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Some Definitions Relating to the Specialization of Local Administration

Authority and legitimacy:

POWER

Power, in the context of politics, can be defined as the ability to get others to do things even when they might not want to. Power can operate through persuasion, so that people cooperate willingly and freely, on the basis of reasons they accept (which may include incentives that are offered for cooperation); or through coercion – the use of threats, sanctions, and force. States have power, in the end, because they can make laws. And laws are enforced by the police, again in the end, by the use of force. If you don't obey the law, at some point, you will be fined or jailed or worse. However, we want to be able to make a distinction between cases in which it is right that the state has power, and cases in which it is wrong or objectionable in some way. To make this distinction, we need the concepts of 'authority' and 'legitimacy'.

AUTHORITY

Authority is a much more complex concept, and we need to make distinctions between several different ideas of authority.

A first sense of authority is theoretical authority or expertise. This is the sense in which a person can be 'an authority', an expert, on a particular topic. We ask the advice of theoretical experts, as they can give us reasons for what to believe – for instance, whether whales are fish – but also for what to do – for example, an engineer knows how to build a bridge that won't collapse.

Our interest is in the second sense of authority, practical authority. This is the sense in which a person can be an 'authority figure'. An authority can get us to act in particular ways, because they have power. However, just having power is not enough to also having authority.

There are two senses of practical authority. In the descriptive sense of practical authority,

a state has authority if it maintains public order and makes laws that are generally obeyed by its citizens. It has the power to make and impose laws successfully. Authority goes beyond power because it can secure public order, which depends in part, on people respecting the law. Contrast with this a state in which many people break the law, but the state still has a police force that punishes some of the law-breakers. In this case, in which citizens and the state are in conflict, the state no longer has authority.

In the normative sense, a state has practical authority if its authority in the descriptive sense is legitimate ('normative' means relating to 'norms', rules or reasons for conduct. In this case, it means that the practical authority is right, justified, supported by good reasons).

Some philosophers, e.g. Hobbes, argue that any state that has authority in the descriptive sense is legitimate; so there is no real distinction. On the other hand, some philosophers think the descriptive definition of practical authority is too weak, and doesn't distinguish enough between mere power and genuine authority. They argue that the state only has authority of any kind (and not just power) if the citizens generally obey the laws because many or most of them believe it has authority in the normative sense. A state in which citizens obey the law simply because they are too scared to break it does not have authority, only power. Adding this condition still makes a distinction between descriptive and normative authority – for descriptive authority, the citizens must believe the state is legitimate; for normative authority, the state must be legitimate.

LEGITIMACY

So in addition to whether a state has authority, in the sense that people obey its laws, we can ask whether it has legitimacy. The term legitimate comes from the Latin for 'lawful'. In the most basic sense, a state is legitimate if it exists and operates according to the law. But this definition is too shallow: if a country has no laws about how a government can come to power, then no matter how the government came to power, it will be legitimate. Or again, if a government is elected lawfully, but then changes the laws to create a police state ruled by a dictatorship, the dictatorship will be legitimate. But this is not what we mean by a legitimate government.

If a government is legitimate, then in some way, the fact that it has power is right or justified. If it is right it has power, then we can argue that we ought to obey it. If it is objectionable that it has power, then we don't have an obligation to obey it.

Can we make this more precise? Is it enough for the state to be legitimate that it is capable of keeping public order and is morally justified in coercing people to keep public order?

We can object that this definition does not require that the people over which the

government has authority willingly obey it. A state could have legitimate authority in this sense without those under its rule recognizing its authority as legitimate. Second, it does not claim that the people have a duty to obey the state. It only requires that the exercise of power is morally justified.

If we add these conditions, we can say that the state is legitimate if it can impose duties on the people under it. To impose a duty is not the same as forcing someone to do something. To impose a duty is to put them in a position where they have an obligation to do something, in this case, to obey the law.

The definition does not specify who the imposed duties are owed to. There are two possible answers: we owe it to the state to obey the law, or we owe it to our fellow citizens. Which is the better answer? If we consider the state of nature story, at the point at which we consent to obey the law, who do we agree this with? Not with the state, because the state doesn't exist yet. The state is created through our agreement. So we agree it with other people. Our obligation to obey the law is therefore owed to other citizens. This reflects the idea that we are equal; our obligation is not to something that has power over us, but to other people, and it is all of us – not the state – that will benefit from the agreement.

Political systems and regimes:

ABSOLUTISM:

The notion of absolutism defines a political system of the early modern period which, from a traditional perspective, was defined as the reign of a king whose power was attached to his person and he reigned without the participation of state institutions.

The term "absolutism" is also used for the period of the European history between the religious wars of the 16th to early 17th century and the revolutions of the late 18th century, where we could find elements of this political regime. The sovereign relies on five pillars of power: its standing army, the judiciary and the police, the administration of which the king is the head, the nobility at the royal court, the Church of the State (the clergy) and mercantilism, a political and economic theory related to absolutism, whose objective is the health of the state budget. In order to achieve these goals, all means could be implemented.

ANARCHY:

The notion of anarchy defines a political system characterized by the absence of a government. It is a term used mainly in the political philosophy, where anarchism propagates such social order. On the contrary, in international relations, the concept describes, especially in realistic theories, the situation of the international system of states.

The reasoning about anarchy started already in antiquity. But the concept of anarchy was created only in the 19th century as an anti-movement and anti-political concept of the monarchy and democracy.

Originally, in ancient Greece, anarchy meant the absence of absolute sovereign, derived from the person of the archon * that was created after the royal dynasties.

ARISTOCRACY:

In the history of political thinking, the notion of aristocracy refers to the governance of a small group of elites. This means that a relatively small number of particularly capable individuals manage the State. However, it is not defined what this capacity to rule consists of.

The original meaning of the word is « the rule of the best ». In political reality, it often went hand in hand with belonging to the noble class. For this reason, since antiquity, aristocracy is the rule of the nobility.

AUTOCRACY:

The term of autocracy means « who draws their power (cracy) from themselves (auto) ». As a system or political system, autocracy unifies all the powers of the political system in a central force and does not include in no way participation of the people in state power. The possessor of these powers can be an individual (e.g. a dictator) or a group (party, junta or committee). Two of the examples of autocracy are absolute monarchy and dictatorship.

DEMOCRACY:

In ancient Greece, democracy firstly meant the direct reign of the people. Since at that time, only a selected group of citizens had the right to political participation, the idea of the people was very limited and the Greek Polis popular meetings were reserved only for men.

Today, democracy is used mostly to denote the political systems, where the base of the reign comes from a broad and pluralistic understanding of the people and includes participation rights for all citizens.

For a decision to meet the democratic standards, in addition to the majority principle, other criteria must be satisfied. The actual realisation of these specific criteria depends on the respective electoral system.

-Universal suffrage: Each person having the right to vote can participate in elections and votes (direct or indirect suffrage).

-Equal suffrage: each voter has the same voting power (the same number of votes).

- Free suffrage: No penalty shall be exercised.

- Voting by secret ballot: To ensure free suffrage, the vote is often secret. In addition, enough time must be given to make a decision.

As a result of the freedom to stand for election (indirect election), it can happen that there is only one candidate. A real decision can be reached only if there are several alternatives. However, an

election with only one alternative is also considered democratic, if the other democratic criteria are satisfied.

A democracy presupposes the guarantee of human rights. In particular, this applies to:

- **Freedom of opinion and freedom of the press:** A free exchange of opinions and points of view must be prior to a political decision.
- **Freedom of organization / association:** The freedom to form free political parties and organizations.

DICTATORSHIP:

Dictatorship is a political system characterized by a single ruler, the dictator, or a group of governors (e.g. a party, a junta or a family) whose power is unlimited. Unlike democracy, a dictator does not justify his claim to rule (literally: the right to gain power) by free elections. The condition of the notion dictatorship is its illegitimacy. This means that either it has removed a legitimate political system, or that it has no legitimate or constitutional origin. The dictator draws his legitimacy usually from a particular danger or a state crisis that he could parry.

MONARCHY:

The concept of monarchy is defined as « *power in one* ». It denotes a system or a political regime where a monarch is the head of state (and thus makes the difference from the republic). The competences of the monarch may vary depending on the type of the monarchy: the spectrum ranges from a minimum power (constitutional monarchy) through a power limited by a constitution (constitutional monarchy) to an unlimited, universal power (absolute monarchy).

Moreover, we distinguish the hereditary and elective monarchy. In the former form of monarchy, the king is named according to the principle of hegemony and in the latter by election (in most cases for life). In hereditary monarchies, divine law generally legitimises the domination of the monarch. Similarly, a veneration of the monarch as a deity or person of divine origin is possible.

MILITARY REGIME:

A military regime denotes a political system whose executive authority is derived from the army.

Pure military regimes are rare. Throughout the history, there were more cases combining the civilian regimes dominated behind the scenes by the army. Thus civilian governments do not get the complete political power and can be dismissed by a military intervention of their own armed forces or be controlled otherwise.

Reasons for such an intervention can be the guarantee of stability or efforts to maintain the status quo. In countries dominated by the army, the level of its influence can go from the right of veto until the complete absorption of state power. The resulting military regime can be short duration (two to four years) until the desired state is restored by the army; but it can also be permanent.

REPUBLIC:

The republic is a political system that focuses on the community and the common good. Since the Roman times, and especially since the French Revolution, it is primarily seen as a model opposing the monarchy. From the modern point of view, it is a political system where the people are the foundation of the State, what gives it legitimacy, and they hold the majority of powers in the State. Yet the inner workings of the republic may differ from state to state. The republics with democratic government form the majority, but are not the only model. The republican character indicates only the absence of a monarch. Any other political system is possible. People's participation in the creation of the state will is not necessarily a republican criterion.

TOTALITARIANISM:

In political science, totalitarianism denotes a form of dictatorial rule, which, unlike an authoritarian dictatorship, claims to have an influence on all the social spheres. This principle is often linked to the desire to create a « new man ».

While an authoritarian dictatorship tries to maintain the status quo, a totalitarian dictatorship requires that citizens participate actively in political life and wants the political life to develop in a direction dictated by the respective ideology.

Thus, totalitarianism is generally based on the popular and mass organizations, which it is mobilizing all the time. It excludes any form of opposition, going until the moral and physical destruction of those who totally or partially object to the totalitarian claim for dominance (right to gain power).