with a view to guiding or supporting a largely private economy, collectivized states bring the entirety of economic life under state control. The best examples of such states

Concept

Statism

Statism (or, in French, *étatisme*) is the belief that state intervention is the most appropriate means of resolving political problems or bringing about economic and social development. This view is underpinned by a deep and perhaps unquestioning faith in the state as a mechanism through which collective action can be organized and common goals can be achieved. The state is thus seen as an ethical ideal (Hegel), or as serving the 'general will' or public interest. Statism is most clearly reflected in government policies that regulate and control economic life. These range from selective nationalization and economic management (sometimes called *dirigisme*, from the French *diriger*, to direct) to corporatism (see p. 275) (in both liberal and fascist forms), and Soviet-style state collectivization.

were in orthodox communist countries such as the USSR and throughout eastern Europe. These sought to abolish private enterprise altogether, and set up centrally planned economies administered by a network of economic ministries and planning committees. So-called 'command economies' were therefore established that were organized through a system of 'directive' planning that was ultimately controlled by the highest organs of the communist party. The justification for state **collectivization** stems from a fundamental socialist preference for common ownership over private property. However, the use of the state to attain this goal suggests a more positive attitude to state power than that outlined in the classical writings of Marx and Engels (1820-95).

Marx and Engels by no means ruled out nationalization, and Engels in particular recognized that, during the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', state control would be extended to include factories, the banks, transportation and so on. Nevertheless, they envisaged that the proletarian state would be strictly temporary, and that it would 'wither away' as class antagonisms abated. In contrast, the collectivized state in the USSR became permanent and increasingly powerful and bureaucratic. Under Stalin (see p. 55), socialism was effectively equated with Statism, the advance of socialism being reflected in the widening responsibilities and powers of the state apparatus. Indeed, after Khrushchev announced in 1962 that the dictatorship of the proletariat had ended, the state was formally identified with the interests of 'the whole Soviet peoples'.

Totalitarian states

The most extreme and extensive form of interventionism is found in totalitarian states. The essence of totalitarianism (see p. 29) is the construction of an all-embracing state, the influence of which penetrates every aspect of human existence. The state brings not only the economy but education, culture, religion, family life and so on under direct state control. The best examples of totalitarian states are Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR, although modern regimes such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq arguably have similar characteristics. The central pillars of such regimes are a comprehensive process of surveillance and terroristic policing, and a pervasive system of ideological manipulation and control. In this sense, totalitarian states effectively extinguish civil society and abolish the 'private' sphere of life altogether. This is a goal that only fascists, who wish to dissolve individual identity within the social whole, are prepared openly to endorse. It is sometimes argued that Mussolini's notion of a totalitarian state was derived from Hegel's belief in the state as an 'ethical community' reflecting the altruism and mutual sympathy of its members. From this perspective, the advance of human civilization can clearly be linked to the aggrandisement of the state and the widening of its responsibilities.

A 'hollow' state?

Although the state has traditionally been regarded as the central feature of political life, its role and significance are threatened by developments that became increasingly pronounced in the late twentieth century. This has occurred most dramatically in certain postcommunist countries and in parts of the developing world, where fractured or disintegrating state apparatuses confronted ethnic unrest or the growing

Collectivization: The abolition of private property in favour of a system of common or public ownership.

menace of organized crime. The result of this was the emergence of stateless nations, tribes and clans, notable examples being the Chechens in the Russian Federation, the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, the Kurds, the Tamils and the Ibos in Nigeria. Elsewhere, state decline has been less striking but still significant. It has consisted of what Jessop (1990) called 'hollowing out', an insidious process through which functions that once belonged to the state have gradually been transferred to other institutions and bodies. This is a process that has been brought about by three distinct but interrelated developments: globalization, 'rolling back' and restructuring, and the growth of Substate government.

Globalization

Perhaps the most significant threat to the state, or at least to the nation-state, is the process of globalization (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7). Globalization is, broadly, the process through which events and decisions in one part of the world have come to affect people in quite another part of the world. One manifestation of this is the emergence of a global economy, in which it has become increasingly difficult, and perhaps impossible, for any country to regulate the international flow of capital. The implications of this development for states are dramatic. For example, it means that the capacity of individual states to manage economic life and deliver general prosperity is limited, because 'national' economic strategies such as Keynesianism are virtually unworkable in a global context. Similarly, it has led to a general retreat from state welfarism, as intensified competition creates pressure for decreased taxes and lower labour costs. Another manifestation of this is that states have found it increasingly difficult to regulate multinational companies that can more easily relocate production and investment. Political globalization has had no less an impact, as reflected in the growing importance of international and supranational bodies such as the United Nations, the European Union (EU), NATO and the World Trade Organization. It is clear, for instance, that membership of the EU threatens state power, because a growing range of decisions (for example, on monetary policy, agricultural and fisheries policies, defence and foreign affairs) are made by European institutions rather than by member states.

Some argue that globalizing trends have effectively brought out the reconstruction of the state as it has been traditionally understood. Certainly, sovereignly, the defining feature of the state, is at an end, at least insofar as it implies supreme and exclusive rule. States now operate in post-sovereign conditions, in a context of interdependence and permeability. However, this may lead not so much to the twilight of the state as to the emergence of a different kind of state. Social-democratic states, like collectivized states, may have been consigned to the dustbin of history, but in their place have emerged 'competition' states that are better adjusted to the requirements of a globalized economy. The concerns of such states include, for instance, the need to strengthen education and training as the principal way of guaranteeing economic success in the new technology-dependent economy, the desire to increase market responsiveness by promoting entrepreneurialism and labour flexibility, and the need to combat social exclusion and bolster the moral foundations of society. Political globalization may also open up opportunities for the state as well as diminish them. This is expressed in the idea of 'pooled' sovereignty: the notion that states that would be weak and ineffective acting independently can acquire greater influence by working together with other states through the vehicle of international or regional

institutions. This can, for example, be seen in the fact that the EU Council of Ministers, the most powerful policy-making body in the Union, is very much a creature of its member states and provides a forum that allows national politicians to make decisions on a regional level.

Restructuring the state

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed, particularly in the USA and the UK, a determined assault on the state by governments inspired by New Right priorities and beliefs. This led to a 'rolling back' of the state through policies such as deregulation, **privatization** and the introduction of market reforms in the public services. Similar policies, however, were adopted elsewhere, perhaps most enthusiastically by the postcommunist regimes of central and eastern Europe in an attempt to dismantle their collectivized state machines. Although state contraction was hastened where a pro-market and anti-state philosophy of 'private, good; public, bad' was influential, it was also dictated by broader and more irresistible forces. Among these are the pressures generated by increased global competition and the need to develop more efficient and responsive means of developing public policy and delivering public services, linked to the shift from government to 'governance' (see p. 6). This latter idea reflects the fact that, as society has become more complex and fluid, new methods of governing have had to be devised that rely less on hierarchical state institutions, thus blurring the distinction between the state and society. The 'governance turn' in politics has been evident in a variety of tendencies. These include the growing trend to finance public programmes through private investment, the 'reinvention' of government through a move away from direct service provision to an 'enabling' or 'regulating' role, the increased use of quasi-governmental and private organizations to deliver public services, and the advent of the 'new public management', which has seen private-sector management techniques more widely adopted within government.

Substate governance

The final challenge to the state comes from the pressure for decentralization, the tendency to transfer responsibilities from national or central bodies to a local or community level. This process is by no means universal, but, in many parts of the world, the growing importance of community and ethnic politics has led to demands for the strengthening of local and regional bodies. For example, the creation of a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly in 1999 brought the UK into line with other European states, such as Spain, France and Italy, in having a significant tier of devolved government. In the case of Scotland, this involves a considerable measure of elected self-government, and, arguably, amounts to 'quasi-federalism'. Moreover, centrifugal forces within the EU have led to the idea of a 'Europe of the regions', meaning that regional institutions and groups have increasingly sought direct access to EU bodies, thereby bypassing national governments. This has created patterns of **multi-level governance** within the EU, involving Substate, state and suprastate bodies, which are difficult to reconcile with the traditional notion of statehood. In its most dramatic form, however, centrifugal pressures have led to the reconstitution of state power or the overthrow of the state itself. Rising ethnic nationalism thus led in 1993 to the breakup of the Czechoslovakian state and the creation of separate Czech

Privatization: The transfer of state assets from the public to the private sector, reflecting a contraction of the state's responsibilities.

Multi-level governance: A complex policy process involving Subnational, national and supranational levels and governmental and non-governmental actors.

and Slovak ones, and in the early 1990s the Yugoslav state was torn apart by a civil war fuelled by a mixture of nationalist ambition and ethnic rivalry. Such forces are examined in greater depth in Chapter 8.

Summary

• The state is a political association that exercises sovereign jurisdiction within defined territorial borders. In contrast to government, which is merely one of its parts, the state encompasses all public bodies and exercises impersonal authority on the basis of the assumption that it represents the permanent interests of society rather than the partisan sympathies of any group of politicians.

• There are a number of rival theories of the state. Pluralists hold that the state is a neutral body that arbitrates between the competing interests of society. Marxists argue that the state maintains the class system by either oppressing subordinate classes or ameliorating class conflict. The New Right portrays the state as a self-serving monster that is intent on expansion and aggrandisement. Radical feminists point to patriarchal biases within the state that support a system of male power.

• Those who support the state see it either as a means of defending the individual from the encroachments of fellow citizens or as a mechanism through which collective action can be organized. Critics, however, tend to suggest that the state reflects either the interests of dominant social groups, or interests that are separate from, and antithetical to, society.

• States have fulfilled very different roles. Minimal states merely lay down the conditions for orderly existence. Developmental states attempt to promote growth and economic development. Social-democratic states aim to rectify the imbalances and injustices of a market economy. Collectivized states exert control over the entirety of economic life. Totalitarian states bring about all-encompassing politicization and, in effect, extinguish civil society.

• The modern state is confronted by a variety of threats. Chief amongst these are: globalization in the form of economic interdependence and the emergence of supranational bodies; the 'rolling back' or 'hollowing out' of the state as responsibilities are transferred to private institutions; and decentralization through the transfer of responsibilities from state institutions to regional, provincial or local bodies.

Questions for discussion

- Would life in a state of nature really be 'nasty, brutish and short'?
- Does government control the state, or does the state control government?
- Can the state be viewed as a neutral body in relation to competing social interests?
- Does the nature and background of the state elite inevitably breed bias?
- What is the proper relationship between the state and civil society?
- How far can the state be 'hollowed out' before it ceases to be a state altogether?
- Does globalization mean that the state has become irrelevant?

Further reading

Dunleavy, P. and B. O'Leary *Theories of the State* (London: Palgrave, 1987). A carefully structured and accessible introduction to five major approaches to the state and the politics of liberal democracy.

Jessop, B. *State Theory: Putting Capitalist States in Their Place* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990). A demanding but worthwhile collection of essays through which Jessop develops his own approach to state theory.

Pierre, J. and B. Guy Peters *Governance, Politics and the State* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000). A useful discussion of the phenomenon of governance and of its implications for the role and nature of the state.

Poggi, G. *The State* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). An analysis of the nature, development and prospects of the state that is particularly useful in relation to the 'crisis of the state'.

Schwarzmantel, J. *The State in Contemporary Society: An Introduction* (London and New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994). A clear and useful introduction to the study of politics that focuses on rival views of the liberal-democratic state.



Nations and Globalization

Nations and Nationalism

CHAPTER 6

'Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind.'
ALBERT EINSTEIN *Letter* (1921)

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For the last 200 years the nation has been regarded as the most appropriate (and perhaps the only proper) unit of political rule. Indeed, international law is largely based on the assumption that nations, like individuals, have inviolable rights, notably the right to political independence and self-determination. Nowhere, however, is the importance of the nation more dramatically demonstrated than in the potency of nationalism as a political creed. In many ways, nationalism has dwarfed the more precise and systematic political ideologies examined in Chapter 3. It has contributed to the outbreak of wars and revolutions. It has caused the birth of new states, the disintegration of empires and the redrawing of borders; and it has been used to reshape existing regimes as well as to bolster them. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that the age of the nation may be drawing to a close. The nation-state, the goal that generations of nationalists have strived to achieve, is increasingly beset by pressures, both internal and external.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- What is a nation?
- How do cultural nationalism and political nationalism differ?
- How can the emergence and growth of nationalism be explained?
- What political forms has nationalism assumed? What causes has it articulated?
- What are the attractions or strengths of the nation-state?
- Does the nation-state have a future?

Concept

Nation

Nations (from the Latin *nasci*, meaning 'to be born') are complex phenomena that are shaped by a collection of cultural, political and psychological factors. *Culturally*, a nation is a group of people bound together by a common language, religion, history and traditions, although nations exhibit various levels of cultural heterogeneity. *Politically*, a nation is a group of people who regard themselves as a natural political community. Although this is classically expressed in the form of a desire to establish or maintain statehood, it can also take the form of civic consciousness. *Psychologically*, a nation is a group of people distinguished by a shared loyalty or affection in the form of patriotism (see p. 115). However, such an attachment is not a necessary condition for membership of a nation; even those who lack

What is a nation?

Many of the controversies surrounding the phenomenon of nationalism can be traced back to rival views about what constitutes a nation. So widely accepted is the idea of the nation that its distinctive features are seldom examined or questioned; the nation is simply taken for granted. Nevertheless, confusion abounds. The term 'nation' tends to be used with little precision, and is often used interchangeably with terms such as state, country, ethnic group and race. The United Nations, for instance, is clearly misnamed, as it is an organization of states, not one of national populations. What, then, are the characteristic features of the nation? What distinguishes a nation from any other social group or other sources of collective identity?

The difficulty of defining the term 'nation' springs from the fact that all nations comprise a mixture of objective and subjective features, a blend of cultural and political characteristics. In *objective* terms, nations are cultural entities: groups of people who speak the same language, have the same religion, are bound by a shared past, and so on. Such factors undoubtedly shape the politics of nationalism. The nationalism of the Québecois in Canada, for instance, is based largely on language differences between French-speaking Quebec and the predominantly English-speaking rest of Canada. Nationalist tensions in India invariably arise from religious divisions, examples being the struggle of Sikhs in Punjab for a separate homeland (Khalistan), and the campaign by Muslims in Kashmir for the incorporation of Kashmir into Pakistan. Nevertheless, it is impossible to define a nation using objective factors alone. All nations encompass a measure of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity. The Swiss nation has proved to be enduring and viable despite the use of three major languages (French, German and Italian), as well as a variety of local dialects. Divisions between Catholics and Protestants that have given rise to rival nationalisms in Northern Ireland have been largely irrelevant in mainland UK, and of only marginal significance in countries such as Germany.

This emphasizes the fact that, ultimately, nations can only be defined *subjectively* by their members. In the final analysis, the nation is a psycho-political construct. What sets a nation apart from any other group or collectivity is that its members regard themselves as a nation. What does this mean? A nation, in this sense, perceives itself to be a distinctive political community. This is what distinguishes a nation from an **ethnic group.** An ethnic group undoubtedly possesses a communal identity and a sense of cultural pride, but, unlike a nation, it lacks collective political aspirations. These aspirations have traditionally taken the form of the quest for, or the desire to maintain, political independence or statehood. On a more modest level, however, they may consist of a desire to achieve a measure of autonomy, perhaps as part of a federation or confederation of states.

The complexity does not end there, however. Nationalism is a difficult political phenomenon, partly because various nationalist traditions view the concept of a nation in different ways. Two contrasting concepts have been particularly influential. One portrays the nation as primarily a cultural community, and emphasizes the importance of ethnic ties and loyalties. The other sees it essentially as a political community, and highlights the significance of civil bonds and allegiances. These rival views not only offer alternative accounts of the origins of nations, but have also been linked to very different forms of nationalism.

Ethnic group: A group of people who share a common cultural and historical identity, typically linked to a belief in common descent.

Concept

Cultural nationalism

Cultural nationalism is a form of nationalism that places primary emphasis on the regeneration of the nation as a distinctive civilization, rather than as a discrete political community. Not uncommonly, cultural nationalists view the state as a peripheral, if not alien, entity. Whereas political nationalism is 'rational', and usually principled, cultural nationalism is 'mystical', in that it is based on a romantic belief in the nation as a unique, historical and organic whole, animated by its own 'spirit'. Typically, it is a 'bottom-up' form of nationalism that draws more on 'popular' rituals, traditions and legends than on elite, or 'higher', culture. Though often antimodern in character, cultural nationalism may also serve as an agent of modernization by enabling a people to 'recreate' itself.

therefore developed to meet the needs of particular social conditions and circumstances. On the other hand, Gellner's theory suggests that nationalism is now ineradicable, as a return to premodern loyalties and identities is unthinkable. However, in *The Ethnic Origins ofNations* (1986) Anthony Smith challenged the idea of a link between nationalism and modernization by highlighting the continuity between modern nations and premodern ethnic communities, which he called 'ethnies'. In this view, nations are historically embedded: they are rooted in a common cultural heritage and language that may long predate the achievement of statehood or even the quest for national independence. Smith nevertheless acknowledged that, although ethnicity is the precursor of nationalism, modern nations came into existence only when established ethnies were linked to the emerging doctrine of political sovereignty (see p. 129). This conjunction occurred in Europe in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, and in Asia and Africa in the twentieth century.

Regardless of the origins of nations, certain forms of nationalism have a distinctively cultural, rather than political, character. Cultural nationalism commonly takes the form of national self-affirmation; it is a means through which a people can acquire a clearer sense of its own identity through the heightening of national pride and self-respect. This is demonstrated by Welsh nationalism, which focuses much more on attempts to preserve the Welsh language and Welsh culture in general than on the search for political independence. Black nationalism in the USA, the West Indies and many parts of Europe also has a strong cultural character. Its emphasis is on the development of a distinctively black consciousness and sense of national pride, which, in the work of Marcus Garvey (see p. 169) and Malcolm X (1926-65), was linked to the rediscovery of Africa as a spiritual and cultural 'homeland'. A similar process can be seen at work in modern Australia and, to some extent, New Zealand. The republican movement in Australia, for example, reflects the desire to redefine the nation as a political and cultural unit separate from the UK. This is a process of self-affirmation that draws heavily upon the Anzac myth, the relationship with indigenous peoples, and the rediscovery of a settler folk culture.

The German historian Friedrich Meinecke (1907) went one step further and distinguished between 'cultural nations' and 'political nations'. 'Cultural' nations are characterized by a high level of ethnic homogeneity; in effect, national and ethnic identities overlap. Meinecke identified the Greeks, the Germans, the Russians, the English and the Irish as examples of cultural nations, but the description could equally apply to ethnic groups such as the Kurds, the Tamils and the Chechens. Such nations can be regarded as 'organic', in that they have been fashioned by natural or historical forces, rather than by political ones. The strength of cultural nations is that, bound together by a powerful and historical sense of national unity, they tend to be stable and cohesive. On the other hand, cultural nations tend to view themselves as exclusive groups. Membership of the nation is seen to derive not from a political allegiance, voluntarily undertaken, but from an ethnic identity that has somehow been inherited. Cultural nations thus tend to view themselves as extended kinship groups distinguished by common descent. In this sense, it is not possible to 'become' a German, a Russian or a Kurd simply by adopting the language and beliefs of the people. Such exclusivity has tended to breed insular and regressive forms of nationalism, and to weaken the distinction between nation and race (see p. 194).

Nations as political communities

The view that nations are essentially political entities emphasizes civic loyalties and political allegiances rather than cultural identity. The nation is thus a group of people who are bound together primarily by shared citizenship, regardless of their cultural, ethnic and other loyalties. This view of the nation is often traced back to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (see p. 75), sometimes seen as the 'father' of modern nationalism. Although Rousseau did not specifically address the nation question, or discuss the phenomenon of nationalism, his stress on popular sovereignty, expressed in the idea of the 'general will' (in effect, the common good of society), was the seed from which nationalist doctrines sprang during the French Revolution of 1789. In proclaiming that government should be based upon the general will, Rousseau developed a powerful critique of monarchical power and aristocratic privilege. During the French Revolution, this principle of radical democracy was reflected in the assertion that the French people were 'citizens' possessed of inalienable rights and liberties, no longer merely 'subjects' of the crown. Sovereign power thus resided with the 'French nation'. The form of nationalism that emerged from the French Revolution therefore embodied a vision of a people or nation governing itself, and was inextricably linked to the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

The idea that nations are political, not ethnic, communities has been supported by a number of theories of nationalism. Eric Hobsbawm (1983), for instance, highlighted the degree to which nations are 'invented traditions'. Rather than accepting that modern nations have developed out of long-established ethnic communities, Hobsbawm argued that a belief in historical continuity and cultural purity was invariably a myth, and, what is more, a myth created by nationalism itself. In this view, nationalism creates nations, not the other way round. A widespread consciousness of nationhood (sometimes called popular nationalism) did not, for example, develop until the late nineteenth century, perhaps fashioned by the invention of national anthems and national flags, and the extension of primary education. Certainly, the idea of a 'mother tongue' passed down from generation to generation and embodying a national culture is highly questionable. In reality, languages live and grow as each generation adapts the language to its own distinctive needs and circumstances. Moreover, it can be argued that the notion of a 'national' language is an absurdity, given the fact that, until the nineteenth century, the majority of people had no knowledge of the written form of their language and usually spoke a regional dialect that had little in common with the language of the educated elite.

Benedict Anderson (1983) also portrayed the modern nation as an artefact, in his case as an 'imagined community'. Anderson pointed out that nations exist more as mental images than as genuine communities that require a level of face-to-face interaction to sustain the notion of a common identity. Within nations, individuals only ever meet a tiny proportion of those with whom they supposedly share a national identity. If nations exist, they exist as imagined artifices, constructed for us through education, the mass media and a process of political socialization (see p. 203). Whereas in Rousseau's view a nation is animated by ideas of democracy and political freedom, the notion that nations are 'invented' or 'imagined' communities has more in common with the Marxist belief that nationalism is a species of bourgeois ideology. From the perspective of orthodox Marxism, nationalism is a device through which the ruling class counters the threat of social revolution by ensuring

that national loyalty is stronger than class solidarity, thus binding the working class to the existing power structure.

Whether nations spring out of a desire for liberty and democracy or are merely cunning inventions of political elites or a ruling class, certain nations have an unmistakably political character. Following Meinecke, these nations can be classified as 'political nations'. A 'political' nation is one in which citizenship has greater political significance than ethnic identity; not uncommonly, political nations contain a number of ethnic groups, and so are marked by cultural heterogeneity. The UK, the USA and France have often been seen as classic examples of political nations. The UK is a union of what, in effect, are four 'cultural' nations: the English, the Scottish, the Welsh and the Northern Irish (although the latter may comprise two nations, the Protestant Unionists and the Catholic Republicans). Insofar as there is a distinctively British national identity, this is based on political factors such as a common allegiance to the Crown, respect for the Westminster Parliament, and a belief in the historic rights and liberties of the British people. As a 'land of immigrants', the USA has a distinctively multiethnic and multicultural character, which makes it impossible for it to construct a national identity on the basis of shared cultural and historical ties. Instead, a sense of American nationhood has been consciously developed through the educational system, and through the cultivation of respect for a set of common values, notably those outlined in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. Similarly French national identity is closely linked to the traditions and principles of the 1789 French Revolution.

What such nations have in common is that, in theory, they were founded upon a voluntary acceptance of a common set of principles or goals, as opposed to an existing cultural identity. It is sometimes argued that the style of nationalism that develops in such societies is typically tolerant and democratic. If a nation is primarily a political entity, it is an inclusive group, in that membership is not restricted to those who fulfil particular language, religious, ethnic or suchlike criteria. Classic examples are the USA, with its image as a 'melting pot' nation, and the 'new' South Africa, seen as a 'rainbow society'. On the other hand, political nations may at times fail to experience the organic unity and sense of historical rootedness that is found in cultural nations. This may, for instance, account for the relative weakness of specifically British nationalism in the UK, by comparison with Scottish and Welsh nationalism and the insular form of English nationalism that is sometimes called 'little Englander' nationalism.

Developing world states have encountered particular problems in their struggle to achieve a national identity. Such nations can be described as 'political' in two senses. First, in many cases, they have achieved statehood only after a struggle against colonial rule (see p. 118). In this case, the nation's national identity is deeply influenced by the unifying quest for national liberation and freedom. Third world nationalism therefore tends to have a strong anticolonial character. Second, these nations have often been shaped by territorial boundaries inherited from their former colonial rulers. This has particularly been the case in Africa. African 'nations' often encompass a wide range of ethnic, religious and regional groups that are bound together by little more than a shared colonial past. In contrast to the creation of classic European cultural nations, which sought statehood on the basis of a pre-existing national identity, an attempt has been made in Africa to 'build' nations on the foundations of existing states. However, the resulting mismatch of political and ethnic identities has bred recurrent tensions, as has been seen in Nigeria, Sudan,

Rwanda and Burundi, for example. However, such conflicts are by no means simply manifestations of ancient 'tribalism'. To a large extent they are a consequence of the divide-and-rule policies used in the colonial past.

Varieties of nationalism

Immense controversy surrounds the political character of nationalism. On the one hand, nationalism can appear to be a progressive and liberating force, offering the prospect of national unity or independence. On the other, it can be an irrational and reactionary creed that allows political leaders to conduct policies of military expansion and war in the name of the nation. Indeed, nationalism shows every sign of suffering from the political equivalent of multiple-personality syndrome. At various times, nationalism has been progressive and reactionary, democratic and authoritarian, liberating and oppressive, and left-wing and right-wing. For this reason, it is perhaps better to view nationalism not as a single or coherent political phenomenon, but as a series of 'nationalisms': that is, as a complex of traditions that share but one characteristic - each, in its own particular way, acknowledges the central political importance of the nation.

This confusion derives in part from the controversies examined above about how the concept of a nation should be understood, and about whether cultural or political criteria are decisive in defining the nation. However, the character of nationalism is also moulded by the circumstances in which nationalist aspirations arise, and by the political causes to which it is attached. Thus, when nationalism is a reaction against the experience of foreign domination or colonial rule, it tends to be a liberating force linked to the goals of liberty, justice and democracy. When nationalism is a product of social dislocation and demographic change, it often has an insular and exclusive character, and can become a vehicle for racism (see p. 116) and **xenophobia.** Finally, nationalism is shaped by the political ideals of those who espouse it. In their different ways, liberals, conservatives, socialists, fascists and even communists have been attracted to nationalism (of the major ideologies, perhaps only anarchism is entirely at odds with nationalism). In this sense, nationalism is a cross-cutting ideology. The principal political manifestations of nationalism are the following:

- liberal nationalism
- conservative nationalism
- expansionist nationalism
- anticolonial nationalism.

Liberal nationalism

Liberal nationalism can be seen as the classic form of European liberalism; it dates back to the French Revolution, and embodies many of its values. Indeed, in continental Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, to be a nationalist meant to be a liberal, and *vice versa.* The 1848 Revolutions, for example, fused the struggle for national independence and unification with the demand for limited and constitutional government. Nowhere was this more evident than in the 'Risorgimento' (rebirth) nationalism of the Italian nationalist movement, especially as expressed by the 'prophet' of Italian unification, Guiseppe Mazzini (see p. 112). Similar principles

Xenophobia: A fear or hatred of foreigners; pathological ethnocentrism.



Guiseppe Mazzini (1805–72)

Italian nationalist and apostle of liberal republicanism. Mazzini was born in Genoa, Italy, and was the son of a doctor. He came into contact with revolutionary politics as a member of the patriotic secret society, the Carbonari. This led to his arrest and exile to France and, after his expulsion from France, to Britain. He returned briefly to Italy during the 1848 Revolutions, helping to liberate Milan and becoming head of the short-lived Roman Republic. A committed republican, Mazzini's influence thereafter faded as other nationalist leaders, including Garibaldi (1807–82), looked to the House of Savoy to bring about Italian unification. Although he never officially returned to Italy, Mazzini's liberal nationalism had a profound influence throughout Europe, and on immigrant groups in the USA.

were espoused by Simon Bolivar (1783-1830), who led the Latin-American independence movement in the early nineteenth century, and helped to expel the Spanish from Hispanic America. Perhaps the clearest expression of liberal nationalism is found in US President Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'. Drawn up in 1918, these were proposed as the basis for the reconstruction of Europe after the First World War, and provided a blueprint for the sweeping territorial changes that were implemented by the Treaty of Versailles (1919).

In common with all forms of nationalism, liberal nationalism is based on the fundamental assumption that humankind is naturally divided into a collection of nations, each possessed of a separate identity. Nations are therefore genuine or organic communities, not the artificial creation of political leaders or ruling classes. The characteristic theme of liberal nationalism, however, is that it links the idea of the nation with a belief in popular sovereignty, ultimately derived from Rousseau. This fusion was brought about because the multinational empires against which nineteenth-century European nationalists fought were also autocratic and oppressive. Mazzini, for example, wished not only to unite the Italian states, but also to throw off the influence of autocratic Austria. The central theme of this form of nationalism is therefore a commitment to the principle of **national self-determination.** Its goal is the construction of a nation-state (see p. 121): that is, a state within which the boundaries of government coincide as far as possible with those of nationality. In J.S. Mill's ([1861] 1951:392) words:

> When the sentiment of nationality exists in any force, there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all members of the nationality under one government, and a government to themselves apart. This is merely saying that the question of government should be decided by the governed.

Liberal nationalism is above all a principled form of nationalism. It does not uphold the interests of one nation against other nations. Instead, it proclaims that each and every nation has a right to freedom and self-determination. In this sense, all nations are equal. The ultimate goal of liberal nationalism, then, is the construction of a world of sovereign nation-states. Mazzini thus formed the clandestine organization Young Italy to promote the idea of a united Italy, but he also founded Young Europe in the hope of spreading nationalist ideas throughout the continent. Similarly, at the Paris Peace Conference that drew up the Treaty of Versailles, Woodrow Wilson advanced the principle of self-determination not simply because the breakup of European empires served US national interests, but because he believed that the

National self-determination: The principle that the nation is a sovereign entity; self-determination implies both national independence and democratic rule.

Poles, the Czechs, the Yugoslavs and the Hungarians all had the same right to political independence that the Americans already enjoyed.

From this perspective, nationalism is not only a means of enlarging political freedom, but also a mechanism for securing a peaceful and stable world order. Wilson, for instance, believed that the First World War had been caused because of an 'old order' that was dominated by autocratic and militaristic empires bent on expansionism and war. In his view, democratic nation-states, however, would be essentially peaceful, because, possessing both cultural and political unity, they lacked the incentive to wage war or subjugate other nations. In this light, nationalism is not seen as a source of distrust, suspicion and rivalry. Rather, it is a force capable of promoting unity within each nation and brotherhood amongst nations on the basis of mutual respect for national rights and characteristics.

There is a sense, nevertheless, in which liberalism looks beyond the nation. This occurs for two reasons. The first is that a commitment to individualism implies that liberals believe that all human beings (regardless of factors such as race, creed, social background and nationality) are of equal moral worth. Liberalism therefore subscribes to universalism, in that it accepts that individuals everywhere have the same status and entitlements. This is commonly expressed nowadays in the notion of **human rights.** In setting the individual above the nation, liberals establish a basis for violating national sovereignty, as in the international campaign to pressurize the 'white' South African regime to abandon apartheid. The second reason is that liberals fear that a world of sovereign nation-states may degenerate into an international 'state of nature'. Just as unlimited freedom allows individuals to abuse and enslave one another, national sovereignty may be used as a cloak for expansionism and conquest. Freedom must always be subject to the law, and this applies equally to individuals and to nations. Liberals have, as a result, been in the forefront of campaigns to establish a system of international law (see p. 154) supervised by supranational bodies such as the League of Nations, the United Nations and the European Union. In this view, nationalism must therefore never be allowed to become insular and exclusive, but, instead, must be balanced against a competing emphasis upon cosmopolitanism.

Criticisms of liberal nationalism tend to fall into two categories. In the first category, liberal nationalists may be accused of being naive and romantic. They see the progressive and liberating face of nationalism; theirs is a tolerant and rational nationalism. However, they perhaps ignore the darker face of nationalism: that is, the irrational bonds of **tribalism** that distinguish 'us' from a foreign and threatening 'them'. Liberals see nationalism as a universal principle, but they have less understanding of the emotional power of nationalism, which, in time of war, can persuade people to fight, kill and die for 'their' country, almost regardless of the justice of their nation's cause. Such a stance is expressed in the assertion: 'my country, right or wrong'.

Second, the goal of liberal nationalism (the construction of a world of nation-states) may be fundamentally misguided. The mistake of Wilsonian nationalism, on the basis of which large parts of the map of Europe were redrawn, was that it assumed that nations live in convenient and discrete geographical areas, and that states can be constructed to coincide with these areas. In practice, all so-called 'nation-states' comprise a number of linguistic, religious, ethnic and regional groups, some of which may consider themselves to be 'nations'. This has nowhere been more clearly demonstrated than in the former Yugoslavia, a country viewed by the peacemakers at Versailles as 'the land of the Slavs'. However, it in fact consisted

Concept

Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is literally a belief in a *cosmopolis*, or 'world state'. It thus implies the obliteration of national identities and the establishment of a common political allegiance uniting all human beings. However, the term is usually used to refer to the more modest goal of peace and harmony amongst nations, founded upon mutual understanding, toleration and, above all

Human rights: Rights to which people are entitled by virtue of being human; universal and fundamental rights (see p. 302).

Tribalism: Group behaviour characterized by insularity and exclusivity, typically fuelled by hostility towards rival groups.

of a patchwork of ethnic communities, religions, languages and differing histories. Moreover, as the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s demonstrated, each of its constituent republics was itself an ethnic patchwork. Indeed, as the Nazis and later the Bosnian Serbs recognized, the only certain way of achieving a politically unified and culturally homogeneous nation-state is through a programme of **ethnic cleansing.**

Conservative nationalism

Historically, conservative nationalism developed rather later than liberal nationalism. Until the latter half of the nineteenth century, conservative politicians treated nationalism as a subversive, if not revolutionary, creed. As the century progressed, however, the link between conservatism and nationalism became increasingly apparent, for instance, in Disraeli's 'One Nation' ideal, in Bismarck's willingness to recruit German nationalism to the cause of Prussian aggrandisement, and in Tsar Alexander Ill's endorsement of pan-Slavic nationalism. In modern politics, nationalism has become an article of faith for most, if not all, conservatives. In the UK this was demonstrated most graphically by Margaret Thatcher's triumphalist reaction to victory in the Falklands War of 1982, and it is evident in the engrained 'Euroscepticism' of the Conservative right, particularly in relation to its recurrent bogey: a 'federal Europe'. A similar form of nationalism was rekindled in the USA through the adoption of a more assertive foreign policy, by Reagan in the invasion of Grenada and the bombing of Libya, and by Bush in the invasion of Panama and the 1991 Gulf War.

Conservative nationalism is concerned less with the principled nationalism of universal self-determination and more with the promise of social cohesion and public order embodied in the sentiment of national patriotism. Above all, conservatives see the nation as an organic entity emerging out of a basic desire of humans to gravitate towards those who have the same views, habits, lifestyles and appearance as themselves. In short, human beings seek security and identity through membership of a national community. From this perspective, patriotic loyalty and a consciousness of nationhood is rooted largely in the idea of a shared past, turning nationalism into a defence of values and institutions that have been endorsed by history. Nationalism thus becomes a form of traditionalism. This gives conservative nationalism a distinctively nostalgic and backward-looking character. In the USA, this is accomplished through an emphasis on the Pilgrim Fathers, the War of Independence, the Philadelphia Convention and so on. In the case of British nationalism (or, more accurately, English nationalism), national patriotism draws on symbols closely associated with the institution of monarchy. The UK national anthem is *God Save the Queen,* and the Royal Family play a prominent role in national celebrations such as Armistice Day, and on state occasions such as the opening of Parliament.

Conservative nationalism tends to develop in established nation-states rather than in ones that are in the process of nation building. It is typically inspired by the perception that the nation is somehow under threat, either from within or from without. The traditional 'enemy within' has been class antagonism and the ultimate danger of social revolution. In this respect, conservatives have seen nationalism as **the** antidote to socialism: when patriotic loyalties are stronger than class solidarity, the working class is, effectively, integrated into the nation. Calls for national unity and the belief that unabashed patriotism is a civic virtue are therefore recurrent

Ethnic cleansing: The forcible expulsion or extermination of 'alien' peoples; often used as a euphemism for genocide.

themes in conservative thought. The 'enemies without' that threaten national identity include immigration and Supranationalism.

In this view, immigration poses a threat because it tends to weaken an established national culture and ethnic identity, thereby provoking hostility and conflict. This fear was expressed in the UK in the 1960s by Enoch Powell, who warned that further Commonwealth immigration would lead to racial conflict and violence. A similar theme was taken up in 1979 by Margaret Thatcher in her reference to the danger of the UK being 'swamped' by immigrants. Anti-immigration campaigns waged by the British National Party, Le Pen's National Front in France, and far-right groups in Germany such as the Republicans also draw their inspiration from conservative nationalism. National identity, and with it our source of security and belonging, is threatened in the same way by the growth of supranational bodies and by the globalization of culture. Resistance in the UK and in other EU member states to a single European currency reflects not merely concern about the loss of economic sovereignty, but also a belief that a national currency is vital to the maintenance of a distinctive national identity.

Although conservative nationalism has been linked to military adventure and expansion, its distinctive character is that it is inward-looking and insular. If conservative governments have used foreign policy as a device to stoke up public fervour, this is an act of political opportunism rather than because conservative nationalism is relentlessly aggressive or inherently militaristic. This leads to the criticism that conservative nationalism is essentially a form of elite manipulation or ruling-class ideology. From this perspective, the 'nation' is invented and certainly defined by political leaders and ruling elites with a view to manufacturing consent and engineering political passivity. In crude terms, when in trouble, all governments play the 'nationalism card'. A more serious criticism of conservative nationalism, however, is that it promotes intolerance and bigotry. Insular nationalism draws upon a narrowly cultural concept of the nation: that is, the belief that a nation is an exclusive ethnic community, broadly similar to an extended family. A very clear line is therefore drawn between those who are members of the nation and those who are alien to it. By insisting upon the maintenance of cultural purity and established traditions, conservatives may portray immigrants, or foreigners in general, as a threat, and so promote, or at least legitimize, racialism and xenophobia.

Concept

Patriotism

Patriotism (from the Latin *patria*, meaning 'fatherland') is a sentiment, a psychological attachment to one's nation (a 'love of one's country'). The terms nationalism and patriotism are often confused. Nationalism has a doctrinal character and embodies the belief that the nation is in some way the central principle of political organization. Patriotism provides the affective basis for that belief. Patriotism thus underpins all forms of nationalism; it is difficult to conceive of a national group demanding, say, political independence without possessing at least a measure of patriotic loyalty or national consciousness. However, not all patriots are nationalists. Not all of those who identify with, or even love, their nation see it as a means through which political demands can be articulated.

Expansionist nationalism

The third form of nationalism has an aggressive, militaristic and expansionist character. In many ways, this form of nationalism is the antithesis of the principled belief in equal rights and self-determination that is the core of liberal nationalism. The aggressive face of nationalism first appeared in the late nineteenth century as European powers indulged in 'the scramble for Africa' in the name of national glory and their 'place in the sun'. Nineteenth-century European imperialism (see p. 131) differed from the colonial expansion of earlier periods in that it was fuelled by a climate of popular nationalism in which national prestige was increasingly linked to the possession of an empire, and each colonial victory was greeted by demonstrations of popular enthusiasm, or **jingoism.** To a large extent, both world wars of the twentieth century resulted from this expansionist form of nationalism. When the First World War broke out in August 1914, following a prolonged arms race and a succession of international crises, the prospect of conquest and military glory provoked spontaneous

Jingoism: A mood of public enthusiasm and celebration provoked by military expansion or imperial conquest.

Concept

Racialism, racism

The terms racialism and racism are often used interchangeably, although the latter has become more common in modern usage. Racialism includes any belief or doctrine that draws political or social conclusions from the idea that humankind is divided into biologically distinct races. Racialist theories are thus based on two assumptions. First, genetic differences justify humankind being treated as a collection of races (race effectively implying species). Second, cultural, intellectual and moral differences amongst humankind derive from these more fundamental genetic differences. In political terms, racialism is manifest in calls for racial segregation (apartheid), and in doctrines of 'blood' superiority and inferiority (for example, Aryanism and anti-Semitism). Racism may be used more narrowly to refer to prejudice or hostility towards people on the grounds of their racial origins, whether or not this is linked to a developed racial theory.

public rejoicing in all the major capitals of Europe. The Second World War was largely a result of the nationalist-inspired programmes of imperial expansion pursued by Japan, Italy and Germany. The most destructive modern example of this form of nationalism in Europe has been the quest by the Bosnian Serbs to construct a 'Greater Serbia'.

In its extreme form, such nationalism arises from a sentiment of intense, even hysterical nationalist enthusiasm, sometimes referred to as integral nationalism. The term integral nationalism was coined by the French nationalist Charles Maurras (1868-1952), leader of the right-wing Action Française. The centrepiece of Maurras' politics was an assertion of the overriding importance of the nation: the nation is everything and the individual is nothing. The nation thus has an existence and meaning beyond the life of any single individual, and individual existence has meaning only when it is dedicated to the unity and survival of the nation. Such fanatical patriotism has a particularly strong appeal for the alienated, isolated and powerless, for whom nationalism becomes a vehicle through which pride and self-respect can be regained. However, integral nationalism breaks the link previously established between nationalism and democracy. An 'integral' nation is an exclusive ethnic community, bound together by primordial loyalties rather than voluntary political allegiances. National unity does not demand free debate and an open and competitive struggle for power; it requires discipline and obedience to a single, supreme leader. This led Maurras to portray democracy as a source of weakness and corruption, and to call instead for the reestablishment of monarchical absolutism.

This militant and intense form of nationalism is invariably associated with chauvinistic beliefs and doctrines. Derived from the name of Nicolas Chauvin, a French soldier noted for his fanatical devotion to Napoleon and the cause of France, chauvinism is an irrational belief in the superiority or dominance of one's own group or people. National chauvinism therefore rejects the idea that all nations are equal in favour of the belief that nations have particular characteristics and qualities, and so have very different destinies. Some nations are suited to rule; others are suited to be ruled. Typically, this form of nationalism is articulated through doctrines of ethnic or racial superiority, thereby fusing nationalism and racialism. The chauvinist's own nation is seen to be unique and special, in some way a 'chosen people'. For early German nationalists such as Fichte and Jahn, only the Germans were a true *Volk* (an organic people). They alone had maintained blood purity and avoided the contamination of their language. For Maurras, France was an unequalled marvel, a repository of all Christian and classical virtues.

No less important in this type of nationalism, however, is the image of another nation or race as a threat or enemy. In the face of the enemy, the nation draws together and gains an intensified sense of its own identity and importance, achieving a kind of 'negative integration'. Chauvinistic nationalism therefore establishes a clear distinction between 'them' and 'us'. There has to be a 'them' to deride or hate in order for a sense of 'us' to be forged. The world is thus divided, usually by means of racial categories, into an 'in group' and an 'out group'. The 'out group' acts as a scapegoat for all the misfortunes and frustrations suffered by the 'in group'. This was most graphically demonstrated by the virulent anti-Semitism that was the basis of German Nazism. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* ([1925] 1969) portrayed history as a Manichean struggle between the Aryans and the Jews, respectively representing the forces of light and darkness, or good and evil.

A recurrent theme of expansionist nationalism is the idea of national rebirth or

regeneration. This form of nationalism commonly draws upon myths of past greatness or national glory. Mussolini and the Italian Fascists looked back to the days of Imperial Rome. In portraying their regime as the 'Third Reich', the German Nazis harked back both to Bismarck's 'Second Reich' and Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire, the 'First Reich'. Such myths plainly give expansionist nationalism a backward-looking character, but they also look to the future in that they mark out the nation's destiny. If nationalism is a vehicle for reestablishing greatness and regaining national glory, it invariably has a militaristic and expansionist character. In short, war is the testing ground of the nation. At the heart of integral nationalism there often lies an imperial project: a quest for expansion or a search for colonies. This can be seen in forms of **pan-nationalism.** However, Nazi Germany is again the best-known example. Hitler's writings mapped out a three-stage programme of expansion. First, the Nazis sought to establish a 'Greater Germany' by bringing ethnic Germans in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland within an expanded Reich. Second, they intended to achieve *Lebensraum* (living space) by establishing a German-dominated empire stretching into Russia. Third, Hitler dreamed of ultimate Aryan world domination.

Anticolonial nationalism

The developing world has spawned various forms of nationalism, all of which have in some way drawn inspiration from the struggle against colonial rule. The irony of this form of nationalism is that it has turned doctrines and principles first developed through the process of 'nation building' in Europe against the European powers themselves. Colonialism, in other words, succeeded in turning nationalism into a political creed of global significance. In Africa and Asia, it helped to forge a sense of nationhood shaped by the desire for 'national liberation'. Indeed, during the twentieth century, the political geography of much of the world was transformed by anticolonialism. Independence movements that sprang up in the interwar period gained new impetus after the conclusion of the Second World War. The overstretched empires of Britain, France, the Netherlands and Portugal crumbled in the face of rising nationalism.

India had been promised independence during the Second World War, which was eventually granted in 1947. China achieved genuine unity and independence only after the 1949 communist revolution, having fought an eight-year war against the occupying Japanese. A republic of Indonesia was proclaimed in 1949 after a three-year war against the Netherlands. A military uprising forced the French to withdraw from Vietnam in 1954, even though final liberation, with the unification of North and South Vietnam, was not achieved until 1975, after 14 further years of war against the USA. Nationalist struggles in South East Asia inspired similar movements in Africa, with liberation movements emerging under leaders such as Nkrumah in Ghana, Dr Azikiwe in Nigeria, Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika (later Tanzania), and Hastings Banda in Nyasaland (later Malawi). The pace of decolonization in Africa accelerated from the late 1950s onwards. Nigeria gained independence from the UK in 1960 and, after a prolonged war fought against the French, Algeria gained independence in 1962. Kenya became independent in 1963, as did Tanzania and Malawi the next year. Africa's last remaining colony, South-West Africa, finally became independent Namibia in 1990.

Early forms of anticolonialism drew heavily on 'classical' European nationalism and were inspired by the idea of national self-determination. However, emergent

Concept

Anti-Semitism

Semites are by tradition the descendants of Shem, son of Noah. They include most of the peoples of the Middle East. Anti-Semitism is prejudice or hatred towards Jews. In its earliest systematic form, anti-Semitism had a *religious* character. It reflected the hostility of the Christians towards the Jews, based on the alleged complicity of the Jews in the murder of Jesus and their refusal to acknowledge him as the son of God. *Economic* anti-Semitism developed from the Middle Ages onwards, and expressed distaste for Jews in their capacity as moneylenders and traders. Jews were thus excluded from membership of craft guilds and prevented from owning land. The nineteenth century saw the birth of *racial* anti-Semitism in the work of Wagner and H. S. Chamberlain (1855–1929), which condemned the Jewish peoples as fundamentally evil and destructive. These ideas provided the ideological basis for German Nazism and found their most grotesque expression in the Holocaust.

Pan-nationalism: A style of nationalism dedicated to unifying a disparate people through either expansionism or political solidarity ('pan' means all or every).

Concept

Colonialism

Colonialism is the theory or practice of establishing control over a foreign territory and turning it into a 'colony'. Colonialism is thus a particular form of imperialism (see p. 131). Colonialism is usually distinguished by settlement and by economic domination. As typically practised in Africa and South East Asia, colonial government was exercised by a settler community from a 'mother country' who were ethnically distinct from the 'native' population. In French colonialism, colonies were thought of as part of the mother country, meaning that colonial peoples were granted formal rights of citizenship. In contrast, neocolonialism is essentially an economic phenomenon based on the export of capital from an advanced country to a less developed one, as seen, for example, in so-called US 'dollar imperialism' in Latin America.

African and Asian nations were in a very different position from the newly created European states of the nineteenth century. For African and Asian nations, the quest for political independence was inextricably linked to a desire for social development and for an end to their subordination to the industrialized states of Europe and the USA. The goal of 'national liberation' therefore had an economic as well as a political dimension. This helps to explain why anticolonial movements typically looked not to liberalism but to socialism, and particularly to Marxism-Leninism, as a vehicle for expressing their nationalist ambitions. On the surface, nationalism and socialism appear to be incompatible political creeds. Socialists have traditionally preached internationalism (see p. 128), since they regard humanity as a single entity, and argue that the division of humankind into separate nations breeds only suspicion and hostility. Marxists in particular have stressed that the bonds of class solidarity are stronger and more genuine than the ties of nationality, or, as Marx put it in the *Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1967:102): 'Working men have no country'.

The appeal of socialism to the developing world is based on the fact that the values of community and cooperation that socialism embodies are deeply established in the cultures of traditional, preindustrial societies. In this sense, nationalism and socialism are linked insofar as both emphasize social solidarity and collective action. By this standard, nationalism may simply be a weaker form of socialism, the former applying the 'social' principle to the nation, the latter extending it to cover the whole of humanity. More specifically, socialism, and especially Marxism, provide an analysis of inequality and exploitation through which the colonial experience can be understood and colonial rule challenged. In the same way as the oppressed and exploited proletariat saw that they could achieve liberation through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, third-world nationalists saw 'armed struggle' as a means of achieving both political and economic emancipation, thus fusing the goals of political independence and social revolution. In countries such as China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia, anticolonial movements openly embraced Marxism-Leninism. On achieving power, they moved to seize foreign assets and nationalize economic resources, creating Soviet-style planned economies. African and Middle Eastern states have developed a less ideological form of nationalistic socialism, practised in Algeria, Libya, Zambia, Iraq, South Yemen and elsewhere. The 'socialism' proclaimed in these countries usually takes the form of an appeal to a unifying national cause or interest, typically proclaimed by a powerful 'charismatic' leader.

However, nationalists in the developing world have not always been content to express their nationalism in a language of socialism or Marxism borrowed from the West. Especially since the 1970s, Marxism-Leninism has often been displaced by forms of religious fundamentalism (see p. 63), and particularly Islamic fundamentalism. This has given the developing world a specifically nonwestern, indeed an anti-western, voice. In theory at least, Islam attempts to foster a transnational political identity that unites all those who acknowledge the 'way of Islam' and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad within an 'Islamic nation'. However, the Iranian revolution of 1979, which brought Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-89) to power, demonstrated the potency of Islamic fundamentalism as a creed of national and spiritual renewal. The establishment of an 'Islamic republic' was designed to purge Iran of the corrupting influence of western materialism in general and of the 'Great Satan' (the USA) in particular through a return to the traditional values and principles embodied in the *Shari'a*, or divine Islamic law. By no means, however, does Islamic nationalism have

a unified character. In Sudan and Pakistan, for example, Islamification has essentially been used as a tool of statecraft to consolidate the power of ruling elites. Nevertheless, in Egypt and Algeria revolutionary Islamic movements have emerged that call for moral renewal and political purification in the name of the urban poor.

Multiculturalism

The idea of the nation as a culturally and politically united whole has, particularly since the 1960s, been challenged by the rise of multiculturalism. Nationalism has always been an example of the politics of identity, in the sense that it tells people who they are: it gives people a history, forges social bonds and a collective spirit, and creates a sense of destiny larger than individual existence. Multiculturalism is also a form of identity politics, but its stress is rather on the 'politics of difference', stressing the range of cultural diversity and identity-related differences in many modern societies. Although such diversity may be linked to age, social class, gender or sexuality, multiculturalism is usually associated with cultural differentiation that is based on race (see p. 194), ethnicity (see p. 168) or language. Multiculturalism not only recognizes the fact of cultural diversity, but also holds that such differences should be respected and publicly affirmed. Although the USA, as an immigrant society, has long been a multicultural society, the cause of multiculturalism in this sense was not taken up until the rise of the black consciousness movement in the 1960s. Australia has been officially committed to multiculturalism since the early 1970s, in recognition of its increasing 'Asianization'. In New Zealand it is linked to a recognition of the role of Maori culture in forging a distinctive national identity. In Canada it is associated with attempts to achieve reconciliation between French-speaking Quebec and the English-speaking majority population, and an acknowledgement of the rights of the indigenous Inuit peoples. In the UK, multiculturalism recognizes the existence of significant black and Asian communities and abandons the demand that they assimilate into white society. In Germany, this applies in relation to Turkish groups.

The relationship between multiculturalism and nationalism is complex. The nationalist traditions that are most disposed to accommodate multiculturalism are liberal nationalism and anticolonial nationalism. This is because both traditions embrace an essentially 'inclusive' model of the nation as a political or 'civic' entity rather than a cultural or 'ethnic' entity. Members of the nation are thus bound together less by a unifying culture and more by common citizenship and shared allegiances. Liberalism, indeed, can be seen to favour multiculturalism in principle. Liberal multiculturalism is rooted, most fundamentally, in a commitment to freedom and toleration. Classically expressed in J.S. Mill's (see p. 46) *On Liberty* ([1859] 1982), toleration can be seen as fundamentally important both to the individual and to society. For the individual, the ability to choose one's own moral beliefs, cultural practices and way of life, regardless of whether these are disapproved of by others, is an essential guarantee of freedom and personal development. Such a defence of what can be seen as 'negative' toleration justifies at least a live-and-let-live multiculturalism, or the politics of indifference. Mill nevertheless believed that toleration has the additional advantage that, in breeding diversity, it both contributes to the vigour and health of society and ensures progress by stimulating argument, discussion and debate. Such a defence of 'positive' toleration comes close to the modern ethic of

Concept

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is used as both a descriptive and a normative term. As a descriptive term it refers to cultural diversity arising from the existence within a society of two or more groups whose beliefs and practices generate a distinctive sense of collective identity. Multiculturalism is invariably reserved for communal diversity that arises from racial, ethnic or language differences. As a normative term, multiculturalism implies a positive endorsement of communal diversity, based either on the right of different cultural groups to respect and recognition, or on the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity. Multiculturalism, in this sense, acknowledges the importance of beliefs, values and ways of life in establishing self-understanding and a sense of self-worth for individuals and groups alike. Critics of multiculturalism argue that multicultural societies are inherently conflict-ridden and unstable, and view normative multiculturalism as an example of political correctness.



Isaiah Berlin (1909–97)

UK historian of ideas and philosopher. Berlin was born in Riga, Latvia, and came to Britain in 1921. He developed a form of liberal pluralism that was grounded in a lifelong commitment to empiricism and influenced by the ideas of counter-Enlightenment thinkers, including Vico (1668–1744), Herder (see p. 107) and Alexander Herzen (1812–70). Basic to Berlin's philosophical stance was a belief in moral pluralism, the idea that conflicts of values are intrinsic to human life. His best-known political writing is *Four Essays on Liberty* (1958), in which he extolled the virtues of 'negative' freedom over 'positive' freedom. Berlin's writings constitute a defence of western liberalism against totalitarianism.

multiculturalism, in which communal diversity is not merely accepted, perhaps grudgingly, but is positively welcomed as a source of vitality and enrichment for all.

However, liberalism and multiculturalism are not entirely compatible. In the first place, individualism (see p. 190), the core principle of liberalism, conflicts with multiculturalism in that it highlights the primary importance of personal or individual identity over any collective notion of identity based on ethnicity, race, language or whatever. To this degree, liberalism looks beyond both multiculturalism and nationalism, supporting, instead, the principle of internationalism (see p. 128). Second, liberalism is universalist in the sense that it gives priority to a set of core values, amongst which freedom and toleration clearly feature. In other words, liberalism offers a particular conception of the 'good life', one in which personal autonomy and freedom of choice are seen as vital pre-conditions for human self-development. Liberals are therefore inclined to tolerate the tolerant, but they find it more difficult to tolerate what they may see as illiberal or intolerant cultural beliefs and practices, such as arranged marriages, female dress codes or discrimination against gays and lesbians. Multiculturalists, for their part, often view liberal toleration as nothing more than cultural imperialism, that is, as an attempt to impose western beliefs, values and sensibilities on the rest of the world.

Firmer foundations for a theory of multiculturalism can be found in the idea of value pluralism. Isaiah Berlin developed a theory of pluralism (see p. 78) that has been used by many multiculturalists to justify a politics of difference. In Berlin's view there is no single, overriding conception of the 'good life', but rather a number of competing conceptions: people, in short, are bound to disagree about the ultimate ends of life. As values conflict, the human predicament is inevitably characterized by moral conflict. As far as individuals are concerned, compromises must be made between competing values and goals. As far as society is concerned, ways must be found to allow people with different moral and cultural beliefs to inhabit the same political space while maintaining peace and mutual respect. Although Berlin's pluralism was not developed with multicultural societies in mind, it provides the basis for at least a live-and-let-live form of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, there are also tensions between Berlin's ideas and multiculturalism. As Berlin remained a liberal to the extent that he believed that only within a society that respects individual liberty can moral pluralism be contained, he failed to demonstrate how liberal and illiberal cultural beliefs can coexist harmoniously within the same society. An alternative basis for multiculturalism has been advanced by Bhikhu Parekh (2000).

In Parekh's view, cultural diversity is, at heart, a reflection of the dialectical interplay between human nature and culture. Although human beings are natural creatures, who possess a common species-derived physical and mental structure, they are also culturally constituted in the sense that their attitudes, behaviour and ways of life are shaped by the groups to which they belong. A recognition of the complexity of human nature, and of the fact that any culture expresses only a part of what it means to be truly human, provides the basis for a politics of recognition and thus for a viable form of multiculturalism.

However, multiculturalism is clearly incompatible with conservative nationalism and expansionist nationalism. This is because these nationalist traditions are based on an 'exclusive' notion of national identity that emphasizes cultural homogeneity and, in some cases, racial purity. The conservative case against multiculturalism is that stable and successful societies must be based on shared values and a common culture. Human beings, in this view, are limited and dependent creatures, who are naturally drawn to others similar to themselves but, by the same token, fear or distrust people who are in some way different. Burke (see p. 47), for this reason, portrayed prejudice as inevitable and socially beneficial insofar as it strengthens social cohesion. Multicultural societies are therefore fractured and conflict-ridden: suspicion, hostility and even violence between different ethnic communities are not products of intolerance, ignorance or social inequality, but are a simple fact of social psychology. Conservative nationalists thus recommend that cultural diversity be contained by restrictions on immigration, as pointed out earlier, or insist on an assimilationist strategy in which minority communities are encouraged to adopt the values, attitudes and allegiances of the majority community.

Expansionist or chauvinist nationalists simply take these arguments to their extreme. The strength of the 'national community' is based strictly on its ethnic and cultural unity, an idea that fascists have used to justify the repatriation, expulsion or otherwise removal of minority groups. In the case of Nazism, an explicitly racialist version of anti-multiculturalism resulted in a programme of genocidal anti-Semitism. However, conservative and far-right objections to multiculturalism suffer from at least two drawbacks. The first is that even if they are not explicitly racialist, they may harbour implicit racialism in serving to legitimize, and perhaps encourage, hostility between different ethnic communities. The second is that they revere an image of social, moral and cultural homogeneity that has long ceased to exist in modern societies and which could be re-established only through widespread repression.

Concept

Nation-state

The nation-state is a form of political organization, and a political ideal. In the first case, it is an autonomous political community bound together by the overlapping bonds of citizenship and nationality. It is thus an alternative to multinational empires and city-states. In the latter case, the nation-state is a principle, or ideal type (see p. 18), reflected in Mazzini's goal: 'every nation a state, only one state for the entire nation'. This acknowledges that no modern state is, or can be, culturally homogeneous. There are two contrasting views of the nation-state. For liberals and most socialists, the nation-state is largely fashioned out of civic loyalties and allegiances. For conservatives and integral nationalists, it is based on ethnic or organic unity.

A future for the nation-state?

As the twentieth century progressed, claims were increasingly made that the age of nationalism was over. This was not because nationalism had been superseded by 'higher' supernational allegiances, but because its task had been completed: the world had become a world of nation-states. In effect, the nation had been accepted as the sole legitimate unit of political rule. Certainly, since 1789, the world had been fundamentally remodelled on nationalist lines. In 1910, only 15 of the 159 states recognized in 1989 as full members of the United Nations existed. Well into the twentieth century, most of the peoples of the world were still colonial subjects of one of the European empires. Only three of the current 65 states in the Middle East and Africa existed before 1910, and no fewer than 74 states have come into being since 1959.

These changes have been fuelled largely by the quest for national independence, with these new states invariably assuming the mantle of the nation-state.

History undoubtedly seems to be on the side of the nation-state. The three major geopolitical upheavals of the twentieth century (the First World War, the Second World War and the collapse of communism in eastern Europe) each gave considerable impetus to the concept of the nation as a principle of political organization. Since 1991 at least 18 new states have come into existence (14 of them as a result of the disintegration of the USSR), and all of them have claimed to be nation-states. The great strength of the nation-state is that it offers the prospect of both cultural cohesion and political unity. When a people who share a common cultural or ethnic identity gain the right to self-government, community and citizenship coincide. This is why nationalists believe that the forces that have created a world of independent nation-states are natural and irresistible, and that no other social group could constitute a meaningful political community. They believe that the nation-state is ultimately the only viable political unit. This view implies, for instance, that supranational bodies such as the European Union will never be able to rival the capacity of national governments to establish legitimacy and command popular allegiance. Clear limits should therefore be placed on the process of European integration because people with different languages, cultures and histories will never come to think of themselves as members of a united political community.

Nevertheless, just as the principle of the nation-state has achieved its widest support, other, very powerful forces have emerged that threaten to make the nation-state redundant. A combination of internal pressures and external threats has produced what is commonly referred to as a 'crisis of the nation-state'. Internally, nation-states have been subject to centrifugal pressures, generated by an upsurge in ethnic and regional politics. This heightened concern with ethnicity may, indeed, reflect the fact that, in a context of economic and cultural globalization (see p. 138), nations are no longer able to provide a meaningful collective identity or sense of social belonging. Given that all nation-states embody a measure of cultural diversity, the politics of ethnic coherence cannot but present a challenge to the principle of the nation. Unlike nations, ethnic or regional groups are not viable political entities in their own right, and thus look to forms of federalism (see p. 161) and confederalism to provide an alternative to political nationalism. For example, within the framework provided by the European Union, the Belgian regions of Flanders and Wallonia have achieved such a degree of self-government that Belgium remains a nation-state only in a strictly formal sense. The nature of such centrifugal forces is discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

External threats to the nation-state have a variety of forms. First, advances in the technology of warfare, and especially the advent of the nuclear age, have brought about demands that world peace be policed by supranational and international bodies. This led to the creation of the League of Nations and later the United Nations. Second, economic life has been progressively globalized. Markets are now world markets, businesses have increasingly become transnational corporations, and capital is moved around the globe in the flick of an eyelid. Is there a future for the nation-state in a world in which no national government can control its economic destiny? Third, the nation-state may be the enemy of the natural environment and a threat to the global ecological balance. Nations are concerned primarily with their own strategic and economic interests, and most pay little attention to the ecological consequences of their actions. The folly of this was demonstrated by the Chernobyl

nuclear accident in the Ukraine in 1986, which released a wave of nuclear radiation across Northern Europe that will cause an estimated 2000 cancer-related deaths over 50 years in Europe.

Finally, distinctive national cultures and traditions, the source of cohesion that distinguishes nation-states from other forms of political organization, have been weakened by the emergence of a transnational and even global culture. This has been facilitated by international tourism and the dramatic growth in communications technologies, from satellite television to the 'information superhighway'. When US films and television programmes are watched throughout the world, Indian and Chinese cuisine is as popular in Europe as native dishes, and people can communicate as easily with the other side of the world as with their neighbouring town, is the nation-state any longer a meaningful entity? These and related issues are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

Summary

• Nations are defined by a combination of cultural and political factors. Culturally, they are groups of people who are bound together by a common language, religion, history and traditions. Ultimately, however, nations define themselves through the existence of a shared civic consciousness, classically expressed as the desire to achieve or maintain statehood.

• Distinctive cultural and political forms of nationalism can be identified. Cultural nationalism emphasizes the regeneration of the nation as a distinctive civilization on the basis of a belief in the nation as a unique, historical and organic whole. Political nationalism, on the other hand, recognizes the nation as a discrete political community, and is thus linked with ideas such as sovereignty and self-determination.

• Some political thinkers portray nationalism as a modern phenomenon associated with industrialization and the rise of democracy, while others trace it back to premodern ethnic loyalties and identities. The character of nationalism has varied considerably, and has been influenced by both the historical circumstances in which it has arisen and the political causes to which it has been attached.

• There have been a number of contrasting manifestations of political nationalism. Liberal nationalism is based on a belief in a universal right to self-determination. Conservative nationalism values the capacity of national patriotism to deliver social cohesion and political unity. Expansionist nationalism is a vehicle for aggression and imperial conquest. Anticolonial nationalism is associated with the struggle for national liberation, often fused with the quest for social development.

• The spread of multiculturalism poses a number of challenges for nationalism. From a liberal perspective these are containable, so long as national identity is constructed on the basis of civil or political allegiances rather than ethnic or cultural homogeneity. Cultural diversity must nevertheless be underpinned by toleration and personal freedom. Conservatives, on the other hand, argue that multiculturalism weakens national unity by breeding suspicion, hostility and even violence.

• The most widely recognized form of political organization worldwide is the nation-state, which is often seen as the sole legitimate unit of political rule. Its

strength is that it offers the prospect of both cultural cohesion and political unity, thus allowing those who share a common cultural or ethnic identity to exercise the right to independence and self-government.

• The nation-state now confronts a number of challenges. Nation-states have been subject to centrifugal pressures generated by the growth in ethnic politics. Externally, they have confronted challenges from the growing power of supranational bodies, the advance of economic and cultural globalization, and the need to find international solutions to the environmental crisis.

Questions for discussion

- Where do nations come from? Are they natural or artificial formations?
- Why have national pride and patriotic loyalty been valued?
- Does cultural nationalism merely imprison a nation in its past?
- Why has nationalism proved to be such a potent political force?
- Does nationalism inevitably breed insularity and conflict?
- Is multiculturalism a source of social enrichment or a threat to social stability?
- Is the nation-state the sole legitimate unit of political rule?

Further reading

Alter, P. *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989). A readable and very useful introduction to the various forms of nationalism.

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Global Politics

CHAPTER 7

'War, in our scientific age, means, sooner or later, universal death.'

BERTRAND RUSSELL *Unpopular Essays*, (1950)

The late twentieth century brought with it recognition that the world had become, in Marshall McLuhan's words, a 'global village'. The phenomenon of globalization has completely altered our understanding of politics and of the nature of political interaction. The traditional view of politics was state-centric: the state was treated as the principal political actor, and attention was focused on the national level of government activity. It therefore followed that there was a clear distinction between domestic politics and foreign politics: that is, between what took place within a nation-state and what took place outside its borders. The latter, indeed, became the subject matter of a new and separate discipline, international relations. However, globalization has weakened, and perhaps destroyed, the distinction between 'the domestic' and 'the foreign', leading, some have argued, to the emergence of a world society. Although nation-states continue to be the most significant actors on the world stage, the growing impact of supranational bodies and of transnational groups and organizations is impossible to deny.

The central issues examined in this chapter are as follows:

Key issues

- How has international or world politics been analysed and explained?
- Will world order in the twenty-first century be characterized by peace and harmony or by chaos and disruption?
- What is globalization? What are its implications for the nation-state?
- Is globalization a beneficial or a destructive force?
- What are the prospects for supranational regional bodies?
- Could the idea of a world government ever become a reality?

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Understanding world politics

The recognition that there is an international dimension to politics is as old as the discipline itself, going back to accounts of conflict and war between the city-states of Ancient Greece. However, the modern international system did not come into existence until the emergence of centralized states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This process was completed by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which brought the Thirty Years War to an end with a formal recognition by the European powers of the sovereign independence of each state. The European state system was subsequently extended when the USA was recognized, after its defeat of Spain in 1898, as a great power, and when Japan was also so recognised after its victory over Russia in 1904-05. Imperialism (see p. 131), and especially the European 'scramble for colonies' in Africa and Asia in the late nineteenth century, gave the international system a truly global dimension.

The twentieth century thus witnessed the emergence of world politics in the sense that patterns of conflict and cooperation amongst states and international organizations extended across the globe. This was most chillingly seen in the First World War (1914-18), the Second World War (1939-45), and the **Cold War.** As the twentieth century drew to a close, however, there was a growing recognition that the very parameters of political life had changed. This more radically called into question the conventional distinction between a domestic realm and an international realm of politics. These complex and multifaceted changes have increasingly been referred to as 'globalization' (see p. 138).

In order to analyse these and other developments, however, it is necessary to examine the various perspectives from which international and world politics has traditionally been examined. The major theoretical 'schools' of international politics are the following:

- idealism
- realism
- pluralism
- Marxism.

Idealism

The defining characteristic of idealism is that it views international politics from the perspective of moral values and legal norms. It is concerned less with empirical analysis (that is, with how international actors behave) than with normative judgements (that is, with how they *should* behave). For this reason, idealism is sometimes seen as a species of utopianism (see p. 27). A broad range of idealist theories have been developed. In the Middle Ages, for instance, Thomas Aquinas (1224-74) discussed the nature of a 'just war', attempting to place the international actions of rulers in a moral context. He argued that war could be justified only if three conditions were met. First, it had to be declared by a ruler who had the authority to do so. Second, the cause that the war was fought in had to be just in the sense that it avenged a wrong. Third, the intention of just belligerence had to be to achieve good or avoid evil, not to give vent to greed or cruelty. Immanuel Kant developed what amounted to an early vision of world government. In his view, morality and reason combined to

Cold War: The period of rivalry between the USA-dominated West and the USSR-dominated East that extended from 1945 to the collapse of communism in the revolutions of 1989-91 (see p. 132).

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

German philosopher. Kant spent his entire life in Königsberg (which was then in East Prussia), becoming professor of logic and metaphysics at the University of Königsberg in 1770. His 'critical' philosophy holds that knowledge is not merely an aggregate of

morality. He believed that the law of reason dictated categorical imperatives, the most important of which was the obligation to treat others as 'ends', and never only as 'means'. Kant's (1970) most important works include *Critique of Pure Reason*



dictate that there should be no war, the future of humankind being based on the prospect of 'universal and lasting peace'.

Most forms of idealism are underpinned by internationalism: that is, the belief that human affairs should be organized according to universal, and not merely national, principles. This, in turn, is usually reflected in the assumption that human affairs, on both the domestic and international levels, are characterized by harmony and cooperation. One of the most influential forms of idealism has been found in liberalism. Although liberals have traditionally accepted the nation as the principal unit of political organization, they have also stressed the importance of interdependence and free trade, arguing quite simply that 'war does not pay'. Such internationalism is also reflected in a faith in collective security (see p. 153) and international law (see p. 154), which is embodied in organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. President Woodrow Wilson of the USA, for example, argued that the First World War had resulted from the 'old politics' of militarism and expansionism pursued by multinational empires. In his view, the best antidote to war was the construction of a world of democratic nation-states that were prepared to cooperate in areas of common interest and had no incentive to embark upon conquest or plunder.

After years of ridicule and denigration at the hands of realist theorists, idealism was revived in the late twentieth century. What has usually been called **neo-idealism** reflects disenchantment with the amoral power politics of the superpower era. An early example of this was the attempt by President Carter in the 1970s to restore a moral dimension to US foreign policy by emphasizing that economic and military aid depended on the human-rights records of recipient regimes. The theme of international cooperation and common security was taken up more boldly in the late 1980s by the Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, who spoke of a 'common European house', and proclaimed that the doctrine of human rights transcended the ideological rivalry between communism and capitalism.

In many respects, the prospect of nuclear annihilation (the product of years of escalating military spending by both East and West) gave greater impetus to idealist theories. This was reflected in the emergence of the peace movement, which embraced a broadly internationalist philosophy that was often linked to pacifism, a principled rejection of war and all forms of violence as fundamentally evil. The neo-idealist position has also been advanced in relation to the notion of a 'world society', which is usually associated with the Australian diplomat and scholar John Burton

Neo-idealism: A perspective on international politics that emphasizes the practical value of morality and, in particular, respect for human rights and national independence.

Concept

Internationalism

Internationalism is the theory or practice of politics based on transnational or global cooperation. It is rooted in universalist assumptions about human nature that put it at odds with political nationalism, the latter emphasizing the degree to which political identity is shaped by nationality. The major internationalist traditions are drawn from liberalism and socialism. *Liberal* internationalism is based on individualism. This is reflected, for example, in the belief that universal human rights ultimately have a 'higher' status than the sovereign authority of the nation. *Socialist* internationalism is grounded in a belief in international class solidarity (proletarian internationalism), underpinned by assumptions about a common humanity. Feminism and environmentalism have also advanced distinctive internationalist positions.

(1972). The world-society perspective rejects as obsolete the notion of sovereign nation-states, emphasizing instead a pattern of complexity and interdependence that Burton portrayed through the image of a cobweb. Such a view suggests that the power politics of old has largely given way to noncoercive and cooperative means of solving international conflicts.

Realism

The realist tradition, sometimes called 'political realism', can claim to be the oldest theory of international politics. It can be traced back to Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War (431 BCE), and to Sun Tzu's classic work on strategy, *The Art of War*, written at roughly the same time in China. Other significant figures in the realist tradition are Machiavelli (see p. 6) and Thomas Hobbes (see p. 303). However, realism only became the dominant international perspective during the twentieth century, receiving its impetus from the First World War and Second World War. Whereas idealism emphasizes that international relations should be guided by morality, realism is grounded in an emphasis on **power politics** and the pursuit of national interests. Its central assumption is that the state is the principal actor on the international or world stage, and, being sovereign, is able to act as an autonomous entity. Moreover, the rise of nationalism and the emergence of modern nation-states (see p. 121) transformed the state into a cohesive political community, within which all other loyalties and ties are subordinate to those to the nation.

Realist scholars, such as E. H. Carr (1939) and Hans Morgenthau (1948), were particularly scathing about the idealist belief in internationalism and natural harmony. Carr, in fact, argued that a naive faith in international law and collective security in the interwar period prevented statesmen on both sides of the Atlantic from understanding, and so acting to contain, German expansion. Realists emphasize that, in contrast, as there is no higher authority than the sovereign state, international politics is conducted in a 'state of nature', and is thus characterized by anarchy, not harmony. An anarchic international system is one in which each state is forced to help itself and give priority to its own national interest, defined, most basically, as state survival and territorial defence.

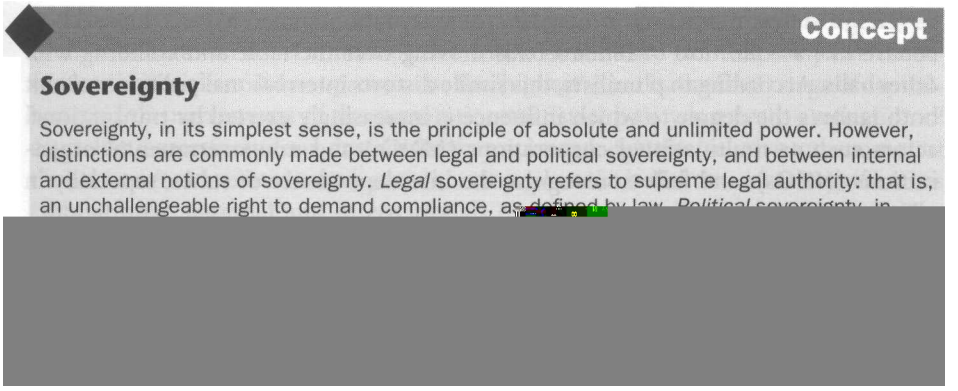
This is why realists place such a heavy emphasis on the role of power in international affairs, and why they tend to understand power in terms of military capacity or force. By no means, however, does international anarchy mean relentless conflict and unending war. Instead, realists insist that the pattern of conflict and cooperation within the state system conforms largely to the requirements of a **balance of power.** This view recognizes that, in pursuit of national security, states enter into alliances that, if balanced against one another, may ensure prolonged periods of peace and international stability. However, this type of international system is inherently dynamic, and when the balance of power breaks down, war is the probable result.

Realists have always acknowledged that the international order is not a classic 'state of nature', because power, wealth and resources are not equally distributed amongst states. Major actors have traditionally been accorded the status of **great powers** (during the Cold War, superpowers). The resulting hierarchy of states imposes a measure of order on the international system, reflecting the control that great powers exercise over subordinate ones through trading blocs, 'spheres of influence', and outright colonization (see p. 118). During the Cold War period this led to the creation of a bipolar world order in which rivalry between the US and Soviet power

Power politics: An approach to politics based on the assumption that the pursuit of power is the principal human goal; the term is sometimes used descriptively.

Balance of power: A pattern of interaction amongst states that tends to curb aggression and expansionism by rendering them impracticable.

Great power: A state deemed to rank amongst the most powerful in a hierarchical state system, reflected in its influence over minor states.



blocs extended over much of the globe. Realists have been prepared to argue, however, that bipolarity helped to maintain peace as escalating military spending led to an effective system of nuclear deterrents, especially once the condition of mutually assured destruction (MAD) was recognized in the 1960s. A stable hierarchy based on accepted rules and recognized processes thus kept anarchy at bay, and encouraged realists to adopt the modified idea of what Hedley Bull (1977) termed an 'anarchical society'.

During the 1980s, **neo-realism** (sometimes called 'new' or structural realism) developed under the influence of Waltz (1979) and others. While neo-realists continue to acknowledge the central importance of power, they tend to explain events in terms of the structure of the international system rather than the goals and make-up of individual states.

Realism and neo-realism have attracted fierce criticism, however. The central objection is that, in divorcing politics from morality, the realist perspective legitimizes military escalation and the hegemonic ambitions of great powers. This view suggests that power politics has not so much maintained peace as kept the world on the verge of nuclear catastrophe. A second critique of realism is advanced by feminist theorists, who contend that power-seeking behaviour and an obsession with national security and military might reflect the worldwide dominance of male politicians whose priorities are essentially aggressive and competitive. The central empirical weakness of realist theories is that, in focusing attention on the state as the dominant international actor, they have ignored the pluralistic tendencies that reshaped the face of international politics in the late twentieth century. 'Classical' realism has thus largely given way to neo-realism.

Pluralism

The pluralist perspective on international politics emerged, particularly in the USA, in the 1960s and 1970s, and it built on a bedrock of liberal ideas and values. In its traditional sense, pluralism (see p. 78) is a sociopolitical theory that emphasizes the diffusion of power amongst a number of competing bodies or groups. As a theory of international politics, it highlights the permeability of the state, and provides an alternative to the state-centrism of the realist model. The limitations of the state-centric approach were illustrated by John Burton's (1972) simile of the billiard table. This suggests that realism assumes that states, like billiard balls, are impermeable and self-contained units, which influence each other through external pressure.

Neo-realism: A perspective on international politics that modifies the power-politics model by highlighting the structural constraints of the international system.

Sovereign states interacting in a system of international anarchy are thus seen to behave like a collection of billiard balls moving over the table and colliding with other balls. According to pluralists, this simile distorts international politics in that it both ignores the degree to which influence is increasingly exerted by transnational actors such as multinational corporations (MNCs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and fails to recognize the interdependence of states, especially in relation to economic affairs.

The resulting pluralist perspective therefore offers a mixed-actors model that, while not ignoring national governments, emphasizes that international politics is shaped by a much broader range of interests and groups. At the very least, the emphasis on external sovereignty that is central to realism has to be replaced, in this view, by the more modest notion of autonomy. This enables bodies such as Greenpeace, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Coca-Cola, and the Papacy to be recognized as international actors in precisely the same sense as, say, the French and Argentine states. Indeed, given its emphasis on the diffusion of power, the pluralist model calls the very notion of an autonomous actor into question, emphasizing that all actors (governmental and nongovernmental) operate within a framework of checks and constraints that inhibit independent movement. This view allowed, for example, Allison (1971), in analysing the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, to make the point that decisions are more commonly shaped by the bureaucratic-political context than by any 'rational' pursuit of national interest.

Finally, one of the important implications of the pluralist approach to international politics is that it highlights a shift away from power politics and national aggrandisement. This reflects not so much an idealist faith in abstract principles as the recognition that, when power is widely distributed, competition tends to be self-defeating. As a result, pluralists tend to argue that, in an increasingly interdependent world, the tendency towards cooperation and integration (perhaps most clearly manifested in Europe) will ultimately prove to be irresistible.

Marxism

Marxism offers a perspective on international politics that contrasts sharply with conventional paradigms. What makes the Marxist approach distinctive is its stress on economic power and the role played by international capital. Although Marx (see p. 53) was concerned primarily with analysing the structures of national capitalism, and particularly the antagonistic relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, an internationalist perspective was implicit in his work. This was evident in Marx's recognition that class loyalties cut across national divisions, which enabled him to proclaim, at the end of the *Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1967), 'workers of the world, unite!'. In other words, whereas liberal and realist theories hold that power is organized *vertically,* reflecting the division of the world into independent states, Marxism advances a theory of *horizontal* organization based on international class. However, the implications of viewing capitalism as an international system were not fully explored until Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* ([1917] 1970). Lenin (see p. 77) argued that imperial expansion reflected domestic capitalism's quest to maintain profit levels through the export of surplus capital, and that this, in turn, brought major capitalist powers into conflict with one another, the resulting war (the First World War) being essentially an imperialist war in the sense that it was fought for the control of colonies in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.

Modern Marxists or neo-Marxists (see p. 92), however, recognize the limitations of the classical Marxist-Leninist model. These include the fact that early twentieth-century imperialism did not prove to be the 'highest' (that is, the final) stage of capitalism, and the narrowness of the assumption that state policy is merely a reflection of capitalist interests. Indeed, insofar as they acknowledge the 'relative autonomy' of the state, neo-Marxists have drawn close to a pluralist belief that a variety of bodies (Subnational, national and international) exert influence on the world stage. The distinctive feature of the neo-Marxist perspective, however, is that, whereas classical Marxism emphasized rivalry between separate national capitalisms, neo-Marxism focuses attention on the development, during the twentieth century, of a global capitalist system.

In neo-Marxist analysis, the central feature of this system is the organization of class interests on an international basis through the emergence of multinational corporations. In this view, these corporations have not merely displaced sovereign states as the dominant actors on the world stage; they also, like states themselves and international organizations, operate within structural constraints that ensure the long-term interests of global capitalism. According to neo-Marxists, this global structure of production and exchange is highly ordered in the sense that it has divided the world into 'core' and 'peripheral' areas (see p. 170). Core areas such as the developed North benefit from technological innovation and high and sustained levels of investment, while peripheral areas such as the less developed South provide a source of cheap labour, and are often dependent on cash crops. Such global inequalities mirror those found at a regional level within national economies. Whereas regional core areas are integrated into the global economy, peripheral regions are effectively marginalized, often becoming a breeding ground for ethnic nationalism. Economic globalization thus goes hand in hand with national disintegration.

Concept

Imperialism

Imperialism is, broadly, the policy of extending the power or rule of a state beyond its boundaries. In its earliest usage, imperialism was an ideology that supported military expansion and imperial acquisition, usually by drawing on nationalist and racialist doctrines. The term is now more commonly used to describe the system of political *domination or economic* exploitation that the pursuit of such goals helped to establish. In the Marxist tradition, imperialism is seen as an economic phenomenon that typically results from the pressure to export capital. Neo-Marxists, however, draw attention to a more subtle form of imperialism, termed neocolonialism, through which industrialized powers control foreign territory by economic domination while respecting the territory's formal political independence. Realist theorists, however, view imperialism more as a political phenomenon, seeing it as the pursuit by states of power and strategic advantage through expansion and conquest.

The changing world order

The rise and fall of the Cold War

On 9 November 1989, jubilant East German demonstrators stormed the Berlin Wall and started to dismantle what had become the chief symbol of the Cold War era. By the spring of 1990, during the Kuwait crisis that saw the construction of a broad international alliance to confront Iraqi aggression, President Bush of the USA proclaimed the emergence of a 'new world order'. In November 1990, representatives of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, the military faces of East-West confrontation, met in Paris formally to declare the end of hostilities, officially closing the book on the Cold War. However, how did the Cold War start in the first place? What was it that kept the Cold War 'cold' and prevented it from developing into a 'fighting war'? And what did the end of the Cold War bring: did anyone win the Cold War?

The debate about the origins of the Cold War is closely linked to the rivalries and ideological perceptions that helped to fuel the Cold War itself. The traditional, or 'orthodox', explanation lays the blame firmly at the door of the USSR. It sees the Soviet stranglehold over eastern Europe as an expression of long-standing Russian imperial ambitions, given renewed impetus by the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of world-wide class struggle. This view was articulated as early as 1947 in George Kennan's famous 'Mr X' articles (which portrayed Soviet communism as essentially aggres-

Concept

Cold war

A 'cold' war (the term was coined by Walter Lippman in 1944) is a state of protracted and extreme tension between countries or rival alliances that stops short of all-out war. The term is most commonly associated with a period of political, economic, cultural and military rivalry between the 'capitalist' western bloc and the 'communist' eastern bloc, and thus between the US and Soviet superpowers. This period is usually seen as having started in 1947 with the establishment of the so-called 'Truman Doctrine', although some trace it back to the 1945 Potsdam Conference, or even to western intervention against the Bolsheviks during the 1918–21 Russian Civil War. Although the 'war' was 'cold' in the sense that the adversaries avoided direct confrontation, covert operations and proxy warfare were a feature of the period. Renewed superpower tension associated with the US military buildup under Reagan is often referred to as the Second Cold War (1981–90).

sive), and it was revived in the 1980s in President Reagan's description of the USSR as an 'evil empire'. From this perspective, the problem was communist **expansionism,** and US policy from Truman onwards focused on its containment, initially via the economic reconstruction of Europe through the Marshall Plan (1946), and subsequently through the creation of a military alliance in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

A 'revisionist' interpretation of the Cold War was nevertheless developed that attracted growing support during the Vietnam War from academics such as Gabriel Kolko (1988). This view portrayed Soviet policy as defensive, rather than aggressive, motivated essentially by the desire for a buffer zone between itself and a hostile West, and a wish to see a permanently weakened Germany. It also drew attention to the expansionist policies of the USA. According to this view, the goal of US policy was to establish a *Pax Americana* that would keep the markets of the world open to US capitalism. The desire of the USA for economic domination was effectively concealed by the fanatical anti-communism of the McCarthy era. However, the weakness with both the orthodox and the revisionist accounts is that each presents a one-sided picture that reflects a wish to apportion blame for the Cold War rather than advance historical understanding. A number of 'post-revisionist' explanations have therefore developed.

Some of these acknowledge the hegemonic ambitions of both superpowers, arguing that the Cold War was the inevitable consequence of a power vacuum that was a product of the defeat of Germany and Japan as well as the exhaustion of the UK (Yergin, 1980). Alternative explanations place a heavier emphasis on misunderstanding and missed opportunities (McCauley, 1983). Early signs of hope in relation to the post-Second-World-War order were in fact evident in President Roosevelt's belief in peaceful cooperation under the auspices of the newly created United Nations, and also in Stalin's distinctly discouraging attitude towards Tito in Yugoslavia and Mao in China. Nevertheless, once a mentality of 'bombs, dollars and doctrines' took root in both East and West, a descent into mutual suspicion and engrained hostility became unavoidable.

The first phase of the Cold War was fought in Europe. The division of Europe that resulted from the defeat of Germany (the Soviet Red Army having advanced from the east and the USA, the UK and their allies having pushed forward from the west) quickly became permanent: in Winston Churchill's words, an 'iron curtain' descended between East and West. This process was completed in 1949 with the creation of the 'two Germanies' and the establishment of rival military alliances, consisting of NATO and, in 1955, the Warsaw Pact. Thereafter, the Cold War became global. The Korean War (1950-53) marked the spread of the Cold War to Asia following the Chinese Revolution of 1949. During the 1960s and 1970s, international crises throughout the world, from the Middle East to Latin America and from Africa to Indo-China, were incorporated into the struggle between the USSR and the USA, which represented the broader clash between communism and capitalism. The **bipolar** model of the Cold War, however, became increasingly less accurate from the 1960s onwards. This was due, first, to the growing fragmentation of the communist world (notably, the deepening enmity between Moscow and Beijing), and second to the resurgence of Japan and Germany as 'economic superpowers'. One of the consequences of this emerging multipolarism was ***detente*** between East and West. This was reflected in President Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972 and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between 1967 and 1979 that produced the SALT I and SALT II agreements.

Expansionism: A policy of military aggression designed to secure territorial gains, a phenomenon closely linked to imperialism.

Bipolarity: The tendency of the international system to revolve around two poles (major power blocs); bipolarity implies equilibrium and stability.

Detente: *(French)* Literally, loosening; the relaxation of tension between previously antagonistic states.

Debate about the end of the Cold War is mired in as much ideological controversy as is debate about its origins. One version credits Ronald Reagan with having brought the Cold War to an end by instigating a renewed US military buildup in the early 1980s, particularly in the form of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) (the 'star wars' initiative) of 1983, thereby sparking off the 'Second Cold War'. The result of this was that the USSR was drawn into an arms race that its already fragile economy could not sustain. In a broader form, this explanation has been elaborated, by Fukuyama (1992) amongst others, into the triumphalist 'end of history' thesis. This thesis suggests that the West 'won' the Cold War ultimately because only US-style liberal democracy offered a viable economic and political system. Other versions, however, place heavier stress on the structural weaknesses of the Soviet economy and the catastrophic mishandling of the reform process by Mikhail Gorbachev.

From this perspective, the inefficiency of the central-planning system, and the failure to introduce reforms at an earlier stage, undermined the legitimacy of the Soviet and eastern European communist regimes, which could not satisfy the growing demand for western-style consumer goods and western-style political freedoms. The Gorbachev reforms, initiated in 1985, merely brought about the collapse of an inefficient yet still functioning economic system, and, in relaxing the grip of the Communist Party, unleashed centrifugal forces that by the end of 1991 had brought about the destruction of the USSR itself. Some even suggest that the Cold War, and particularly renewed hostilities under Reagan, helped to prolong the life of the USSR. In keeping alive the idea of an external 'capitalist' threat, the Cold War at least brought about a measure of internal consolidation.

It is doubtful, however, whether such momentous historical events as the rise and fall of the Cold War can ever have a monocausal explanation. It is clear, for instance, that the events of the 1980s to some extent built on a process established by *detente* in the 1970s. *Detente* was significant in initiating on both sides a re-examination of strategic priorities that helped to question whether continued hostility was necessary or desirable. For that matter, the resurgence of the peace movement in the early 1980s also helped to weaken domestic support for continued superpower conflict. In broader terms, however, the end of the Cold War can be seen to reflect a shift in the global balance of power. The bipolar superpower era was born out of a power vacuum that left the USA and USSR as the dominant actors on the world stage. However, it is unclear whether the post-Cold-War era will be characterized by US-dominated **unipolarity** or by a new **multipolar** world order.

Twenty-first-century world order

The birth of the post-Cold-War world was accompanied by a wave of optimism and idealism. The superpower era had been marked by East-West rivalry that extended across the globe and led to a nuclear buildup that threatened to destroy the planet. As communism collapsed in eastern Europe, and Soviet power was in retreat both domestically and internationally, 'one world' speaking with 'one voice' appeared to have come into existence. The 'new world order', at least as envisaged by President George Bush Sr, was going to be based not on ideological conflict and a balance of terror, but on a common recognition of international norms and standards of morality. Central to this emerging world order was the recognition of the need to settle disputes peacefully, to resist aggression and expansionism, to control and reduce military arsenals, and to ensure the just treatment of domestic populations through

Unipolarity: An international system in which there is one pre-eminent state; the existence of a single great power.

Multipolarity: An international system in which there are three or more power centres, creating a bias in favour of fluidity and, perhaps, notability.

Focus on . . .

Humanitarian intervention

Humanitarian intervention is military intervention that is carried out in pursuit of humanitarian rather than strategic objectives. The growth in humanitarian intervention reflects the wider acceptance of universalist doctrines such as human rights (see p. 302) and the fact that democratic support for warfare can increasingly be mobilized only on the basis of a moral cause. Supporters of humanitarian intervention see it as evidence of the inability of states in a global age to restrict their moral responsibilities to their own people.

Humanitarian intervention has been seen as justified in the following circumstances:

- in the case of gross abuses of human rights (such as the expulsion or

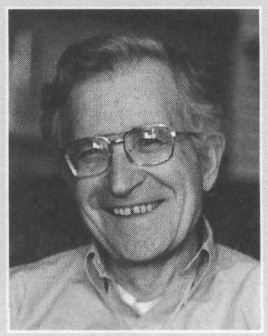
respect for human rights. What is more, the post-Cold-War world order appeared to pass its first series of major tests with ease.

Iraq's annexation of Kuwait in August 1990 led to the construction of a broad western and Islamic alliance that, through the Gulf War of 1991, brought about the expulsion of Iraqi forces. The disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, which precipitated war between Serbia and Croatia, saw the first use of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in December 1994) as a mechanism for tackling international crises, leading to hopes that it would eventually replace both the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Although the CSCE had been effectively sidelined by superpower hostility since its creation at the Helsinki Conference of 1975, it was the CSCE Heads of Government meeting in Paris in November 1990 that produced the treaty which brought a formal end to the Cold War. However, the early promise of international harmony and cooperation quickly proved to be illusory as new forms of unrest and instability rose to the surface.

In many ways, the linchpin of the hoped-for new world order was the USA. A bipolar world order had given way to a unipolar one, with the USA, the only power with the military capacity and political authority to intervene effectively, playing the role of the 'world's police force'. This was demonstrated by Desert Storm, the military expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait, by the role that the USA played in NATO's 'human-

Noam Chomsky (born 1928)

US linguistic theorist and radical intellectual. Chomsky was born in Philadelphia, the son of eastern European immigrant parents. He first achieved distinction as a scholar in the field of linguistic studies. His *Syntactic Structures* (1957) revolutionized the discipline with the theory of 'transformational grammar', which proposed that humans have an innate capacity to acquire language. Radicalized during the Vietnam War, Chomsky subsequently became the leading radical critic of US foreign policy, developing his views in works such as *American Power and the New Mandarins* (1969), and *New Military Humanism* (1999). In works such as (with Edward Herman) *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) he developed a radical critique of the mass media and examined how popular support for imperialist aggression is mobilized.



itarian intervention' to remove Serb forces from Kosovo in 1999, and by the aerial bombing of Afghanistan that precipitated the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001. Moreover, the USA, unlike earlier hegemonic powers, was wedded to the principles of liberal democracy, and so was concerned more with the spread of political freedom and market capitalism than it was with plunder and conquest. A trend towards democratization, encouraged by the USA, in parts of the world such as Latin America and Asia where authoritarianism had previously reigned, supported this view. In short, US global hegemony (see p. 201) promised to ensure international peace and political and economic development.

There are several reasons, however, for questioning this image of US-sponsored international fraternity and world peace. In the first place, there are those who, like Noam Chomsky (1994), challenge the idea that the USA is a disinterested world power, and doubt that there is anything 'new' about the new world order. For example, the anti-Iraq coalition of 1990-91 perhaps only reflected the fact that US and broader western concerns about oil supplies coincided with regional anxieties amongst Islamic powers such as Syria and Saudi Arabia about a 'Greater Iraq'. In other words, rhetoric about international law and national sovereignty merely camouflaged power politics and the pursuit of national interest. Similarly, intervention in Kosovo may only have escalated atrocities and violence, and further weakened respect for national sovereignty. The very idea of a new world order might, indeed, be a piece of historical engineering aimed at safeguarding US interests and maintaining the USA's mastery of the global economy.

There are also doubts about the capacity of the USA to play the role of the world's police force, even if this were thought to be desirable. In the first place, preponderant nuclear power does not always translate into effective military capacity, as was demonstrated by the USA's failure in Vietnam in the 1970s and its embarrassed withdrawal from Somalia in 1995. At a deeper level, however, it is questionable whether the USA has the economic resources to sustain its global role, particularly in a context of relative decline highlighted by the economic resurgence of Japan and Germany. As discussed below, this may be evidence of the USA succumbing to a tendency, common amongst earlier great powers, to **imperial over-reach.** One manifestation of this was an upsurge in **isolationism.** How long would Americans be prepared to pay the price of the USA being 'number one'? In the same way as after the First World War, the idea of the USA disengaging itself from international affairs ('leaving the world to sort itself out') came to have a potent appeal in the USA. This

Imperial over-reach: The tendency for imperial expansion to be unsustainable as wider military responsibilities outstrip the growth of the domestic economy (Kennedy, 1989).

Isolationism: The policy of withdrawal from international affairs and, in particular, avoiding political or military commitments to other states.

was illustrated by George W. Bush's election in 2000 and by his decision to withdraw from a range of international arms-control treaties and from the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change. However, the devastating terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 so dramatically demonstrated the USA's vulnerability to events elsewhere in the world that they probably put a permanent end to traditional isolationism.

Further stresses within the new world order have been generated by the releasing of tensions and conflicts that the Cold War had helped to keep under control. The existence of an external threat (be it international communism or capitalist encirclement) promotes internal cohesion and gives societies a sense of purpose and identity. To some extent, for instance, the West defined itself through antagonism towards the East, and *vice versa.* There is evidence that, in many states, the collapse of the external threat has helped to unleash centrifugal pressures, usually in the form of racial, ethnic and regional tensions. This has occurred in many parts of the world, but in particular in eastern Europe, as demonstrated by the prolonged bloodshed amongst Serbs, Croats and Moslems in the former Yugoslavia, and by the war between Russia and the secessionist republic of Chechnya that broke out in 1994. Such conflicts create the prospect of an increasingly dangerous world characterized by ethnic nationalism and regional strife. Far from establishing a world order based on respect for justice and human rights, the international community stood by in former Yugoslavia and, until the Kosovo crisis, allowed Serbia to wage a war of expansion and perpetrate genocidal policies reminiscent of those used in the Second World War.

As opposed to the world being policed and orderly, the emerging international scene seems to be typified by lawlessness and inaction; it appears, in some respects, to resemble more a new world *dis*order. The idea of stable unipolarity may, anyway, always have been a myth, in that a single hegemonic state breeds resentment and hostility amongst other states, and because the role of the world's police force is ultimately unsustainable. Unipolarity may therefore be only a transitionry condition. There is strong evidence that twenty-first-century world order will have a multipolar character, with the emergence of five or possibly more major actors, to say nothing of the asymmetrical threats posed by so-called 'rogue' states and international terrorism (see p. 382). In addition to the USA, which clearly retains leadership in areas of 'safe' power such as intellectual capital and advanced technology, the major actors would include China, a German-dominated EU, Japan and Russia, with significant regional players emerging in the form of Brazil and India. China's claim to great power status is linked to its rapid economic progress since the introduction of market reforms in the 1970s, its huge population, and a growing military capacity. The World Bank has forecast that, if current growth rates persist, China will have the world's largest economy by 2020. Germany and the EU have made sustained economic progress since the 1950s, and, since the end of the Cold War, have shown indications of greater assertiveness and independence from the USA and NATO. This has been evident in the accelerating pace of monetary and political union, the enlargement of the EU, and the development of a defence capacity. Japan has the world's second largest economy, and benefits from links with the east and southeast Asian 'tiger' states. Russia may have lost control of eastern Europe, and may no longer be an economic superpower (if it ever was one), but its nuclear arsenal ensures that it will remain a major diplomatic force, and its population size and natural resources provide clear foundations for future economic progress.