
Intro to Politics

Words and Ideas

Objectives

1. Understand the meaning and scope of politics
 2. Describe approaches to political studies
 3. Build first vocabulary list of political terms
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Part 1. What is politics?

Academic field, part of social sciences - explore:

- psychology - human mind and behaviour
 - sociology - society and groups
 - economics - allocation of resources
 - history - interpretation of past events
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What does politics study?

Politics is primarily about the study of power.

- Who has power?
- How is it used?
- Who benefits and who loses?



“Political
power grows
out of the
barrel of
a gun.”

Mao Tse-tung

Power

Politics as power can be seen in all areas of human life.

- institutions (e.g. government) to MNCs
- city gov't to international relations



Politics is ...

City government - local

Loss of power is reshaping US landscape.

- One time center of industry and labour unions
- 2013, city filed for bankruptcy
- \$18 billion USD in debt
- insufficient municipal services - cuts to fire, police and libraries



City Politics - Detroit Broke

Population decline

- 2.0 million (1950) to 0.7 million (2012)
- plan to demolish 10,000 homes and turn land into farms
- despite the great number of homeless people in Detroit



Politics is IR - Cold War

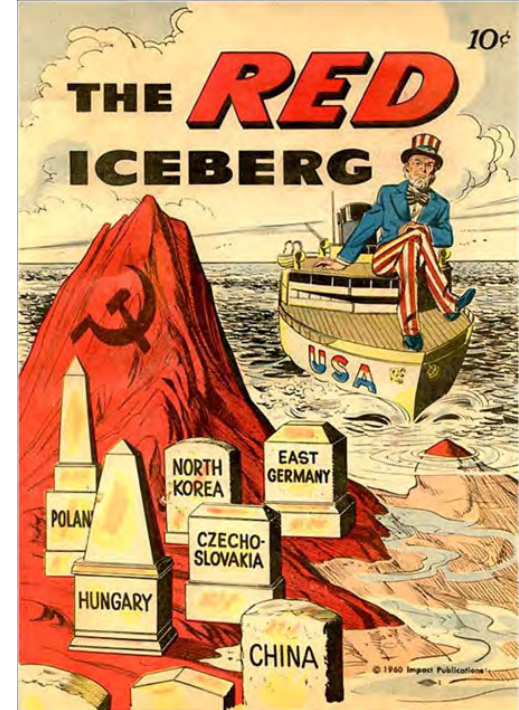
Global struggle through local wars
and technology race

- battle for influence, containment
- roughly 1945 - 1989
- two main blocs - USA and Soviet Union



Cold War - policy, programs, war

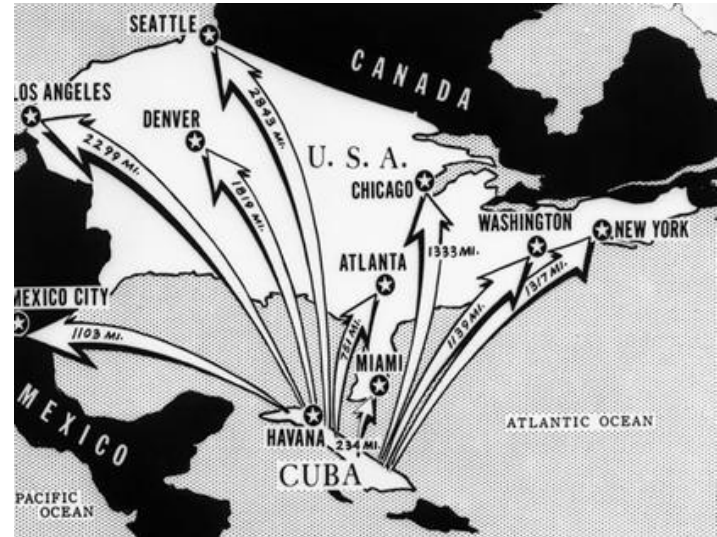
- US policy to **contain** Soviet influence
- **Marshall Plan** money to rebuild economies in Western Europe, Greece and Turkey
- established **NATO** (1949)
- **proxy wars** in Korea (1950-53) and Vietnam (1955-75)
- military tension with **Cuban missile crisis** (1962)
- constant state of **threat/fear**
- end of Soviet Union (1991)



Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)

World in brink of nuclear war

- US placed nuclear missiles in Turkey and Italy
- USSR puts missiles in Cuba as deterrence
- US blockade of Cuba



Tensions Ease

- Khrushchev agrees to remove missiles
- US agrees not to invade Cuba
- secretly, US agrees to remove missiles in Turkey and Italy



What is power?

Professor Steven Lukes

- Power: A Radical View (1972)
- changed way we see power
- power has 3 dimensions

Power is when A gets B to do something that is not in B's best interests.

How does power work? What does it look like?



Three Dimensions of power (1)

1st dimension:

- behaviour and decisions
- conflict and issues
- things which we see in daily political life
- all very observable
- change people's actions or decisions and get them to do what I want
- popular with pluralist view of politics and society



Three Dimensions of power (2)

2nd dimension:

- critique of pluralist view
- power is not always about changing behaviour and decisions in public
- people control the agenda
- behind closed doors, decisions are made about what will and will not be debated
- all very observable
- for example in the US: war on terror, invasion of Iraq or media coverage of Bernie Sanders



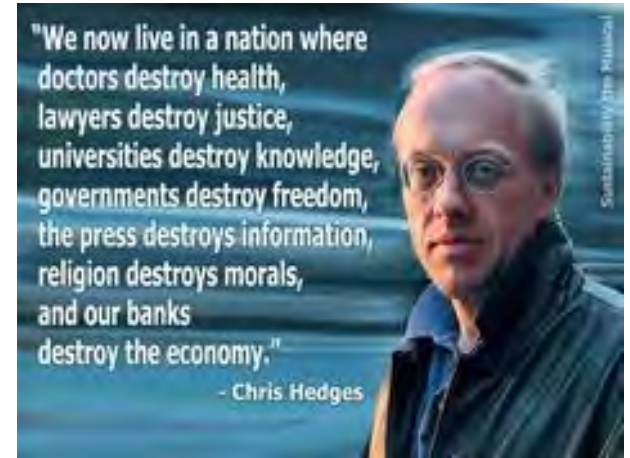
Three Dimensions of power (3)

3rd dimension:

- controversial idea
- weak people do things against their best interests, that help the powerful, without coercion or force
- the exercise of power is invisible

There is **latent conflict** in society.

- People are unaware or remain quiet about the contradictions in life. They support issues they actually harm their own interests.
- This conflict is managed and controlled with **ideology**.



power is not just conflict; it's also the ability to prevent conflict

Three Dimensions of power - wrap up

Power has three sides

1. behaviour, decisions, public conflict
2. unseen ability to manage what is public
3. ideology - the glue that holds society together by removing contradictions or the will to take action

**“If you’re not careful,
the newspapers
will have you hating
the people who are
being oppressed,
and loving the people
who are doing
the oppressing.”**



2. APPROACHES TO POLITICS

Politics has evolved over thousands of years. Divide history into five groups:

- a. Political philosophy
 - b. Empiricism
 - c. Behavioralism
 - d. Rational choice
 - e. Critical Ideas
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a. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

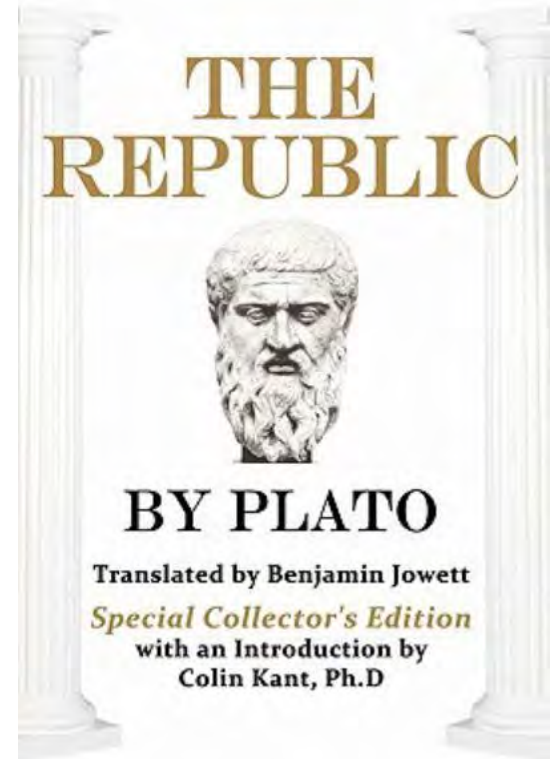
- back to ancient Greece
 - **normative** rather than empirical
 - ask questions like:
 - a. Why should I obey the state?
 - b. What are the limits of freedom?
 - c. What is the best way to organize society?
-

a. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY - CLASSICS

Ancient Greece

Plato's Republic

- a dialogue between Socrates and students
- describes the ideal state
- three classes of people: producers, soldiers and rulers
- shows us the Socratic method



a. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY - CLASSICS

European Renaissance (14th to 17th C)

The Prince by Niccolò Machiavelli

- first writer to describe politics from empirical point of view
- strategies to keep power
- evil and immoral actions justified
- force required to eliminate enemies
- describes a person who believes the end justifies the means for personal gain



b EMPIRICAL TRADITION

Focus: describe, analyze and explain what *is* the case

- gained popularity around 17th with the progress of science
 - by 19th century, political studies look at society with methods used in natural sciences
 - gain knowledge through experience, hypotheses, testing and observations
... not from reason or normative concepts
-

Scientific Revolution

From 16th C, great inventions and science:

- Nicolaus Copernicus - suggested Earth & sun relationship
- William Gilbert - described magnetism, lead to electricity
- Isaac Newton - gravity, calculus
- Galileo Galilei - improved telescope, father of modern science, proved earth revolves around the sun

From the inside the human body to outer space, science was opening up universe to human understanding.

Not surprising political studies copied the same methods.



God is Dead

Advances in science created new thinking.

- The highest authority gave people stability and order.
- We don't need God to explain the universe.
- Values are contrived.
- His ideas started existential philosophy.

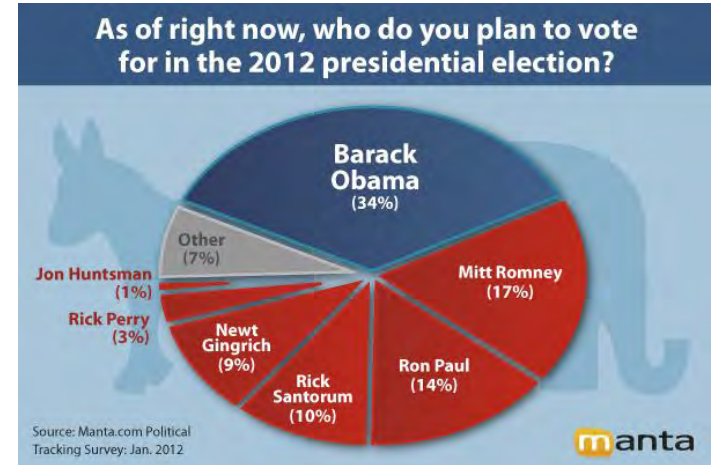
God is dead...
And we have
killed him.



c BEHAVIOURALISM

Political studies 1930s - 1950s

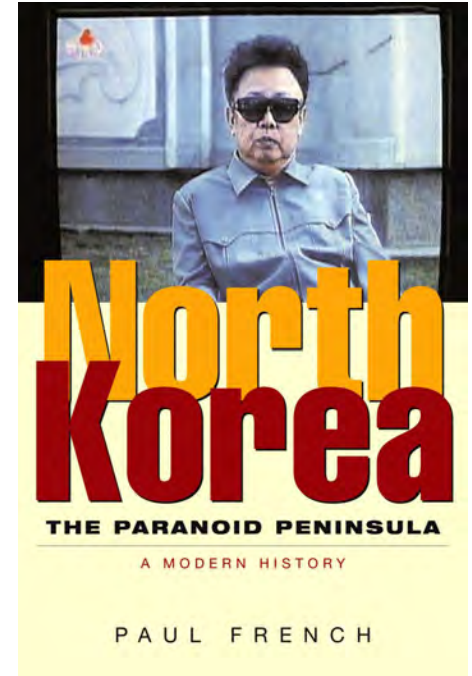
- collect, analyse quantitative data about individuals to understand and predict action
- sampling, surveys, statistical analysis
- few human behaviours measured in numbers, except for voting, opinion surveys
- limited definition of politics - only what could be counted
- ignored issues like justice, fairness, equity and rights



d. RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

Popular in late 20th C. Borrowed from economics.

- People are self-interested and act to achieve a purpose.
- Assumes all people examine costs and benefits; make choices based on maximum advantage.
- Once we know the range of interests and choices, we can predict what will happen.
- Has several weaknesses as a tool for understanding and explaining the actions of individuals and states.



e. CRITICAL IDEAS

Critical approaches question and challenge status quo.

Based on relationships with marginalized groups or interests.

- Seek out to correct inequalities in currently political system
- Feminism - looks at systematic and structural gender inequality
- Green Politics - bring ecology & resource management to political agenda



Post Modernism

Because of these changes in the material conditions, there are various social and political changes

- individuals are less producers and more consumers
 - shift from membership to individualism
 - there is no “reality”
 - no absolute truth, just a collection of personal subjective experiences
-

Post Modernism

PREMODERN



"Because God put it there and that's the way it's always been."

MODERN



"Onwards and upwards with inevitable progress!"

POSTMODERN



"Blpppgghljsdlkfjowejfalsk
djflksdjflksjldj!;aldfkjlj;;;df"

Conclusion

Looked at politics:

- it's about power
- from the classroom to cities to international conflict
- power has three dimensions

The study of politics has evolved in response to changes in human progress.

1. Political philosophy
 2. Empiricism
 3. Behavioralism
 4. Rational choice
 5. Critical Ideas
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Review and Disucssion

A

MNC - International relations
Containment policy - Proxy war
Rational choice - Feminism - latent conflict

1. How would you define politics? Give specific examples.
2. What is democracy? Do we live in a democracy?
3. What is freedom?

B

Marshall Plan - NATO - Political philosophy
Behaviorism - Green politics - Machiavelli
Cold War

1. How would you define power. Give specific examples.
 2. Do you think political actions can be understood and predicted by looking at rational choices?
 3. Can you think of any organized political groups based on single issues or themes in Korea? Have they been successful?
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