

Political Economy Facts and Wishes

Part I

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It is natural for books like those of the earlier centuries to contain an unstructured approach of describing and comparing political systems. However, it is shocking that in the twenty first century, political science fails to establish and emphasize a scientific framework wherein more careful analysis and more distinct definitions are used in the study and analysis of states. Despite the marvelous advances we have achieved in the philosophy of science, social sciences have suffered a deficiency in two ways. Careful consideration and formatting of a scientific approach has been neglected. Furthermore, it seems as if the new rhetoric of the social sciences is utilizing mathematics to mask the aforementioned deficiency and to gain credibility by making it seem esoteric. In fact some academic institutions support policies by reverse engineering the policy into assumption and then fudging the math in between. What the social scientists need to see is that trying to mask social sciences with math will only ridicule the discipline. On the other hand, exploring methods of developing sound philosophy of analysis would further the science beyond the rhetoric of mathematics and jargon that act more as a barrier to entry towards productive thought than a facilitators of information exchange.

Once this format is established, the field of comparative politics would be more able to produce effective analysis and establish metrics of differences between systems. Aided with these analysis tools, one would be more able to examine the compatibility of the system and its nation's requirements. The prescriptive side of political science would be more able to qualify and quantify the importance of their critical analysis. This system analysis is needed in an era where countries and states are springing up around the world. It is also needed since the analysis of political theory is still utilizing the dialectic approach of Socrates. The merits of the methods are not being questioned because of their age. However, Political science needs to shift the paradigm of using the normative approach in an area of analysis they are striving to make more positive analysis in theory and application. While the dialectic is a great approach when subjects require an axiomatic approach, it turns into a useless exercise in rhetoric when used in the field of comparative politics if it did not generate into a shameful propaganda machine used in lecture halls of academic institutions.

Formatting the description of political systems

With the current lack of standardization, we will proceed to set a format for the specification and analysis of political system then give an example that seems to be of importance in our current stage of human history.

While Rousseau chooses to describe the state as the natural extension of the social contract, I will, as aforementioned, take a more positive approach.

Definition: A state is a set of two elements: a nation and a government.

Definition: A nation is a set of one or more individuals.

Definition: A state is viable if the nation owns rights of resources to generate at least normal profit. Definition

Indeed, if the nation cannot generate normal profit, then the government would not be able to cover their costs and thus it would not be economically viable. These costs of the state would depend on the requirements of the nation and the operation of government.

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“Food is the basis of the people; the people are the basis of the country; the country is the basis of the ruler”

Definition: A government is an organization established by a nation towards certain ends.

These ends are of positive utility to the nation that often includes defense and administration of public goods such as law enforcement. However, the ends might differ from one state to another, thus, it is important for each nation to define their ends before they set out to form a political system. The following is an excerpt from an ancient Chinese work on the subject:” The basic task of government is to make the populace secure. The security of the populace is based on meeting needs. The basic need is not depriving people of their time. The basis in not depriving people of their time is to minimize exactions and expenditures. ”

Definition: A political system is a mechanism whereby the government discerns national ends and the means of achieving them.

Definition: A government is illegitimate if the government seizes to act towards the national interest and only the national interest.

Notice that the legitimacy of the government is dependent on the proper formulation of the nation’s ends. If the ends are improperly specified then the state seizes to be legitimate. It is clear by this point that a metric measuring the deviation of government from national ends is required to reflect the legitimacy of a state under government with a certain political system. However, before we establish this metric we shall point out that a formal description is needed for a political system before it is subjected to a metric of legitimacy. Thus, a discussion of a format of a formal description of a political system is a needed.

By Godel’s law, any description of formal system contains at least one occurrence wherein the system is unable to respond. In other words, political systems like any other formal system must contain axioms. A political system like any other formal system is to have a formal description with a set of clearly defined axioms.

Governments around the world have established these axioms in one way or another. In the US they have the constitution, a set of axioms that attempt to be clear and concise despite the limitation of language. In England, on the other hand, the axioms are implicit in a large body of past decisions that have been recorded for hundreds of years. These numerous examples help convey the intention by applying the principle in different contexts. Nevertheless, it is clear that a set of axioms is required if the government is newly formed. One of the most refreshing supporting quotes is made by a Hunanian master in an ancient Chinese work on leadership and strategy written more than two thousand years ago. It affirms the need for axioms rather than past cases. The Hunanian *Book of Leadership and Strategy* advises:” To survive peril and quell disorder can not be done without wisdom. Were it a matter of following precedents even fools have more than enough.” It seems that those masters of old were not in support of a system such as the on followed in England. On the other hand, it is clear that using both the original axioms and prior cases should allow the decision maker to make uncertain decisions in light of more information. The method of discernment of these axioms poses great difficulties. Since the preferences of the nations is seldom heterogeneous, the mechanisms of collective decision-making fail to satisfy everyone.

Keeping in mind the heterogeneity of population and the consequences of Arrow’s impossibility theorem¹, the axioms are to reflect and maintain the legitimacy of the government,

Arrows impossibility theorem: states that, when voters have three or more distinct alternatives (options), no rank order voting system can convert the **ranked preferences** of individuals into a community-wide (complete and transitive) ranking while also meeting a pre-specified set of criteria.

they must respond to the limitation of any mechanism chosen to discern and implement national ends. Even though, national ends might change over time with regards to policies and law, the basic rights of an individual belonging to the nation must be safeguarded. If these basic rights of individuals within the nation are not safeguarded the state ceases to be legitimate regardless of the goals it seeks to fulfill for the nation as a whole. The American equivalent of these axioms is the bill of rights wherein the axioms are chosen to shield the basic rights of any individual against the shortcomings of a voting system. Since these axioms protect the basic rights of the individual as the superceding national ends, it shall act as protection for any individual against any branch of government executive, legislative, judicial, or military. These superceding ends are necessary to maintain the legitimacy of any system of government.

These axioms are increasingly important with regards to the heterogeneity of the population comprising the nation. However, it could be easily illustrated that the heterogeneity of nations is an inescapable conclusion based on the limited space and the growth of population. Thus, the existing of these axioms is necessary to insure a liberal framework in a heterogeneous nation.

The axioms must also refer to a mechanism whereby the axioms themselves could be changed. This mechanism of changing a basic axiom should require the consensus of the populace. While it is rare that the population would need to make into law an intrusion of their basic rights, it has to be allowed and permitted under strict scrutiny and in rare conditions. Until now we have been forming a state and insuring the axioms of government, under any execution mechanism that we called a political system, insures the legitimacy of government. However, we must proceed in our attempt to formulate a formal description of a political system.

It is not clear that the argument could be made to advocate a political system over another in absolute terms. Each political system must evolve to respond to its national ends. Thus, since the ends of the nation might change through time, we could not require one form of government to be an axiom. However, if we attempt to formulate a set of ends that seem vital to any nation regardless of time and geography, then we may be able to proceed with our formulation of a political system. Notice that a comparative analysis of political system could not be carried out unless the ends of two nations are identical. However, at this point the comparative approach could be established by examining the effectiveness of these axioms in protecting the nation from the limitation of any possible discernment and implementation mechanism of national ends. On the other hand, if it is possible to isolate the different mechanisms and their performance in terms of their intended use, then we could at least establish the merit of a mechanism in terms of its sufficiency, efficiency, and the safeguarding of legitimacy.

Assuming common ends and analysis framework

As mentioned above, a list of common ends of nations is defense. Another is providing and administering public goods such as law enforcements. These are two ends require specification of three branches of government: the legislative, the judicial, and the executive. A formal description of a political system working towards these natural ends must contain a detailed specification of the following:

- The relation between the armed forces and the executive, legislative, and judicial. This specification would describe in detail the circumstances upon which any of the above branches is in control and or under the protection of the armed forces.
- The limits of authority of the Legislative, executive, and judicial body. Furthermore, the mechanism of appointment and the term thereof must be specified.

The analysis and evaluation of a political system must be in terms of its ability to avoid the shortcomings of discernment and implementation of national ends. These shortcomings are identified from a simple examination of human nature and game theoretic evaluation of government - nation interaction. Furthermore, if our theoretical analysis does not provide a complete list of the universe of possible events that would compromise the legitimacy of the government, then we may examine the data as we have more than thousands of years of documented states and their journey towards illegitimacy and dissolution. Thus, we would arrive to several criteria of analysis of a political system that evaluate it on several spaces. One of these spaces is the efficiency versus the danger of illegitimacy.

A dictatorship is chosen as the military leadership mechanism for its high efficiency. On the other hand, the consolidation of power has proven throughout the ages to motivate abuse of authority. Since the government seizes to act for the fulfillment of national ends, this abuse of authority by individual in power renders the government illegitimate. The tendency of individuals to for their personal benefit in positions of power has been immortalized by “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Thus, we would like to point out that the division of power amongst several individuals while it is less efficient; it safeguards against power abuse. Let us say that the gains needed to entice one person would prove insufficient to entice a committee of three hundred. Thus, we propose that there is an optimal mix between efficiency and the safeguarding power. Furthermore, applying risk reduction methods would suggest that the positions amongst which governmental power is distributed are not to be assigned to be assigned in a manner that differences political power as well as separate the source of funds. On the other hand, the loyalty of these power holder is to reside with the nation if and only of the positions are assigned by the nation.

The optimal mix between efficiency and the safeguarding of power would depend on the efficiency requirements of the state in its current state of affairs. One might say that the state has less efficiency requirement than an army operation. On the other hand, the state may need in times of war and instability for a high level of efficiency. Perhaps this requires some degree of separation between the armed forces and the civil government in such times. However, we have laid the foundation for a serious step towards a more structured approach to the description of states. Furthermore, we have laid some ground rules for comparative politics and suggested some level of analysis, which that is still subjective in some sense, but nevertheless quantitative. Most importantly we have pointed out that the success of the axioms in providing ends such as the valued freedoms of an individual is one of the principle goals of any heterogeneous state.²

² We have spoken about the legitimacy of government, but since we defined what a state is we shall also include a brief discussion about the legitimacy of the state. This is by no means a new issue, and it is not a purely theoretical issue, nor is it a trivial practical issue. The formation of states and the invasions of one state to another have prompted much argument about the issue of legitimacy. Needless to say that these arguments were subject to much rhetoric and red herrings, but there is a need for a formal exploration of the issue.