

# Power, authority and legitimacy

In the words of Robert A Dahl “power influence and authority are common place words that ordinary people share with political practitioners and political theorist. One hears of power to govern, the power of purse, political power, spiritual power, economic power, national power, judicial power, presidential power, black power, student power and state power.”



Power is central to the study of politics. Politics is nothing but struggle for power. We cannot separate power from the study of politics. All states possess power which is the most important and essential element of the state. No state system can work in the absence of power. Political power is not evenly distributed. It is usually concentrated in the hands of a few who may be called “the power elites”.”

According to Herbert Goldhamer and Edward Shills “Power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others in accordance with one’s own ends”. This means the power of man over the minds and actions of other man.

## Power

Power is used by many scholars as a synonym for authority and this has led to a confused understanding of the entire concept of authority especially with the idea that legitimacy is also another form of authority. The questions which emerge therefore include: what then is authority? Is it synonymous to power, influence and legitimacy? How do these concepts relate and apply to society and its institutions?

Power as defined by Cline (2012) is “the ability, whether personal or social, to get things done — either to enforce one’s own will or to enforce the collective will of some group over others.” Power is therefore an ability or potential of an individual or groups of individuals to influence and compel action. Power can therefore be force or influence of action whether accepted/recognised or not. This differs from authority in that authority comes with recognition of the right to exercise power hence authority also encompasses the legitimacy defined as a socially constructed and psychologically accepted right to exercise power. Authority therefore refers to the ability (power) and right (legitimacy) to influence and compel action.

In its broadest sense, power is the ability to achieve a desired outcome, sometimes seen as the ‘power to do something’. This includes anything from the ability to keep oneself alive to the ability of government to achieve economic growth.

In politics, however, power is more commonly understood as a relationship; that is, as the ability to influence the behaviour of others, usually through rewards or punishments. This implies having 'power over' other people.

Power does have its limitations. Hannah Arendt, in her book *Crises of the Republic* says, "Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but, to act in concert. It is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence

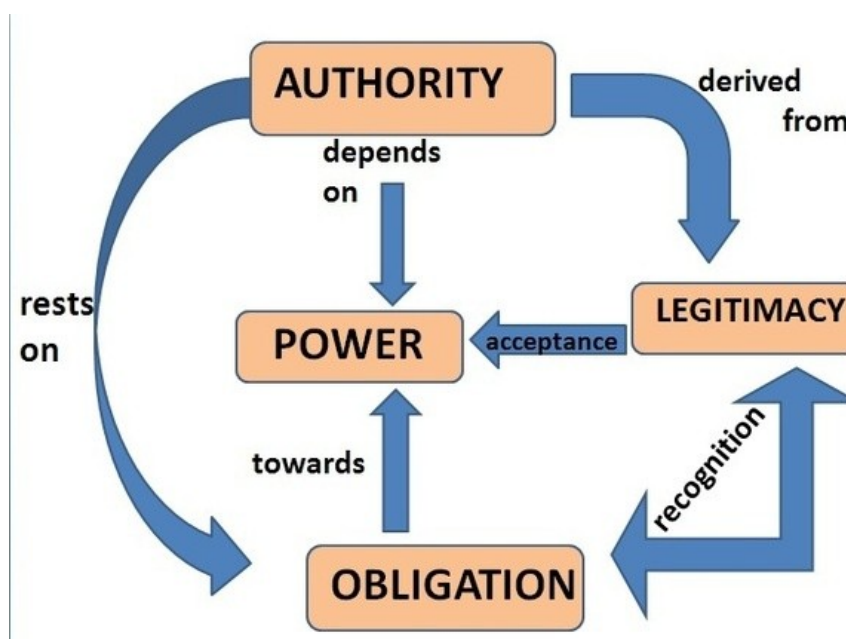


only so long as the group keeps together". What she means is that power cannot be given to a single individual. The reason for this is because it would go against the mind of the individual. The ruler may take decisions for the collective good, but can also manipulate them to his own intentions and create a corrupt

system. Hence, it is always handed to a group of individuals, who through each of their views, is required to keep a check on the remaining of the others and ensure no such bias is set.

Power that is legitimate is seen as fair and right and so coercion (force) is not needed. Most people obey rules even if they do not agree with them. This is because they accept the prevailing system of government as legitimate. This legitimate power is called authority.

Power and authority are often used interchangeably, making it difficult to remember that they do in fact describe different phenomena. One approach used by political theorists is to make a conceptual difference: authority is a philosophical concept, and power a sociological concept. In order for someone to have authority they must have legitimacy or rightfulness: they have the right to give orders, or make pronouncements or decisions.



Manifestations of power:	Recent example
<p><b>Political</b> (control of or influence on, the state's ability to make or influence political decisions.)</p>	
<p><b>Economic</b> (control of economic assets)</p>	
<p><b>Military</b> (ability to wage a war)</p>	

## A radical view of power: Steven Lukes

In his book *Power: A Radical View* (1974), Steven Lukes argued that power had three 'faces' or 'dimensions':

1. **Decision-making:** Lukes' first face of power is its 'open face', or power that can be seen to



be used. For example, when the government proposes to introduce a new law they produce a bill which will be debated in the Houses of Parliament, discussed in the media and attract the attention of pressure groups, which might, in turn, lobby Members of Parliament (MPs). Eventually the bill may pass through the decision-making process and become law. Usually we can identify where the power lies, and that it

is exercised in accordance with the will (or the authority) of the people.

2. **Non-decision-making:** The second face of power Lukes called its 'secretive face'. This is power that is exercised behind closed doors. He suggests that an important source of power



is the power to set the political agenda, that is, being able to decide not only what will be discussed but, just as importantly, what will not be discussed. Power is therefore about preventing decisions from being made, or limiting choices, as well as making them. An example of this concerns the issue of devolution for Scotland. During the period of Conservative government from 1979 to 1997, the issue of devolution was never allowed on to the main political agenda because the Conservatives were opposed to it. The Labour government elected in May 1997 had made devolution a prominent part of its election manifesto in Scotland and subsequently held a referendum on the issue. The Scottish National

Party (SNP), whose aim was independence, wanted a question in the referendum on independence as well as devolution, but the Labour government didn't allow it as it was not part of their political agenda.

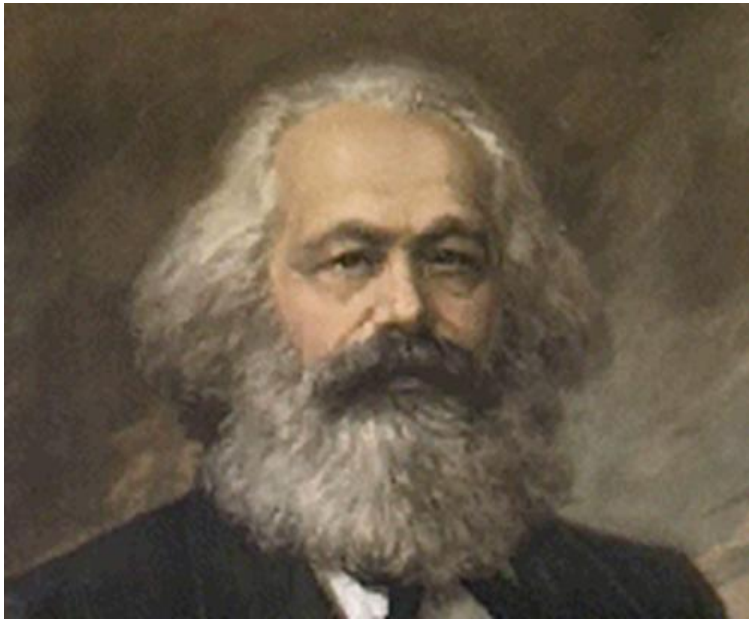
3. **Manipulating desires:** Lukes suggests that power can go further, and its third face is one in which power is exercised through manipulation. His argument is that people in power can

persuade us that the decisions being made are in our best interests and what we want. For example, some feminists would claim that women are persuaded that being a housewife and mother is the best role for women in our society. In reality, some feminists claim, women who occupy this role are being exploited by men for the benefit of men.



**Antonio Gramsci** (1891-1937), the Italian Marxist, argued that the state in a liberal democracy wages a 'war of ideas', whereby the dominant middle class use their positions of power to maintain supremacy over the working class. This 'hegemony' relates to Lukes' argument that one person (of the state) can exercise power over another person in a manner entirely contrary to the first person's interests.

### **Karl Marx's view on ruling class theory**



According to Marx, the political structures are mere reflection of the economic structure. The political power is unequally distributed in a society and there is a polarisation of the society based on the accessibility to, and ownership of the means of production. The ruling classes, who own the modes of production, control the political power too. The Marxist view envisages a classless egalitarian future in which the ruled masses capture the power from the ruling class and form a communist state.

# Authority

This can most simply be defined as 'legitimate power'. Whereas power involves the ability to influence the behaviour of others, authority operates through the **right** to do so.

Authority is therefore based on an acknowledged duty to obey, rather than the use of punishments and rewards. In this sense, authority is power cloaked in legitimacy or rightfulness.

Nevertheless, power and authority are often used in tandem, and examples of authority being used in the absence of power (such as the monarchy are rare).

## Max Weber's theory of power and authority

Max Weber was a 19th century German sociologist who developed ideas about how society works, including the way in which power can become authority. Weber believed that there is a fixed amount of power in any society, and that power held by any individual or group is power which is not available to any other individual or group. He also argued that power is always used to further the interests of those who hold it.

Weber identified three types of authority:

1. **Traditional authority:** Depends upon a belief in established customs and traditions. Those in authority expect obedience and loyalty on the grounds that established customs and traditions demand it. For example, the tradition of a hereditary monarchy demands that a new monarch commands as much obedience and loyalty as the previous monarch did.



2. **Charismatic authority:** Depends upon the special qualities of a leader. People are drawn to follow the leader because of the qualities they believe he or she has. Charismatic authority may die with the leader or continue to work through a group of chosen disciples



3. **Rational-legal authority:** Depends upon a formal set of rules which gives those who hold authority the right to direct and command others and to take decisions on their behalf. It has a moral dimension in that people have freely handed power over to another person (or other people). So a democratic government can be said to exercise rational-legal authority because the electorate hands over power to it through the ballot box (ie. through voting).



If people have power, it means they are able to make other people do what they want them to do even if the other people do not want to do it. Power, therefore, is the ability to influence the behaviour of others by threat, sanctions or through manipulation. In political situations, those who have power are able to reward those who conform and punish those who do not.

Power cannot be exercised unless there is some way of enforcing it. This might be a direct threat or physical use of force (coercion), but it does not need to be. If people accept that power is 'legitimate', they are likely to be obedient and coercion will not be necessary.

Although power may rest upon force (or the threat of it), it is often camouflaged by ideologies that deny its existence, or minimise its importance.

Having gained an understanding of power and authority from a conceptual point of view, it is important to look at an example of the exercise of political power and authority in practice.

The assumption in a liberal democracy is that those in key positions of political power are able to exercise that power because they have been granted the 'authority' of the people (the voters) to do so. Essentially, what this means is that politicians in a liberal democracy can have the power 'removed' from them if they do not use their powers in a responsible and effective fashion. The power is removed through the ballot box: the voters may vote for a party other than the one in government if they think the party in government has acted irresponsibly. In this sense, then, they no longer have the authority of the people, and will not be in a position where they can exercise overall power over government policy.

## Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527)

In the essay *The Prince* (1532), the Italian statesman and political philosopher Machiavelli examined the subject of the 'mechanics of power'. He rejected the accepted ideas about political authority. The prevalent medieval notion was that leaders were bound by a body of



natural law and Christian ethics. Machiavelli argued that the conventional advice to rulers to be merciful, liberal and loved was ideal in a world in which people were virtuous, but the problem was that the world was not like that. He argued that a ruler could only survive by being mean, cruel and by keeping his word only when it was to his advantage to do so. In this sense, then, a definition of authority

being the exercise of power with the will of the people, seems to be absent from Machiavellian thought.

In a chapter of *The Prince* entitled 'Of Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved or Feared', Machiavelli wrote:

*'The question [is] whether it is better to be loved rather than feared, or feared rather than loved. It might perhaps be answered that we should wish to be both; but since love and fear can hardly exist together, if we must choose between them, it is far safer to be feared than loved. . . . For love is held by the tie of obligation, which, because men are a sorry breed, is broken on every whisper of private interest; but fear is bound by the apprehension of punishment which never relaxes its grasp.'*

Clearly, from this statement, we can see that Machiavelli, although not dismissing the idea of the people feeling 'love' for whoever was in power, believed that in order to rule effectively, it would be far more advantageous for the people to live in some kind of 'fear' of what might happen if they failed to obey the will of those in power. People, Machiavelli suggests, would betray a ruler who loved them if it suited their own best interests, as there might be little chance of being punished. However, if the ruler (or rulers) exercised his or her power through fear, the people would be too afraid to pursue their own interests at the expense of those in power. Modern political theorists, known as 'modern realists', see politics as the pursuit of power, and social order (ie. an orderly society) existing entirely because of threats about what would

happen if people didn't follow orders. They are sometimes described as the heirs of the Machiavellian tradition.

## Legitimacy

Legitimacy is commonly defined in political science and sociology as the belief that a rule, institution, or leader has the right to govern. It is a judgment by an individual about the rightfulness of a hierarchy between rule or ruler and its subject and about the subordinate's obligations toward the rule or ruler. When shared by many individuals, legitimacy produces distinctive collective effects in society, including making collective social order more efficient, more consensual, and perhaps more just. Tom Tyler says that if authorities "are not viewed as legitimate, social regulation is more difficult and costly" (Tyler 2001, 416). This accounts for the interest rulers show in legitimating their rule.

Legitimacy itself is a fundamentally subjective and normative concept: it exists only in the beliefs of an individual about the rightfulness of rule. It is distinct from legality, in that not all legal acts are necessarily legitimate and not all legitimate acts are necessarily legal. One would hope for a close coincidence between the two, but it is conceptually necessary to keep the two separate. The possibility always exists that rulers might impose laws which the followers find illegitimate, and this possibility ensures that the two concepts cannot be reduced to one. Moreover, to define what is legal as the same as what is legitimate means that the government would have the power to control the categories of legitimate and illegitimate. This would make legitimacy inherently conservative since it could only buttress existing power relations. In practice, we see many instances in which citizens come to believe that their governments are illegitimate and this creates a serious crisis in governance.

In order for someone to have authority they must have legitimacy or rightfulness: the right to give orders, or make pronouncements or decisions. If people accept that power is 'legitimate', they are likely to be obedient and coercion will not be necessary. Power may rest upon force (or the threat of it), but the acceptance of legitimacy should make the use of force unnecessary.

Legitimacy is very important in understanding the role of governments within a state and it is crucial for governments to be legitimate to control in a democratic states. If governments are not legitimate then holding the state together will become difficult.

Weber defined legitimacy as being the right to rule. Therefore, as long as people were prepared to comply, a system of rule can be described as legitimate. Weber's definition was entirely separate from any moral or rational basis for legitimacy. This is at odds with most political theorists who would argue that there are distinct differences between legitimate and illegitimate rule.

The Greek philosopher and one of Plato's students, Aristotle, argued in *Politics*, that the best forms of government were those that existed for the common good (i.e. the best thing for everyone). Rousseau, writing in the C18th, argued that governments should be based on the 'general will' - what was collectively good for the whole population. Therefore, Aristotle and Rousseau would both disagree with Weber. For Weber, legitimacy is merely a matter of public acceptance, even submission. He would accept a government as legitimate even if it acted



in the interests of a minority, as long as the majority complied. Aristotle and Rousseau would say that a government can only be legitimate if it acts in the interests of all.

## Legitimacy and Electoral Systems

A crucial part of our political process which produces legitimacy, is the electoral system. In making a decision about who rules us, we are showing support for those we have chosen so to do. Hopefully, they will legislate in the interests of all. Once the election result is known, we accept the legitimacy of Parliament and the further legitimacy of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. They now have the authority to exercise power over us.

Elections convey legitimacy for three reasons:

1. Almost every adult has the opportunity to take part and most do so. The people have all had the opportunity to express their will.
2. The result accurately reflects the votes cast. Therefore, it accurately reflects the will of the people.
3. The elected Parliament is socially representative, i.e. its composition reflects the composition of society. The elected Parliament will be able to legislate in the interests of all, as all are fairly represented in it.

In Britain, in particular, the legitimacy of governments has been increasingly called into question because of the way in which the electoral system works. Specifically, this has involved the increasing failure of the electoral system to produce results, and governments, which reflect the will of the people.

Firstly, under the electoral system for UK general elections, First Past the Post (FPTP), a significant number of votes are wasted. For example, all the votes for the losing candidates are wasted in the sense that they are not represented in the House of Commons. Moreover, all the votes for the winning candidate over and above that which is needed to win are in fact surplus, as you only need one more vote than your nearest rival. As a consequence, nationally the percentage of votes a party gets is in no way in proportion to the percentage of seats it gets in the Commons. Moreover, most MPs are elected with less than half the votes in their constituencies.

Nationally, this means that governments in the UK are very rarely elected with more than 50% of the vote in a General Election. In fact, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century this happened only twice, in 1900 and in 1931. The system can also produce a situation where one party can win more seats than any other, but with fewer votes than another party. This happened in February 1974 when the Conservatives polled 37.9% of the vote, with Labour second with 37.1%. However Labour had 301 MPs to the Conservatives 297, and, as such, formed the government, claiming sole authority to exercise all of the power of the Crown.

The FPTP system is very unfair on smaller parties. This is because it favours parties such as Labour and Conservative in Britain whose support is concentrated in certain areas. The 'winner takes

all' principle means that smaller parties find it very difficult if not impossible to convert support into meaningful representation, particularly if their support is spread out. Critics of the current system also point out that in Britain, amongst the 650 constituencies, the vast majority are usually safe, and so the outcome of General Elections are dependent on what happens in a handful of marginal seats.

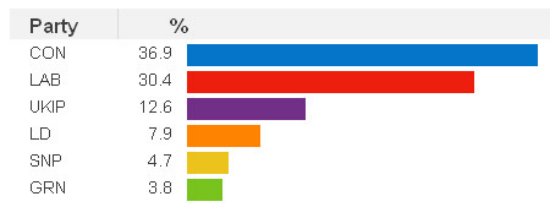
According to a report by the Electoral Reform Society entitled *The 2015 General Election: A Voting System in Crisis*, The 2015 general election was the "most disproportionate in British history".

- UKIP received 3.9 million votes and the Greens 1.2 million, and they ended up with one MP each.
- 50% of votes in the election - 22 million - went to losing candidates
- The election saw an MP win on the lowest vote share in electoral history 24.5% in Belfast South
- 331 of 650 MPs were elected on under 50% of the vote, and 191 with less than 30% of the electorate

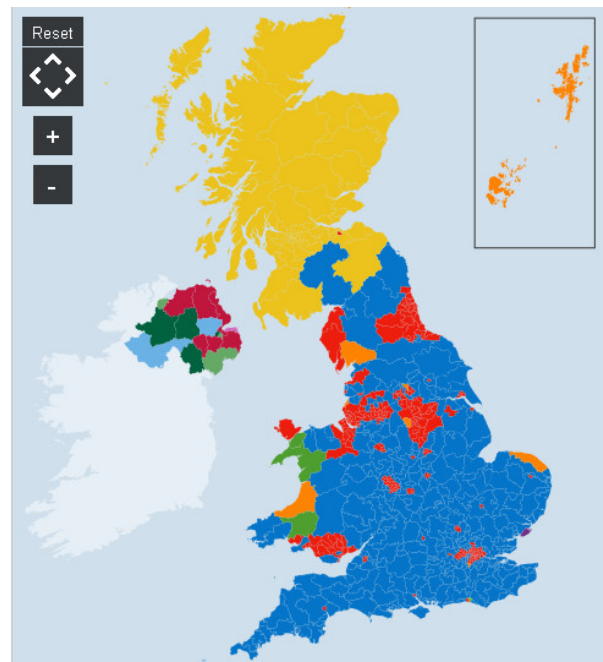
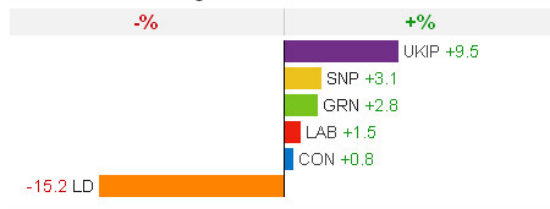
In addition to the failure of the system to accurately reflect the will of the people, First Past The Post produces Parliaments that are not socially representative. This is because it uses single member constituencies. Each political party can choose only one candidate per constituency and will often (though not necessarily openly) opt for one who will not be susceptible to public prejudices. This contributes to a Parliament that is predominantly white, male and middle class. As of 2015, 191 MPs (29% of the House of Commons) are female, the highest ever proportion. 42 MPs (6.6%) are from ethnic minorities, which is also the highest ever proportion, but some way short of the 14% share of the UK population. 25% of MPs went to independent schools, compared to 7% of the UK population.

## UK GENERAL ELECTION RESULT 2015

UK vote share after 650 of 650 seats



UK vote share change since 2010 after 650 of 650 seats



## Class Questions

1. Consider Theresa May as the UK Prime Minister. To what extent does she hold legitimate power and/or authority?
2. Would Aristotle and Rousseau perceive her position as legitimate?
3. Why would some people criticise the hung parliament that emerged post 2017 General Election as being illegitimate?
4. Imagine an absolute monarchy, in which there are no elections. The monarch makes no attempt to gain the consent of the people and never asks them their opinion. However, there is no opposition to him.
5. Would Weber view the monarch as legitimate? Why or why not?
6. What would the monarch have to do, in order for Aristotle or Rousseau to view him or her as legitimate?
7. "Without legitimacy, a government can have power, but it cannot have authority". Write an extended response (not an essay) to this statement. Ensure that you include ideas from relevant political theorists and examples to support your ideas.

## Case studies of the relationship between power, authority and legitimacy

### **Yemen's President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi**



Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi has been the President of Yemen since 27 February 2012, and was Vice President from 1994 to 2012.

Between 4 June and 23 September 2011, Hadi was the acting President of Yemen while Ali Abdullah Saleh was undergoing medical treatment in Saudi Arabia following an attack on the

presidential palace during the 2011 Yemeni uprising. On 23 November, he became Acting President again, after Saleh moved into a non-active role pending the presidential election "in return for immunity from prosecution."

Hadi was "expected to form a national unity government and also call for early presidential elections within 90 days" while Saleh continued to serve as President in name only. Mansour Hadi was chosen as a president for a two-year transitional period on February 21, 2012, in an election in which he was the only candidate. His mandate was extended for another year in January 2014. However, he remained in power after the expiration of his mandate.

On 22 January 2015, he was forced to resign by the Houthis. Subsequently, the Houthis and the supporters of Saleh seized the presidential palace and placed Hadi under house arrest. A month later, he escaped to his hometown of Aden, rescinded his resignation, and denounced the Houthi takeover as an unconstitutional coup d'état. The Houthis named a Revolutionary Committee to assume the powers of the presidency, as well as the General People's Congress, Hadi's own political party.

On 25 March 2015, after the beginning of the Yemeni Civil War, Hadi fled Yemen in a boat as Houthi forces advanced on Aden. He arrived in Riyadh the next day, as Saudi Arabia began a bombing campaign in support of his government.

He returned to Aden in September 2015, as Saudi-backed government forces recaptured the city. Upon his arrival in Aden, he declared himself the country's "legitimate" leader, asserting that all Houthi decrees issued since September were "null" and "illegitimate."

In late 2017 he was reportedly residing in Riyadh under house arrest.

The secretary-general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Abdelatif al-Zayani, said in March that GCC member states supported the legitimacy of Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

Following a meeting with Hadi in the southern city of Aden, al-Zayani said Gulf States also backed the political process led by the Yemeni president. "Yemen's security is inseparable from the security of the Gulf," al-Zayani said. He said the Gulf States were relieved by Hadi's successful departure from capital Sanaa, where he had been placed under house arrest by the Shiite Houthi militia.

The Houthis have long been known to receive direct support from Iran, but the UN also accused the Houthis of being strongly supported by Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. A damning report, compiled by four experts, outlined how Saleh backed the Houthis as they pushed toward the capital in order to "seek revenge" against those who helped topple him in 2011, sources told the UN investigators.



Saleh stepped down at the end of 2011 following months of often deadly protests against his 33-year rule that broke out on the back of the Arab Spring.

The former strongman was given immunity in exchange for stepping down, but many have accused him and his son of continuing to pull strings in Yemen and wielding influence in the army.

According to the UN, Saleh is estimated to have personal assets worth \$32-60bn, accumulated over decades spent defrauding the impoverished country's coffers. If the top figure proves true, Saleh would be regarded as the world's fifth richest man in the Forbes Magazine rich list, above Oracle CEO and founder Larry Ellison who has an estimated worth of \$54.1bn and just below Spanish retail mogul and Zara founder Amancio Ortega, who has an estimated worth of \$67bn.

## Kim Jong-un, Leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea



Kim also serves as Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army.

Kim is the second child of Kim Jong-il (1941–2011) and Ko Yong-hui. The grandson of Kim Il-sung, the first leader of North Korea from 1948 to 1994, he is the first North Korean leader to have been born after the country's founding.

From late 2010, Kim Jong-un was viewed as heir apparent to the leadership of the DPRK, and following the elder Kim's death, he was announced as the "Great Successor" by North Korean state television. Kim was promoted to

the rank of Marshal of North Korea in the Korean People's Army on 18 July 2012, consolidating his position as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and is often referred to as Marshal Kim Jong-un or "the Marshal" by state media. Kim obtained two degrees, one in physics at Kim Il-sung University, and another as an Army officer at the Kim Il-sung Military University.

Forbes magazine ranked Kim as the 46th most powerful person in the world in 2013 and the third highest amongst Koreans after Ban Ki-moon and Lee Kun-hee. [16] On 12 December 2013, North Korean news outlets reported that Kim Jong-un had ordered the execution of his uncle Jang Song-thaek due to "treachery".

On 9 March 2014, Kim was elected unopposed to the Supreme People's Assembly. He is widely believed to have ordered the assassination of his half-brother, Kim Jong-nam, in Malaysia in February 2017.

Elections in North Korea are held every four-to-five years for the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), the country's national legislature, and every four years for Local People's Assemblies.

All seats are won by the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland. The Workers' Party of Korea dominates the Front and holds 87.5% of the seats, with 7.4% for the Korean Social Democratic Party, 3.2% for the Chondoist Chongu Party, and 1.9% for independent deputies. According to official reports, turnout is near 100%, and approval of the Democratic Front's candidates is unanimous or nearly so.

Only one candidate appears on the ballot. Elections are ostensibly conducted by secret ballot, and a voter may cross off the candidate's name to vote against him/her, but must do so by crossing out the name without secrecy. Voting is mandatory.

The elections have been variously described as show elections or a political census. Seats are uncompetitive as all candidates are chosen by the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland. Because of the near-100% turnout, elections double as unofficial censuses. It has been reported that officials watch the elections to identify and investigate no-shows.

A voter may cross off the candidate's name to vote against him or her, but in most polling stations the voter must do so with a red pen next to the ballot box in sight of electoral officials. At some polling stations there is a separate ballot box for 'no' votes. Many North Korean defectors claim such an act of defiance is too risky to attempt.

### **Donald Trump, President of the United States of America**



Unlike any other democratic voting system, the United States has set up a method of an indirect popular election through a unique political institution called the Electoral College. This system allows the people of America to not vote directly for their presidential candidate, rather they vote for the electors that are state officials or senior party figures- who are previously nominated by a political party. The

Electoral College is composed of 538 electors who are elected by the people nationally, who represent the state and then go on to cast their votes for the future president and vice president. According to the Constitution, the number of electors in each state is proportionate to the combined total of the state's senate and House Representatives, the number of electors can vary in each state from 3 to 55. The most populous state of California has 55 votes, whilst the least densely populated states such as Wyoming and Washington DC only get three each.

The candidate with the most electors will win all the state's Electoral College votes apart from Maine and Nebraska that use the proportional representation system instead, and finally the candidate who is able to obtain the most Electoral College votes and reach the 270 electoral votes is elected to office. Therefore, the American election is based on who wins in which states, rather than who wins the most votes across the states. However, in recent history during the presidential campaigns problems occur when a candidate loses Electoral College vote but wins the popular vote which has happened four times. Most notably the 2000 elections where Al Gore won the majority by 540,000 more votes, but Bush won the Electoral College of 271 to 266 making him the 43rd president. As a result, the Electoral College is the battleground for running presidential campaigns, before the two candidates rely on their 'safe' states such as California already announcing Clinton's victory a couple of hours before the polling stations were closed.

The Electoral College was created in Article II, Section 1 of the US Constitution in 1787 as a fair geographical electoral system, seeing that the size of America would create an unequal voting power to the more populous states. Therefore, a balance of power was established between the smaller states and the larger states, the constitution prevent any process of political manipulation by the larger states. Another reason for the creation of the Electoral College was to establish a stable and democratic nation; the founding fathers feared the direct popular votes from the people would create chaos to their proudly independent country, as there were fears over the possibility of a power-hungry tyrant who would abuse the rights of other citizens and the nation itself. Hence a compromise was made between the founding fathers and the people of America by voting for the officials who were more responsible to elect a qualified president. The idea that Electoral College in the 18th century would act as an extra barrier between the people and its president and would ensure the right candidate was selected through congress rather than an oppressor; we can safely say this protective political barrier is almost impractical. Many are amazed at how far Trump has come, especially from last night's events as many of the states had swapped sides. Trump's extreme views on typecasting and excluding many of the ethnic minority groups, in addition to his misogynist comments and actions had shocked the America, yet it is these scandalous comments that have earned him the seat in office. A newly elected president that is the antithesis of what America's founding fathers hoped for, a disunited America.



For the fifth time in U.S. history, and the second time this century, a presidential candidate won the White House while losing the popular vote.

In the Electoral College balloting, Donald Trump won 304 electoral votes (Trump won states (and one district in Maine) worth 306 electoral votes. However, two Texas electors did not cast their actual ballots for him, so history will record Trump as winning 304 electoral votes to Hillary Clinton's 227), with five Democratic and two Republican "faithless electors" voting for other people. That result was despite the fact that Clinton



received nearly 2.9 million more popular votes than Trump in November's election, according to Pew Research Center's tabulation of state election results. Our tally shows Clinton won 65.8 million votes (48.25%) to almost 63 million (46.15%) for Trump, with minor-party and independent candidates taking the rest.

This mismatch between the electoral and popular votes came about because Trump won several large states (such as Florida, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin) by very narrow margins, gaining all their electoral votes in the process, even as Clinton claimed other large states (such as California, Illinois and New York) by much wider margins. Trump's share of the popular vote, in fact, was the seventh-smallest winning percentage since 1828, when presidential campaigns began to resemble those of today.

In fact, the very nature of the way the U.S. picks its presidents tends to create a disconnect between the outcome in the Electoral College and the popular vote. The last time a popular-vote loser won the presidency in the Electoral College was, of course, in 2000, when George W. Bush edged out Al Gore 271-266 despite Gore winning some 537,000 more popular votes nationwide. The other electoral-popular vote mismatches came in 1876 and 1888; in all four instances the Democratic nominee ended up the loser. (In the 1824 election, which was contested between rival factions of the old Democratic-Republican Party, Andrew Jackson won a plurality of the popular and electoral vote, but because he was short of an Electoral College majority the election was thrown to the House of Representatives, which chose runner-up John Quincy Adams.)

Even in the vast majority of U.S. elections, in which the same candidate won both the popular and the electoral vote, the system usually makes the winner's victory margin in the former a lot wider than in the latter. In 2012, for example, Barack Obama won 51% of the nationwide popular vote but nearly 62% of the electoral votes, or 332 out of 538.

Looking back at all presidential elections since 1828, the winner's electoral vote share has, on average, been 1.36 times his popular vote share – what we'll call the electoral vote (EV) inflation factor. Trump's EV inflation factor, based on his winning 56.5% of the electoral votes (304 out of 538) is 1.22, similar to Obama's in 2012 (1.21).

A quick Electoral College refresher: The 538 electors allocated (mainly by population) among the 50 states and the District of Columbia actually choose the president and vice president, with a majority of electoral votes (i.e., 270) needed for an outright win. All but two states use a plurality winner-take-all system to pick their presidential electors – whoever receives the most votes in a state wins all of its electoral votes, even if he or she got less than a majority of the popular vote. (Maine and Nebraska award some of their electoral votes by congressional district rather than statewide; that enabled Trump to win one of Maine's four electoral votes, for the state's 2nd District, even though Clinton won the state overall.)

The biggest disparity between the winning electoral and popular votes, with an EV inflation factor of 1.96, came in 1912 in the four-way slugfest between Democrat Woodrow Wilson, Republican incumbent William Howard Taft, Progressive Theodore

Roosevelt (who had bolted from the Republicans) and Socialist Eugene V. Debs. Wilson won a whopping 82% of the electoral votes – 435 out of 531 – with less than 42% of the overall popular vote. (In fact, Wilson won popular vote majorities in only 11 of the 40 states he carried – all in what was then the solidly Democratic South.)

The next biggest gap was the 1980 “Reagan landslide.” In that three-way contest, Ronald Reagan took just under 51% of the popular vote, to Jimmy Carter’s 41% and independent John Anderson’s 6.6%. But Reagan soared past Carter in the Electoral College: 489 electoral votes (91% of the total) to 49, for an EV inflation factor of 1.79.

Many of the elections with the most-inflated electoral votes featured prominent third-party candidates, who served to hold down the winners’ popular vote share without being significant Electoral College players themselves. On the other hand, when the two major-party nominees ran fairly evenly and there were no notable independents or third parties, the Electoral College vote has tended to be much closer to the popular tally. In 2004, for instance, incumbent Bush won a second term with just under 51% of the popular vote and 53% of the electoral votes (286 out of 538).

A notable feature of the 2016 Electoral College vote was the record number of so-called “faithless electors” – electors who cast their ballots for someone other than the official nominee of the party they’re pledged to represent. The five Democratic electors who voted for people other than Clinton included three from Washington State who chose Colin Powell and another who chose Yankton Sioux tribal elder Faith Spotted Eagle, and one from Hawaii who voted for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, Clinton’s rival in the primaries. In addition, the two Texas electors who spurned Trump voted instead for Ohio Gov. John Kasich (whom Trump had defeated in the primaries) and former U.S. Rep. Ron Paul.

## Tasks

1. Consider the three examples above. Write a short synopsis of each in terms of their levels of authority, legitimacy and power. Do any of these leaders have power and authority without legitimacy? Do any have legitimacy without power and authority? Can legitimacy simply be given by the people? Are hereditary leaders legitimate? Can election systems result in the appointment of a powerful leader with authority but one that lacks legitimacy? Can authoritarian leaders still retain legitimacy if legitimacy is understood as the will of the people?
2. How could these leaders be categorise in Max Weber’s theory of power and authority?
3. How could these leaders be categorised in Steven Lukes’ theory of power?