POLITICS AND SOCIETY

An Introduction to Political Sociology

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can also be put to different purposes by different groups who from time to time control them.

CONCLUSION

The state provides the basic linkage between politics and society in virtually all polities in the modern world. The development of the state in Europe provided the role model for the development of the state throughout the world, not always, of course, in the capitalist form, or in the pure form of the nation-state, but the concept of a higher authority than those currently exercising power and of the exercise of that power within an established institutional framework is almost universal. The fact that much controversy still surrounds the state and its role, not merely between Marxists and non-Marxists but more widely, is powerful evidence of its importance.

However, the role of the state is more than that of providing an institutional framework; its role is much more extensive and pervasive in some societies than others. It is therefore important to consider variations in and theories about power and its distribution within particular societies, since it is invariably through the state that power is ultimately exercised, and this is the subject of Chapters 3 and 4. Neither the state itself, nor the political and social institutions that constitute a given state, are immutable, and how societies change is dealt with in Part V.

Chapter 3

POWER, AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY

DEFINING AND ANALYSING POWER

Much has been written about power as a concept, but there is no generally agreed definition and it remains a subject of much dispute. Media usage of the term is common: phrases like 'winning power', 'seizing power', and 'power struggle' abound. Historians frequently refer to the 'great powers' and the 'balance of power'; political analysts and others describe the United States (and formerly the Soviet Union) as 'superpowers'. All the usages fit a simple dictionary definition of power as 'an ability to do or act' in the sense that possession of power enables individuals or groups of individuals to carry out their will. 'Winning power', 'seizing power', and 'power struggle' clearly relate to acquiring the ability to act; 'great powers' or states ostensibly have a greater ability to act than lesser powers or states; a 'balance of power' implies that the ability of one state or group of states is matched by that of another state or group of states; and presumably the 'superpowers' have a much superior ability to act compared with other powers or states. Yet merely to examine the media usage in relation to what seems a concise definition of power illustrates the difficulty of conceptualising it.

'Power', argued Bertrand Russell (1938, p. 35), 'is the production of intended effects.' In the context of 'balance of power', 'great powers' and 'superpowers' Russell's definition is easily illustrated and understood. Not only has much modern history been viewed as one of alliances between different states, often involving the notion

of a balance of power, but ultimately power has invariably been measured in terms of military capacity. Military force has frequently been used, and continues to be used, to produce intended effects, not merely in the military sense but also to achieve wider objectives. Bismarck's almost clinical use of military force to bring about German unification and create the German Empire under the leadership of Prussia is a vivid case in point.

The key to Russell's definition is the phrase 'intended effects', easily understandable in a military context: the use of military force is usually deliberate and has intended effects, but what of unintended effects, of which there may well be many, even where the original objectives have been achieved? It can, of course, be acknowledged that unintended effects may be important (even more important than intended effects), but that they are incidental to the use of power. Unintended effects are therefore consequential upon the use of power, but because they were not foreseen or were not part of the original objectives, do not amount to the exercise of power. Such a response will not satisfy neo-Marxist critics, especially structuralists, a point that will be taken up later in the chapter. Important as intended effects undoubtedly are, it seems logically perverse to ignore the unintended effects of the exercise of power.

Russell's definition also sees power as a process or an activity rather than as a commodity or resource, so that the question arises whether power exists only when it is used. Of course, it is understandably common to measure military power *before* it is used by counting numbers of troops, guns, missiles, tanks, ships, and aircraft, and by trying to measure its likely effectiveness by assessing quality of leadership, likely strategy and tactics, and relevant non-military resources. Power needs to be seen in terms of its potential as well as its use, and unsuccessful attempts to exercise power are as much part of social and political behaviour as its successful use. Weber (1947, p. 152), in what is certainly the best-known definition of power, offers a solution to this problem: '"Power" (*Macht*) is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability exists.' His use of the word 'probability' is crucial because it allows power to be seen potentially, rather than await its use and, more importantly, in relative rather than absolute terms. This means that while there are circumstances in which power operates in a zero-sum context – one individual's

gain is proportionate to another's loss – it operates more often in a variable-sum situation, in which power changes and develops according to circumstances and the distribution of the resources on which its rests. Thus Weber rejects any suggestion that power rests solely on the use or threat of physical force, but that other factors can determine whether the will of one individual or group of individuals prevails over that of another individual or group of individuals.

Much social science theory, whether statistically based or not, is couched in terms of probability and power should not be an exception. It is also helpful to see power as both a resource and a process, since the one inevitably complements the other and also allows for the unsuccessful application of power.

All this leaves many questions about power unanswered and at this point it would seem appropriate to reduce these to three fundamental questions. *Who* exercises power? *How* is it exercised? And *why* is it exercised? Given the lack of an agreed definition of power itself, categorical answers can hardly be expected. Nevertheless a useful exploration can be attempted.

There are three broad answers to the question of *who* exercises powers: the elitist, the Marxist, and the pluralist. The simplest is that of the elite theorists, such as Mosca (1939 [1896]), Pareto (1935 [1916]), and Mills (1956): a socially identifiable, cohesive group within a given society wields power based on conscious self-interest. To a significant extent the elite theorists were offering an alternative explanation to that of Marx and his followers, who identified power as being exercised by the social class which controlled the means of production in society. Historically this class varied, but in a capitalist society it is the bourgeoisie or capital-owning class, who will in due course be superseded by the proletariat or working class once it controls the means of production. The third broad answer is the pluralist response of writers like Dahl (1956, 1961, 1982 and 1985) and Polsby (1963), who argued that neither a particular elite or social class held power, but that it was exercised by competing groups and varied from issue to issue.

These theorists will be examined further in Chapter 4, but they can be subsumed under an even broader question about who exercises power by asking, to what extent is power concentrated or diffused in society? And to what extent does it operate hierarchically? Equally important questions arise in respect of whether

those individuals or organisations in a society formally designated as the holders of power – such as kings and emperors, prime ministers and presidents, generals and police chiefs, judges and juries, mayors and magistrates, governments and legislatures, bureaucracies and courts – actually exercise power, or, as is alleged by some theorists, are facades behind which 'real' power is wielded by court favourites, *éminences grises*, vested interests, faceless bureaucrats, party *apparatchiks*, corrupt officials, and the like.

The arguments between elite theorists, Marxists and pluralists and the question of who exercises power depends on *how* it is exercised, that is, the *bases* on which power rests. Power is perhaps most often associated with force, or physical coercion, but it may be based on other resources, notably wealth, status, knowledge, charisma, and authority. In many instances power may rest on more than one of these bases. Power may also take different forms, such as coercion, influence, and control. Coercion includes not only the use or threat of physical force, but also extortion, blackmail, expropriation and confiscation; influence includes not only rational persuasion, respect and deference, but also bribery and corruption; and control involves the acceptance, for whatever reason, that those seeking to exert power have the means to do so.

Conceived as a commodity or resource power becomes a means to an end: *why* is power exercised? To what purposes or ends is power put? Power may be used for individual or collective ends, for political, economic or ideological ends. As noted in Chapter 2, Hall (1985) usefully combines types of power with ends by positing three types of power – political, economic, and ideological – each drawing on particular resources in society. Political power is seen as the capacity of some individuals in society to organise and dominate their fellows, economic power as the capacity to organise and develop resources in society, and ideological power as the capacity to rationalise the organisation of society through belief or value systems. Hall regards military power as part of political power, drawing, as it does, on economic and ideological resources and used primarily for political purposes. Hall's approach does not confine power to the political sphere, arguing that economic and ideological power are not necessarily used exclusively for political purposes, and by doing so he places power, as does Weber, in a broad societal context. Above all, however, power is seen as a motive force in society, used to achieve particular ends, whether selfish or altruistic, material

or spiritual, maintaining the status quo or impelling change. This leads Hall to argue that '[w]here ideological, political and economic power move in the same direction, it is extremely likely that great social energy will be created...' resulting in societal change – this he calls 'enabling power' (Hall 1985, pp. 22–3), but where there is conflict between different types of power societal change will not occur, will be less likely or much slower in taking place – this, as already noted, he calls 'blocking power' (1985, pp. 22–3).

There are yet other answers to why power is exercised, many of which relate to more immediate ends, such as acquiring wealth, status, control of people or territory, or extending or imposing spiritual or ideological beliefs, but most of these are historically self-evident and widely documented. Less well explored is the meeting of psychological needs. Lasswell in *Psychopathology and Politics* (1930), Adorno and his colleagues in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), and Eysenck in *The Psychology of Politics* (1954) have examined various aspects of the role of personality in politics. As in a number of areas of political behaviour, there is a growing awareness of the significance of psychological factors, but much remains to be explored (see Hermann 1986).

In practice the exercise of power involves costs and benefits, both for those who exercise it and those who are subject to it. These costs and benefits may be individual or collective, or both, and may involve the imposition or threat of sanctions or the receipt or promise of rewards. What is less clear is how far the exercise of power involves rational choice. No doubt in many instances it does, at least within the limits of the knowledge and information available to those involved; but, as will be discussed later in the chapter, power may take the particular form of authority – an acceptance of the right to exercise power, ultimately comprising unquestioning obedience, rather than a rational analysis of advantages and disadvantages. More importantly, however, there is the question of whether power is exercised only knowingly and overtly on both sides of the power equation.

With the important exception of unintended effects, power has thus far been discussed in terms of its overt exercise, that is where the will of one individual or group of individuals has clearly and intentionally prevailed over that of another individual or group of individuals, or what pluralists have called observable decisions. Thus Robert Dahl's classic study of decision-making in New Haven,

Who Governs? (1961), examined how decisions were made and, crucially, *who* made them in respect of three case studies, one on urban redevelopment, one on political education, and one on political nominations. In so doing, Dahl concentrated on isolating, through observation, who had the power of initiative, decision and veto in each policy area. Critics of Dahl, notably Bachrach and Baratz (1962 and 1970) pointed out that he neglected what they termed 'non-decision-making', or the power to control the political agenda, in particular to keep issues off the agenda. Their argument was particularly well illustrated by a later study by Crenson (1971) of air pollution as a political issue in the United States. He first examined how the issue had been dealt with in two similar cities in Indiana, East Chicago and Gary. Crenson found that action to curb air pollution had been taken in East Chicago as early as 1949, but not until 1962 in Gary. His explanation was twofold: first, that United States Steel, which was the principal employer in Gary and therefore dominated the town, successfully played down its role as the cause of air pollution, and, second, that Gary had a strong party organisation which showed little or no interest in pollution as an issue; the combination of these two factors kept air pollution off the political agenda. Crenson tested and confirmed his findings against the experience of other American cities.

By definition the pluralist approach concentrates heavily on the activities of organised interests, but governments can also play an important role in controlling the political agenda. This happens most frequently for ideological reasons: as long us a particular party or group holds power certain issues will either be kept off the political agenda or have very low priority on it; other issues will figure very high on the agenda and have a very high priority.

Subsequently, Lukes (1974) described the pluralist approach, as criticised by Bachrach and Baratz and tested by Crenson, as a two-dimensional view of power, arguing that power was used to deal with issues (i.e. observable or overt conflict) and with potential issues (i.e. observable, but covert conflict), but that power also operated in a third dimension concerned with what he termed 'latent conflict' and 'real interests'. This raises the question of whether the exercise of power can be unconscious, leading Lukes to argue what he calls a radical view of power: 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests' (1974, p. 27). In such a situation B may well be aware that A is not acting in his interests, but

is unable to prevent A from acting against them, but Lukes goes on to argue that B may not be aware of his real interests: 'The radical ... maintains that men's wants may themselves be the product of a system which works against their interests, and, in such cases, relates the latter to what they would want and prefer, were they able to make the choice' (1974, p. 34). Lukes thus draws a clear distinction between subjective interests – what someone thinks they want – and objective interests – what someone would want if they could experience the results or be made aware of alternative courses of action.

This concern with real interests shifts the focus away from power (*Macht*) to what Weber calls *Herrschaft*, that is, lordship or domination. In fact, in spite of providing one of the best-known definitions of power, Weber wrote mainly in terms of domination, which he defined as: 'the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons' (1947, p. 152). Similarly, Marxist theorists have come to be interested far more in domination than power. In a sense, Marx, Engels and their earlier followers tended to take power for granted: it was implicit in the concept of a ruling or dominant class and it was only later, when capitalist societies showed a tenacious ability to survive, that Marxist theorists showed an explicit interest in power in order to explain how the capitalist class continued to dominate society. One answer was imperialism – a polemical and much-abused term, but in this context meaning economic exploitation of less-developed areas of the world by economically developed or industrialised societies. A far more subtle answer was through the control of ideas, sometimes called the mobilisation of bias. Writing in 1845/6, Marx and Engels argued that 'the ideas of the ruling class in every epoch are the ruling ideas' (1976 [1927], vol. 5, p. 59).

Antonio Gramsci (1971 [1929–35]), writing during his imprisonment under Mussolini between 1926 and 1934, argued that the bourgeoisie dominated society less by force and more by eliciting consent through using cultural institutions to ensure that its view of the world prevailed, using the term 'hegemony' to describe the situation in which the ruling class was able to represent its interests as the interests of society as a whole. This leads directly to the structuralist arguments advanced by Nicos Poulantzas, who defined power as: 'the capacity of a social class to realise its specific objective interests' (1973 [1968], p. 104), combining the unconscious exercise of power

with unintended effects in that by definition a social class will act in its own interests whether fully aware of them or not. Similarly, Louis Althusser (1972) linked such ideological domination to the state through what he called 'ideological state apparatuses' – the education system, trade unions, political parties, the churches, even the family.

The control of ideas, the mobilisation of bias, and hegemony can be linked to socialisation theory, which suggests that societal values and norms of behaviour are transmitted from generation to generation by a conscious and unconscious learning process. Political values and norms are thus the product of political socialisation, which, some theorists argue (Almond and Verba 1963, 1980; Pye 1966), creates a distinctive *political culture* in every society. Ideas about socialisation can also be linked to the extent to which those exercising power or dominating a society seek to control it. This is clearly central to Marxist theory and to theories of totalitarianism, which argue that all aspects of societal activity are actually or potentially subject to control by those who exercise power. However, the question of control is also central to other sets of values, such as liberalism, socialism, and democracy.

Power was initially conceived of simply as an ability to act or impose one's will, but eventually as an infinitely more complex concept concerning domination of others by some individuals or groups of individuals in society, taking a variety of forms, drawing on a variety of resources, and having costs and benefits for those involved on both sides of the power equation. Its exercise may be overt or covert, conscious or unconscious, and, while often having intended effects, will invariably also have unintended effects. However, it remains open to argument whether power or domination is always exercised by the same group of individuals in a given society, exactly how it is exercised, and for what purposes. It is also open to argument whether the exercise of power or domination is accepted by those who are subject to it; in short, whether power is exercised with *authority*.

AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY

Political philosophers have devoted much time and effort to explaining the question of political obligation. In practice, this raises two

questions. First, why *do* people obey? And second, why *should* people obey? Political philosophers mainly offer answers to the second question, why should people obey? Jean-Jacques Rousseau's answer in *The Social Contract* (1913 [1762]) is that the 'general will' or common good can be elicited through direct, participatory democracy and that laws which express the general will should be obeyed. Such a state of affairs was brought about and maintained through a social contract between all individuals in society. Rousseau's ideal was the small city-state in which direct democracy was feasible and, while laws would presumably be administered by a small number of individuals, he conceived power as being shared.

Other contract theorists offered a very different response to the question, notably Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Both argued that it was in the interests of individuals to accept the domination of a government for their own protection, but differed significantly on the circumstances in which a government could be rejected. Hobbes (1914 [1651]), writing during and in the aftermath of the English Civil War, saw submitting to an all-powerful sovereign or Leviathan as the only means of avoiding the chaotic or anarchic state of affairs epitomised by recent events. Without the protection of a powerful government society would revert to a state of nature, described by Hobbes in a much-quoted phrase as 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (1914 [1651], p. 65). Only in the event of a clear failure by the sovereign to provide that protection could allegiance be transferred elsewhere. Hobbes is thus seen as the ultimate justification for an absolutist or authoritarian state, involving no obligation to carry out the wishes of its subjects.

Locke (1924 [1690]) also saw government as a means of providing protection to the individual, but the scope of government was limited by consent. Thus, while government was expected to maintain order, it was also expected to protect the civil rights, liberty and property of the individual, and failure to do so entitled individuals to withdraw consent and, if necessary, overthrow the government. So, where in a Hobbesian view the acceptance of the exercise of power is prudential and does not necessarily signify approval of the use of power other than for protection, a Lockian view allows the use of power to be judged or approved of much more widely. Feudal society illustrates Hobbesian authority to the extent that tenants offered their feudal lord obligation in return for protection, although feudalism also involved complex contractual arrangements of mutual

obligation. Rousseau and Locke, on the other hand, with their emphasis on the consent of the governed, provide important bases for the development of democratic theories. Locke is not strictly speaking a democratic theorist, but his ideas of limited and representative government were subsequently incorporated into democratic theory. Similarly, although Rousseau has subsequently and mistakenly been associated with the justification of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes by equating the general will with knowing people's 'real' interests, his ideas can be firmly linked to liberal democracy – ideas about equality, the rule of law, and, in the context of authority, that legitimacy depends on the will or consent of the governed.

Hobbes, of course, also offered an answer to the first question, why do people obey? They do so for their own good and, although in Hobbes' case it was fear of the alternative which prompted obedience, people may accept the exercise of power by others over them because they see it is to their advantage in other ways – back to the costs and benefits equation. This was clearly the view of David Hume: 'There is evidently no other principle than interest; and if interest first produces obedience to government, the obligation to obedience must cease whenever the interest ceases, in any degree, and in a considerable number of instances' (1978 [1739–40], p. 553). Modern theorists see authority – the acceptance of the exercise of power, both by those who exercise it and those to whom it is applied – as a crucial concept in politics. The moral justification of where power should lie is important, but so are the reasons why individuals appear willing to accept power being exercised over them.

Students of jurisprudence draw a distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* authority. *De facto* authority exists when an individual or group of individuals accept the exercise of power over them and obey orders or commands of those possessing that power; *de jure* authority exists when the exercise of power is accepted as right or justified by those to whom it is applied. Modern governments sometimes refuse to accord any form of recognition to a regime they dislike or abhor. However, it is not unusual to grant *de facto* recognition – recognising that the regime concerned has control – but denying it *de jure* recognition – that it has the right to that control. Authority is sometimes defined as *legitimate power* and 'authority' and 'legitimacy' are often used synonymously. In the context of particular governments or regimes this often presents no problem, but in the wider context

of social and political organisations it is often more appropriate to talk of *legitimacy*.

Weber's (1947, p. 328) discussion of domination is principally concerned with *legitime Herrschaft* – legitimate domination – and he offered three ideal type bases for legitimacy. These are the traditional, the charismatic, and the rational–legal:

1. *Traditional legitimacy* is based on 'an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them'.
2. *Charismatic legitimacy* is based on 'devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns of order revealed or ordained by him'.
3. *Rational–legal legitimacy* is based on 'a belief in the "legality" of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands'.

Weber cites gerontocracy – rule by elders – and patriarchalism – rule based on inheritance – as traditional types of legitimacy. History provides many examples of charismatic leaders, those whose personal attributes and ideas enabled them to attract and inspire their followers – individuals such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Oliver Cromwell, Hitler or, more recently, Gandhi, Nkrumah, Nasser, and Gaddafi. The modern bureaucratic state, based on legal rules and norms, exemplifies rational–legal legitimacy. It is important, however, to remember that Weber put his three bases forward as ideal types and that in practice the legitimacy of particular regimes is often a mixture of all three. Indeed, Weber points out that charismatic leaders seek to stabilise their position by adopting or adapting traditional legitimacy, that more complex forms of traditional legitimacy have a tendency towards the rational–legal forms, and that the latter may retain important vestiges of traditional legitimacy and periodically be subject to charismatic leaders.

Legitimacy – the extent to which social and political norms in a given society are accepted, especially those applying to the exercise of power or the domination of some individuals or groups of individuals by others – is undoubtedly an important concept in understanding the exercise of power and the relationship between politics and society. Structural–functional theorists, such as Parsons (1951) and Almond (1960, 1966), and systems theorists, such as Easton

(1953, 1965a, 1965b) see legitimacy as crucial to the maintenance of social and political systems. In his theory of the social system Parsons argued that one of its major functions is that of pattern-maintenance, which is the system's capacity to maintain its stability through the inculcation of shared values and the existence of widespread cultural norms. Easton, in developing his input–output analysis, speaks of system 'supports', such as various forms of political participation, especially voting, and positive reactions to policy outputs, that is activities which sustain the operation of the political system; and Almond originally regarded political socialisation as one of three input functions in the political system. Almond and Verba (1963) provided evidence of the basic legitimacy of the American political system in the 1960s in that attitudes towards political institutions were strongly positive and there were high levels of political efficacy – a sense by respondents to their survey that they could influence the course of politics.

A very different picture emerges from studies of the Weimar Republic (1919–33), which preceded Hitler's accession to power in 1933. With the bitterness over the defeat of Germany in the First World War (widely regarded as a betrayal of the military by the politicians), the loss of German colonies, and the punitive reparations imposed by the victorious Allies, coupled with periods of hyperinflation culminating in the Great Depression, it is little wonder that the institutions of the Weimar Republic lacked widespread acceptance and were little mourned after Hitler came to power. Similarly, the political instability of the Fourth French Republic (1946–58), combined with a humiliating colonial defeat in Indo-China, the debacle of Suez in 1956, and an increasingly ferocious struggle against nationalist forces in Algeria, severely undermined confidence in its political institutions and paved the way for Charles de Gaulle to become President and establish a significantly different set of institutions under the Fifth Republic.

For most Marxist theorists, however, legitimacy has been largely ignored as an irrelevance, being part of the ideology of the ruling class. More recently some Marxists have effectively seen legitimacy as an important part of the explanation for the survival of the capitalist system – Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses is the most relevant example, but, more significantly for Marxist theory, Poulantzas (1973) and Habermas (1976 [1973]) have argued that, in order to stave off economic crises, the capitalist system will

need to resort to increasing state intervention. Growing state intervention will, according to Poulantzas, increasingly identify the state with the interests of capital and therefore undermine the popular legitimacy it claims to secure through periodic elections. In his *Legitimation Crisis* Habermas (1976 [1973]) says that such intervention will produce a series of crises – an economic crisis, a rationality crisis, a motivation crisis and, ultimately, a legitimation crisis – in a process effectively summarised by Connolly:

> Habermas perceives the state to be caught within a set of contradictory institutional imperatives: if it responds to one set, it undermines the rationality of the economy, and if it responds to others, it depletes the legitimacy the state itself needs to steer the economy and the motivations people require to carry out the roles available to them in the political economy. (Connolly, 1984, p. 97)

Claus Offe (1984) argues that the state has an institutionalised self-interest in preserving the existing structures of capitalist society rather than simply the interests of the dominant class because, in order to survive, the state has to be 'structurally selective'. This means that in a capitalist society the state favours different groups and interests, including sections of the working class, at different times so it can survive the economic and social crises which continually threaten it. In short, the state seeks to maintain its legitimacy by trying to accommodate the forces of organised labour and monopoly capital.

LEGITIMACY AND COMPLIANCE

Legitimacy is ultimately in the mind of the observer, whether the latter exercises power or is subject to it. The advantage of legitimacy for those exercising or seeking to exercise power is obvious, as Rousseau makes clear in a famous quotation from *The Social Contract*:

> The strongest man is never strong enough to be always master unless he transforms his power into right and obedience into duty. (Rousseau, 1913 [1762], p. 6)

Legitimacy, however, can be seen as only one explanation of why people obey those in power or claiming authority over them.

David Held (1984) has put forward a continuum of obedience or compliance, as shown in Figure 3.1. Held's continuum encompasses the full range of explanations of why people obey those who claim authority over them, from the perception or belief that they have no choice in the matter, to the belief that it is right and proper to do so. However, Held limits legitimacy to his sixth and seventh categories – 'normative agreement' and 'ideal normative agreement', although he concedes that category five – 'instrumental acceptance' – is 'ambiguous [and] could be taken to imply a weak form of legitimacy' (1984, pp. 302–3). These categories are, of course, Weberian ideal types, and social and political compliance in any society will be a mixture of categories, with the emphasis on particular categories varying from society to society. Although Held's particular concern was with legitimacy in Britain in the 1980s, he draws a general conclusion in seeking to explain social and political compliance:

> Political order is not achieved through common values
> systems, or general respect for the authority of the state, or
> legitimacy, or, by contrast, simple brute force; rather, it is

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1. *Following orders or coercion:* there is no choice in the matter.
2. *Tradition:* no thought has ever been given to it and we do it as it has always been done.
3. *Apathy:* we cannot be bothered one way or another.
4. *Pragmatic acquiescence:* although we do not like the situation – it is not satisfactory and far from ideal – we cannot imagine things really being different and so we 'shrug our shoulders' and accept what seems like fate.
5. *Instrumental acceptance or conditional agreement/consent:* we are dissatisfied with things as they are but nevertheless go along with them in order to secure an end; we acquiesce because it is in the long run to our advantage.
6. *Normative agreement:* in the circumstances before us, and with the information available to us at the moment, we conclude it is 'right', 'correct', 'proper' for us as an individual or member of collectivity: it is what we genuinely *should* or *ought* to do.
7. *Ideal normative agreement:* it is what in ideal circumstances – with, for instance, all the knowledge we would like, all the opportunity to discover the circumstances and requirements of others – we would have agreed to do.

Figure 3.1 A continuum of social and political obedience or compliance (Source: Held (1984), pp. 301–2).

> the outcome of a complex web of interdependence between
> political, economic and social institutions and activities
> which divide power centres and which create multiple
> pressures to comply. State power is a central aspect of these
> structures but it is not the only key variable. (Held, 1984,
> pp. 361–2)

The matrix of variables to which Held refers are also closely related to concepts discussed later in the book, especially political socialisation (Chapter 5) and ideology (Chapter 10), and to the crucial question of why societies persist and change, discussed in Part V. More immediately, however, the question of social and political compliance needs to be seen in the context of different explanations of the distribution of power in society, which is the subject of the next chapter.