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Concept of Power: Meaning and Structures of Power, Power, Authority and Legitimacy

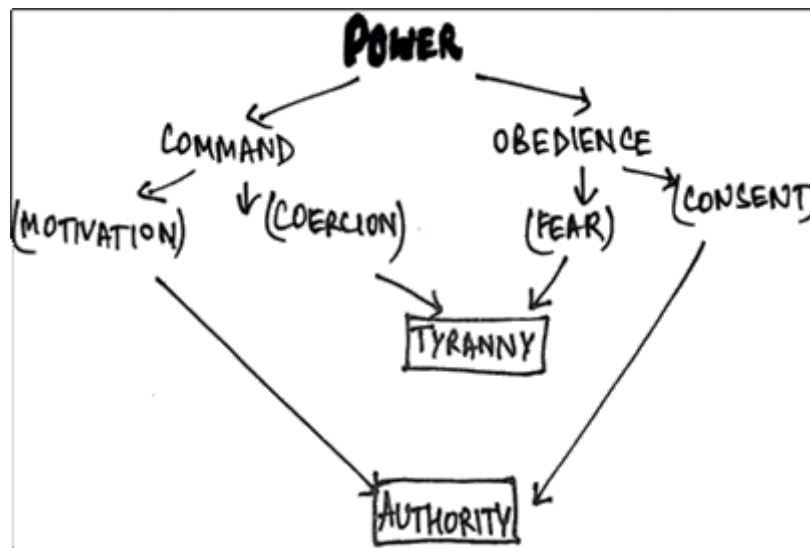
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Meaning of Power

- It is a Central Concept of Political Science
- Russell defined Power as the production of intended effects
- It is a possession of Control, Authority or Influence over others
- Power is the ability or capacity to make decisions
- Power always entails a social relationship between at least two actors
- Power always gives rise to asymmetry in relationships
- Power uses Sanctions

Power, Authority and Legitimacy

- Authority consists of Power And Legitimacy
- Power involves use of force to get obedience
- Legitimacy is based on Respect And Willing Compliance
- If Command is based on willing obedience, then power is manifested in the form of Consent
- If command is based on coercion, then power is manifested in the form of Tyranny



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Structures of Power



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Class Perspective

- Developed by Marx and Engels

- Political Power is the product of economic power which is ownership of means of production
- The Dominant Class exercise power in society over Dependent Class
- Under Capitalism working class get opportunity and became conscious of its exploitation

According to Gramsci Culture of Capitalist Society creates two institutions for domination which are:

1) Structure of Coercion

2) Structure Of legitimation

Elite Theory

- Divides society into two categories of people: Elite and Masses
- This Division doesn't give rise to Injustice
- Propounded by Vilfredo Pareto , Gaetano Mosca , Robert Michel's and C. Wright Mills
- Vilfredo Pareto - Circulation of Elites
- Gaetano Mosca - The Ruling Class
- Robert Michel's - Iron Law Of Oligarchy
- C. Wright Mills - The Power Elite

Vilfredo Pareto (Circulation of Elites)

- He used the term "Elite" in The Mind And Society
- Masses lacks Leadership qualities
- Elites are divided between "Governing Elite" and "Non-Governing Elite" and compete to get power

Gaetano Mosca (The Ruling Class)

- People are divided into two groups: The Rulers and The Ruled
- The Rulers always exercise power in Society
- The Ruling Class possessed the Capacity Of Organization

Robert Michel's (Iron Law of Oligarchy)

- Every organization reduces to Oligarchy
- Human Beings are incapable of self-Government
- Oligarchy is inevitable in an organization as if is an Iron Law

C. Wright Mills (Power Elites)

- He preferred Power Elite to Ruling class
- Power Elite is the combination of groups who possess power
- Use the example of American Society
- Power Elite comprises of Industrialist , Military leaders and Politicians
- Power Elite help each other to strengthen Power and Position

Group Perspective

- Group perspective on power corresponds to Pluralist theory
- Power is divided between groups
- These groups are Autonomous and share power
- Pluralist Theory upheld distribution of power

MCQs

1. Wright Mill's "The Power Elite" is a study of the contemporary politics of

- a) China
- b) United States Of America
- c) Soviet Union
- d) Great Britain

Answer: b

 Mayank

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