


MACMILLAN
foundations

Politics

ANDREW HEYWOOD



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Politics

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For Mark and Robin

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' is 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 have seen 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 globalisation, 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.

The task of providing a comprehensive guide to political analysis is made more difficult by the disparate nature of the discipline itself. All too frequently, politics resembles a collection of disciplines (political theory, comparative government, international relations, policy analysis and so on) rather than a single, coherent field of study. Undoubtedly, justice must be done to the various branches of the discipline, each of which has developed its own conceptual tools and, to some extent, its own methodology. Nevertheless, whenever possible, a holistic approach is adopted 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 thus 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 organised 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 globalisation discusses the role and significance of the nation-state, particularly in the light of internationalisation 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 is made and how the performance of political systems can be judged, thus linking back to the theoretical and ideological issues examined in Part 1.

Each chapter starts with an outline of its major themes and a series of questions that indicate the central topics that are addressed in the chapter. At the end of each chapter, there is a summary, a list of questions for discussion, and suggestions for further reading. Additional material is provided throughout the text in the form of glossary panels and boxed information. Brief biographies are provided of key political thinkers and significant political figures, together with a discussion of their theoretical role or importance. Concept boxes offer a fuller discussion of important political terms and concepts, particularly those with meanings that are complex or contested. Focus boxes give either further insight into particular theories or approaches, or an overview of relevant debates and arguments. These boxes are comprehensively cross-referenced, emphasising the interlocking character of the discipline. A glossary containing definitions of all the significant terms and concepts in the text is included at the end of the book. The bibliographical details of the references in the text (except for works only referred to in the boxes) are given in the bibliography at the end of the book, in addition to details of other relevant works.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the academic reviewers who commented on earlier drafts of this work, namely John Greenaway, Wyn Grant, Chris Brown and Gerry Stoker. Their advice and criticism was both constructive and insightful, and undoubtedly improved the book at a number of points. Discussions with colleagues and friends, particularly Karon and Doug Woodward, also helped to sharpen the ideas and arguments developed here. My publishers Frances Arnold and Steven Kennedy have been a constant source of support and encouragement, leavened, I am glad to say, by patience when necessary. My most heart-felt thanks, however, go, as ever, to my wife Jean. Not only did she take sole responsibility for the preparation of the typescript of this book, but she also offered advice on both style and content, which was especially useful when I was in danger of lapsing into incoherence. This book is dedicated to my sons, Mark and Robin.

Andrew Heywood, 1997

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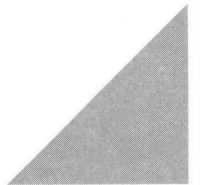
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PART
I

Theories of Politics



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 only emerges 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 explored 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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