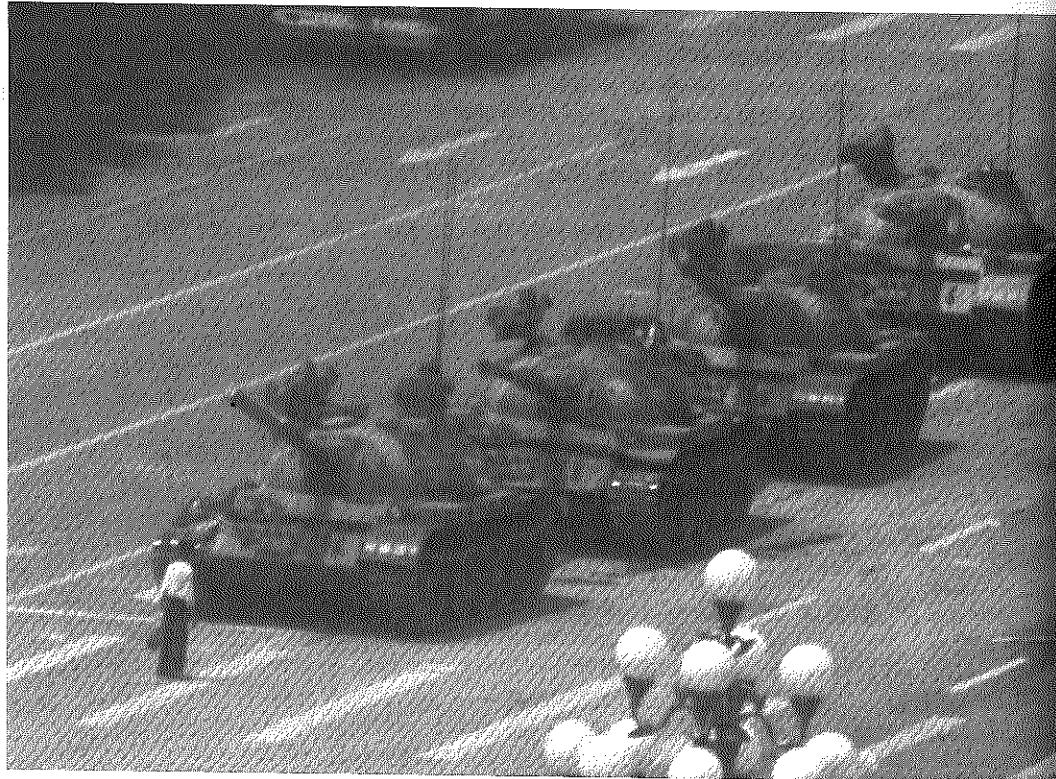


State and Society



INTRODUCTION

The crowd of farmers gathered behind the village church. To make sure everyone could come, the elders had called the meeting for a Sunday evening when people were not working, and to hide it from the hacienda foremen they had passed the word privately among themselves instead of ringing the church bell.

Almost all the men from the village were there as they waited for Jose Merino, president of the village council, to speak. He told his neighbors that the task of representing the village's interests had become too much for him and the other members of the village council. They were too old and infirm to defend the villagers' land titles and water rights, and with new laws and taxes being passed, the burden was only going to get worse. That was why he and the other four men of the village council had decided to resign. Merino then asked for nominations to replace him as council president.

Emiliano Zapata, a young farmer, was nominated and, to no one's surprise, was elected. He had been active in the village's defense, signing petitions, challenging local authorities, and making connections with opposition party leaders. As leader of his village, Zapata defended the land claims of small farmers against large landowners. This soon led to armed conflict with the government that defended the hacienda owners. Zapata's reputation rose quickly and he became the leader of the Liberation Army of the South, which joined forces with other peasant armies to depose the government in the 1910 Mexican Revolution.¹

Fast forward about 100 years and half a world away to Beijing, China, where—like Mexican peasants before them—Chinese students were meeting, sharing grievances, choosing leaders, and trying to avoid the authorities. Students believed the Chinese Communist Party had betrayed its ideals that were represented by the recently deceased Hu Yaobang, a party official who had supported political reforms but had been ousted by hardliners. By marching on Tiananmen Square, the seat of the government, to mourn the death of Hu Yaobang, the students would be validating his criticisms that the Party had deviated from its principles. As more students arrived at the Square, they drafted a list of demands for more democracy and less corruption to present to the government. When the government refused to accept the student's petition, they occupied the Square and called for a boycott of classes. The protest escalated in terms of its demands, becoming more radical, and in its scale, attracting more support from workers and students outside Beijing. Finally, the government called in the People's Liberation Army that fired indiscriminately at its own citizens, murdering them in a bid to restore control.

These incidents reveal what can happen when the linkages between the state and society fail. Unaddressed demands for land reform in Mexico or democracy in China can become tinder that ignites to challenge the state. A few peasants in a remote village or a few students paying homage to a deceased leader can become the basis for mass protest and revolution.

The previous chapter dissected the state to expose and examine its internal organs: the legislature, the core executive, the bureaucracy, the military, and the judiciary. This chapter examines the links connecting state and society. Sometimes the state and society stand in implacable opposition to one another. Perhaps no image captures this better than the one at the beginning of this chapter in which a lone, unarmed man stands defiantly in front of a row of tanks as they approach Tiananmen Square. The awesome, impersonal

power of the state represented by the tanks is confronted by society in the form of a single, determined individual. At other times, the state reflects society instead of being in opposition to it. Citizens' demands are transmitted to the state, which satisfies them. Demands for land reform or democracy from below are translated into policy from above.

The state and society are connected to each other through **political participation**. Political participation flows through political parties, interest groups, social movements, and patron-client relations that convey demands from below to the state. In some countries, these linkages can handle the volume of demands that flows through them. In other countries, such as Mexico in 1910 and China in 1989, the wires are overloaded and political participation overwhelms the ability of the state to process demands and make its authority stick. The state's sovereignty and legitimacy are challenged. Samuel P. Huntington argued that the "most important distinction between countries concerns not their form"—the kind of issues we touched on in the previous chapter—"but their degree of government."² The distinction between order and anarchy, Huntington offers, may be more fundamental than that between democracy and dictatorship.³

Some countries have "strong, adaptable, coherent political institutions," in which the probability is high that policies will be implemented as the government intended.⁴ In these countries, you can be fairly sure that products are safe because regulators have inspected them, water will come out of the tap when you turn it on, police will arrive when you dial 911, and that children will receive an education when you send them to school. In other countries, the opposite is the case. These countries suffer from a **crisis of governability**. The government rules but does not govern. The authority of the state dissolves outside the capital as warlords and local strongmen effectively govern outlying areas. Regulations are not enforced, basic public services are not delivered, and corrupt state officials use public money for their own enrichment. Some states can manage their environments, they can effectively govern society. In others, the society overwhelms the state. The state is defeated by it.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation occurs in both democratic and authoritarian political systems. The former encourages citizens to influence policy, while the latter promotes participation if only to register approval for what the government does. It can also take many different forms. Where citizens fear for their lives, they engage in political activity furtively and anonymously by using satire to make fun of the powers that be, try to undermine rulers' legitimacy through rumor and innuendo, and carry out hidden acts of sabotage.⁵ Political participation can also take the opposite form in which citizens engage in open, violent revolt against their rulers. Citizens can yell from a soap box or cast votes in a ballot box. Citizens use strategies they believe are appropriate given the resources they have and the opportunities that are available. Take the case, for example, of the environmental movement. Green Parties that compete for votes are common and relatively successful in Europe. Indeed, the Greens have been successful enough in elections in Europe to even participate in some governments. But Green parties have been unsuccessful in the United States, despite conditions being as propitious in terms of public support for environmentalism as in Europe.

At the same time Green parties are weaker in the United States, American environmental interest groups are more plentiful and powerful than they are in Europe. There are more than 10,000 environmentally oriented organizations registered as tax-exempt organizations in the United States, and they employ more staff and have bigger budgets than their European counterparts. The difference has to do with the opportunity structure for political participation in the two regions. In the United States, the decentralized, open structure of Congress is congenial to interest group activity. Interest groups can target their influence on congressional committees that have jurisdiction over their issues. At the same time, elections are not nearly as inviting. Third parties, such as the Greens, have a hard time competing in the United States due to winner-takes-all electoral rules, obstacles to getting on the ballot, and a lack of media coverage given to minor parties. The **opportunity structure** is quite different in many European countries, leading environmentalists to mobilize electorally as opposed to doing so through interest groups. Many European countries have proportional representation electoral systems in which small parties, such as the Greens, are awarded seats in the legislature based on the percentage of the vote they receive. This permits small parties to come away with some legislative influence so their voters do not feel they are wasting their vote as they would in the United States, where losing parties get nothing. In addition, parliamentary systems of government that exist throughout Europe deprive their legislatures of having the kind of influence on policy that Congress enjoys. Consequently, environmentalist interest groups in Europe tend to be smaller and weaker than those in the United States. Groups engage in different forms of political participation, depending on the opportunities for influence that different political structures create.

Of course, groups engage in different forms of political participation simultaneously, not one mode of participation at the expense or exclusion of another. While environmentalists in Europe and the United States may not engage in interest group and electoral activity in equal proportion, they are both part of the movement's repertoire as they supplement and support each other. It is also the case that one form of participation may pave the way to another. Recent elections in Serbia (2000), the Ukraine (2004), and Iran (2009) became the trigger for mass protests in which the initial mobilization for an opposition candidate later became the basis for mobilization against the state itself. One form of political participation, voting, morphed into another, street demonstrations. Groups can engage in different forms of political participation simultaneously, one form of political participation can change seamlessly into another, or groups can engage in different types of political participation sequentially. This, for example, was the case with the black civil rights movement in the United States. It shifted its strategy from protest to politics, from marches and demonstrations to voter mobilization and registration as the rewards of the former declined and opportunities for the latter increased. One can also see the same sequence occurring in terms of the history of the environmental movement. In Germany, the Green Party

was the culmination of a process in which antinuclear peace activists shifted their focus from demonstrations to elections.

Like water trying to escape through the weakest part of a dam, political actors are always looking for the weakest point in the wall of power. They may engage in different forms of political participation simultaneously or move sequentially from one to another, depending on the resources political actors have and their opportunities to deploy them.

The early research on political participation found that voting was the most popular form of activism and that only a minority engaged in more demanding forms of participation beyond this, such as party work, and even fewer engaged in protests. People with more resources—more education, money, self-confidence, civic skills, and social contacts—were more likely to participate. Political activity was skewed to those who were most advantaged.⁶ But these results drawn from individual level surveys that showed the impact of social inequality on participation ignored the impact of institutions, the rules of the game, on levels of political activism. A later generation of political scientists found that electoral rules, such as proportional representation systems, compulsory voting, and whether elections occurred during workdays, also affect turnout and why voting is skewed to the affluent and educated in some countries more than on others.⁷ They also found that traditional forms of political participation in democracies, such as turnout in elections, was declining, but new forms of civic and political action, such as petitioning, demonstrating, or participating in consumer boycotts (or becoming vegan in protest to the cruel slaughter of animals for meat), were taking their place.⁸ New forms of political expression are expanding political participation beyond more conventional forms.

Some political scientists found virtue in the limits of political participation, that so few engaged in it beyond the simple and infrequent act of voting. It was sufficient for democracy that citizens could choose among candidates in free and fair elections. It was not necessary that they participate in political activity beyond that. Others believed that activism had virtues in itself, promoting social tolerance, interpersonal trust, political knowledge, and more responsive government. But few considered the inextricable link between political participation and people's capabilities, that improving people's capabilities only occurs through political activity. As Peter Evans notes, "my ability to choose the life I have reason to value often hangs on the possibility of my acting together with others who have reason to value similar things."⁹ People cannot create the institutional structures they need on their own, by themselves, to promote their capabilities. They can only realize these goals through politics, which requires them to act collectively with others if they are to succeed. This is especially true for the underprivileged who have few personal resources to develop their capabilities by themselves. They need to ally with others in political activity in order to create institutions that improve their lives. Individual capabilities depend on collective action, which occurs through parties, interest groups, social

movements, and patron-client relations to achieve them. We review these forms of collective action below.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The Founders of the American Republic viewed **political parties** with contempt and believed they were a threat to liberty. Yet, even as the Founders condemned parties in theory, they helped create them in practice. Thomas Jefferson, who founded the Republican Party (the forerunner of today's Democratic Party), and Alexander Hamilton who led the Federalist Party, both viewed political parties as "sores on the body politic." Two hundred years later, in 1986, Uganda tried to do what the Founders could not. The National Resistance Movement took power and tried to establish a "no-party democracy." While political parties were permitted, party activity on behalf of candidates running for office was banned. But the equivalent of party activity emerged in response to the very effort to limit it, as those who opposed the ban on party activity ran against those who supported it.¹⁰

Political parties emerge even where they are ridiculed because people have diverse interests and values and find parties useful in expressing them to the state. Citizens turn to political parties to educate and mobilize voters, advocate policies that link voters to candidates, and connect elected officials from the same party to each other. But what distinguishes political parties most from other forms of political participation is that they recruit and nominate candidates for public office. Whereas interest groups seek to influence the state from the outside, political parties seek to influence it from the inside by offering candidates to form the government.

Political parties have often been condemned as baleful influences that threaten the unity and integrity of the political order. They "*are parts against the whole*," the political theorist Nancy L. Rosenblum writes, "*not parts of the whole*."¹¹ Other critics have attacked parties for being corrupt and corrupting, for pandering to special interests, or serving the selfish, predatory needs of office-seekers. But those who condemn parties for being divisive have a naïve view of politics. The unified political community that parties allegedly disrupt does not exist anywhere because people have diverse interests and values. Those diverse interests could not be denied within the new American state in 1787 any more than they could be ignored two hundred years later within Uganda's "no-party democracy." And while parties may have vices, they also contribute to the political community by structuring conflict and organizing government. They play a creative role, Nancy L. Rosenblum suggests, that often goes unacknowledged in the way parties "stage the battle" by formulating issues and giving them political relevance. They take the raw material of interests and grievances that exist in society and create the practical art of governing, by offering voters a choice of policies and candidates, from it.¹²

Political parties emerged with democracy and the extension of voting rights in the nineteenth century. In some instances, they arose as extensions of

factional disputes in the legislature. Legislators appealed to the people, organizing supporters among the broader public, to settle policy conflicts among themselves. Party in government gave birth to party in the electorate. This was the case in the United States where opposing congressional factions, what became the Federalists and the Republicans, took their dispute outside the halls of Congress and appealed to the public for support. In other instances, the opposite occurred. Groups outside the legislature formed political parties so as to have more influence within it. An example of this occurred in Britain where the trade unions, frustrated with their lack of political representation in Parliament, gave birth to the Labour Party in order to increase their political influence. This was also the case in many developing countries where political parties formed to express the interests of particular castes, religious groups, and tribes.¹³ For example, the Zulu tribe in South Africa found representation through the Inkatha Freedom Party, and the Bahujan Samaj Party emerged as the expression of lower-caste voters in northern India.

Parties play significant roles in democracies, competing to win elections and form governments. A crude sense of what the public wants gets transmitted up to government through party competition in elections. But political parties are also common in authoritarian systems in the absence of elections. Here they are used not to transmit demands from below up to government, but to reverse the flow of information and convey government policies down to the people. Two political scientists suggested that parties in authoritarian regimes are used both as “an instrument of political recruitment as well as a device for management of the public.”¹⁴ The party facilitates mass mobilization in support of the government in order to assert its legitimacy, and to recruit and socialize people to staff it.

Beyond one-party authoritarian regimes, parties exist within party systems that entail enduring, stable forms of party competition. **Party systems** are distinguished by the number of parties they include. For example, people often refer to the American two-party system because electoral competition often takes the regular, patterned form of Democrats competing against Republicans. But the American two-party system is actually quite rare. Multi-party systems are much more common, where the effective number of parties that compete for votes and win legislative seats is greater than two. In Israel, for example, there were twelve parties that won enough votes in the 2009 elections to be represented in the Knesset, its legislature. Party systems are also distinguished by their ideological breadth. Some party systems are highly polarized because of the presence of extreme right and left wing parties that are absent from other party systems.¹⁵ And finally, party systems differ in their degree of institutionalization, the degree to which they function as a system at all. This, for example, is a dilemma faced in many new democracies in Eastern Europe and Africa, where parties form and disappear quickly, party competition is highly unstable, and party organizations are weak, with few members or resilient local chapters.¹⁶ Some party systems are characterized by strong parties that enjoy high memberships, loyal voters from one election to the

next, and party discipline among their elected officials, while other party systems give rise to weak parties where there is volatility among voters from one election to the next, party membership is low, and there is little unity or party-line voting among legislators.

IN BRIEF

Strong and Weak Political Parties

Characteristics	Weak Parties	Strong Parties
Membership	low	high
Party identification among voters	low	high
Electoral volatility	high	low
Party unity in the legislature	low	high

Party systems reflect deep-rooted social divisions that are embedded in the history of a country. These cleavages give rise to group identities that find expression in political parties. Consequently, party competition assumes the characteristics of a system, with durable, recurrent patterns. According to two sociologists, Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, the party systems that emerged in Western democracies were the geological remains of violent economic and political conflicts from their pasts, specifically, the rise of industrial capitalism and the nation-state. The emergence of industrial capitalism gave birth to class and urban–rural conflicts, while the development of the nation-state gave rise to church–state and national–local conflicts. Just as ice, water, fire, and ice combined in unique ways to shape different regions of the earth, so did these four cleavages combine in distinctive ways to shape party competition in West European countries. The impact of these social divisions is still evident today in the form of socialist (class conflict), Christian democratic (church–state conflict), agrarian (rural–urban conflict), and regional parties (national–local conflict) in many European countries.

Party systems are also shaped by electoral laws. Different methods of counting votes, awarding seats in the legislature and choosing presidents, affect the shape of party systems. For example, the rules under which elections are held in the United States, where whoever-gets-the-most-votes wins, create a bias toward a two-party system. Under these rules, there are no rewards for losing. Consequently, voters do not want to waste their vote on parties that cannot win and strategically vote for the lesser of two evils among the two major parties that can. Under different electoral rules, such as proportional representation, where legislative seats are awarded to parties based upon the percentage of the vote they receive, multiparty systems flourish. Parties receiving less than a plurality still receive some representation in the legislature. Voters can now vote their conscience without the fear that they are throwing their vote away, as would be the case under winner-takes-all rules. Electoral rules shape

the nature of party competition by influencing the number of parties that compete and the ideological space between them.

But not all parties and party systems are created equal. Some contribute more to developing citizens' capabilities than others. The quality of the link between state and society through political parties depends on the presence of well-organized, disciplined parties that articulate clear programs and appeal to a broad coalition of voters. Such parties are able to maximize the greatest asset of the underprivileged: their power of numbers. In their absence, when party systems are poorly institutionalized and parties appear and disappear rapidly—which is the case in many new democracies—it is hard for citizens to know what parties stand for and, thus, what they are voting for. Parties built around personalities tend to appear and these party leaders are less likely to be constrained when they govern and to favor elites who have privileged access to them when they do. Programmatic commitments and organizational discipline that could limit wheeling and dealing by politicians and hold them accountable are absent.¹⁷

Parties built on **patronage** are as suspect as those that are weakly institutionalized and develop around personalities. Parties that are built around rewards in return for political loyalty divide the underprivileged into multiple, competing parties. The less fortunate form political ties with elites who offer them rewards instead of allying with each other. Where such parties exist, people with low capabilities have a difficult time making improvements in their lives because their power of numbers has been diluted. Developing their capabilities depends upon political participation that flows through institutionalized and programmatic political parties that can harness their power of numbers, and can appeal and unite a wide variety of voters around a common program.¹⁸ **Programmatic parties** that link citizens to the state contribute to people's capabilities by providing more public services that ordinary people depend on and by engaging in less corruption that common people cannot afford.¹⁹

THE GOOD SOCIETY IN DEPTH

Iraq—From Bullets to Ballots (and perhaps back again)

Following the American invasion, political participation in Iraq took the form of suicide bombings, civil strife, and ethnic cleansing. Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis used bullets not ballots to influence the government and settle differences with each other. Political participation escaped the institutional channels designed to contain and express it.

In March 2010, legislative elections were held in which Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis ran candidates and appealed for votes. Despite election-day violence that claimed 38 lives, 62 percent of eligible Iraqis walked past cratered buildings and walls pockmarked with bullet holes in order to cast their ballot. Sunnis ignored provocations and turned out to vote instead of boycotting the election as they had

done previously. Secular and religious parties competed for the vote of the dominant Shiite majority, and Kurds participated even though the election might cost them influence they enjoyed under the old government.

But Iraq's fragile institutions imperiled the election's success. A slow tallying of votes brought charges of vote tampering, tainting any government that emerges with suspicions that the election was stolen. When the election returns finally began to come in, they reflected the fragmentation of Iraq too well, yielding indecisive results. Sunni, Shiite, Kurdish, secular, and religious parties dithered in negotiating with each other to form a government, undermining confidence that elections could settle differences.

It is unclear whether Iraq's fledgling institutions will be up to the task of earning the trust of Iraqis as they exchange bullets for ballots. The social conflicts in Iraq may be too powerful for electoral forms of political participation to contain. If the institutional capacity is not sufficient to channel demands arising from electoral participation into effective government, then Iraqis may return to settling their differences with bullets instead of ballots again.

For Further Discussion

1. In what ways do the Iraqi elections support and undercut one of President George W. Bush's reasons to invade Iraq, that it would bring democracy to the country?
2. While the capability approach argues people are better off with civil and political rights, is it possible that democracy may be too much of a good thing in some places? Can democracy reflect social conflicts too well, leading participants to resort to violence in order to settle issues they could not resolve through elections?

INTEREST GROUPS

Political participation can also take the form of interest group activity in which people with common interests organize for the purpose of influencing policy makers. **Interest groups** engage in many of the same activities as political parties: raising money, mobilizing voters, and campaigning for candidates in order to influence policy. But unlike political parties, interest groups do not nominate candidates to run for office.

It may appear natural and easy for people with common interests to organize in pursuit of their shared goals. But interest group formation is not so simple and straightforward. Someone has to invest time, provide leadership, and commit resources to make it happen. Such skills and resources may not exist and are certainly not evenly distributed among groups. For this reason, organizations of poor people, who lack time, money, and leadership skills, are very rare, while those of higher status groups who have these resources are more common. In addition, interest group formation faces the **free rider problem**. It is rational for people to try and gain the benefits that interest groups create without paying the costs of joining or participating in them. For example, it is rational to not contribute to the Sierra Club and enjoy the benefits of clean air

and water it helps promote while letting others pay dues and attend its meetings. But if everyone acted rationally in this way, free riding on the activity of others, no interest groups would form. The Sierra Club would not exist.

But the Sierra Club and interest groups like it do exist because they offer a variety of incentives that entice people to join them. Some groups offer material incentives, some tangible rewards for becoming a member, such as discounts on insurance or purchases. Other groups avoid the free rider problem by offering people an opportunity to feel fellowship in a common enterprise. They derive emotional satisfaction from joining with others in an organization that seeks to realize their shared values.²⁰

To some extent, the challenges of interest group formation and mobilization have been reduced by technological innovations such as the internet. According to the political scientist Mark S. Bonchek, "electronic forms of communication reduce communication, coordination and information costs, facilitating group formation, group efficiency, membership recruitment and retention."²¹ Organizers can recruit members, appeal for contributions, inform supporters, and coordinate their activity through a Web site, which is very inexpensive to create and maintain. The expense of a bureaucracy to carry out basic functions of recruitment and coordination can now be avoided because these tasks can be done cheaper and more quickly through computer-mediated communication. The internet permits interest groups to travel light because it reduces start-up costs.

The internet has not only facilitated interest group formation but also given impetus to professional advocacy organizations, such as the Children's Defense Fund in the United States. These interest groups, in contrast to older ones, dispense with dues paying members and local chapters and rely on foundations, direct mail, or internet fund-raising appeals for money. They have a head, but no body. Previously, members engaged in politics by participating in the life of the organization, developing civic values and leadership skills in the process. But these professional advocacy organizations do not need to involve their supporters in the life of the organization. They are creatures of their staff who simply appeal to the like-minded to support financially their efforts.²²

Some countries have a plethora of interest groups. In the United States, special interests proliferate. In other countries, interest groups are not as plentiful, even when one controls for population. The interest group universe is larger in some countries than in others because their state structures are more conducive to pressure group influence. For example, the divided, decentralized political institutions of the United States create many access points where groups can influence policy: at the state level, in the Senate, the House of Representatives, and in the courts. The open, diffused, fractured structure of policy making in the United States invites groups with a stake in policy to lobby and exert influence. The more power is dispersed within the state, the more opportunities for special interests to apply pressure on it. In countries such as Sweden, where the state is unitary and policy making is centralized, there are not as many access points for interest groups to affect policy and, consequently, the incentive to form them is not as great.

Just as different types of party systems exist, so, too, are there different interest group systems. Groups in different countries that represent similar interests operate very differently depending on the type of interest group system in which they are embedded. For example, even though the AFL-CIO in the United States and the LO in Sweden represent the interests of labor unions in their respective countries, they are organized and act differently because they are embedded in different interest group systems with distinctive characteristics.

Some countries have what is called a **pluralist interest group system**. Such systems are characterized by large numbers of interest groups that compete with each other for members and influence. Pluralist interest group systems have the following characteristics. First, groups have to compete for members in order to survive and expand. They all want to increase their market share and recruit members who can provide them with the money, staff, resources, and significance they need to be influential. This is especially important because pluralist interest groups enjoy no special relationship with the government. They do not participate in policy making but have to exert influence from the outside through lobbying policy makers. Second, pluralist interest groups tend to capture a smaller share of their potential market because some people choose not to join. They are less encompassing. Finally, pluralist interest groups tend to be decentralized. They lack the authority to sanction their members and tell them what to do. For example, the AFL-CIO cannot require its affiliated unions, such as the United Auto Workers or the Machinists union, to support the same bills and candidates it has endorsed. The AFL-CIO lacks sanctions short of expulsion to prevent affiliated unions from freelancing and ignoring its decisions.

At the other end of the spectrum are corporatist systems of interest group representation in which there are fewer but larger interest groups. **Corporatist interest groups** are more encompassing. They recruit a higher percentage of those who are eligible to join because membership is often compulsory, not optional. They also enjoy a monopoly over their market, reducing competition for members. Finally, they are more hierarchically organized with the authority to sanction their member's behavior and they are often invited to participate in policy making by the state as insiders, not outsiders, as occurs with their pluralist counterparts. They are invited to negotiate directly with the government in return for complying with any agreement that is reached. In Table 3.1, countries that received high scores, such as Austria and Norway, have corporatist interest group systems, while countries with low scores, such as Canada and the United States, have pluralist interest group systems.

Corporatist and pluralist interest groups behave differently with consequences for people's capabilities. The pluralist interest group market is crowded with competing groups, which undermines their willingness to cooperate with each other. Internally, a lack of centralized control impedes efforts to operate efficiently. Both sap their collective strength. Corporatist interest groups, on the other hand, don't have to outbid other groups to attract members. They are not beset by organizational fragmentation nor do they suffer from as much organizational inefficiency due to a lack of centralized

TABLE 3.1

Interest Group Systems

Corporatism	Scores	Corporatism	Scores
Austria	5.000	Ireland	2.000
Norway	4.864	New Zealand	1.955
Sweden	4.674	Australia	1.680
Netherlands	4.000	France	1.674
Denmark	3.545	United Kingdom	1.652
Germany (West)	3.543	Portugal	1.500
Switzerland	3.375	Italy	1.477
Finland	3.295	Spain	1.250
Japan	2.912	Canada	1.150
Belgium	2.841	United States	1.150

Source: See Alan Siaroff, "Corporatism in 24 Industrial Democracies: Meaning and Measurement," *European Journal of Political Research* Vol. 36 (1999), p. 198.

authority. Hierarchy within corporatist interest groups is able to resolve problems of internal coordination that plague their pluralist counterparts. Finally, their encompassing memberships require them to synthesize the diverse interests of their members and articulate only the most general interest among them. This broadens the appeal of these groups. All of these qualities permit corporatist interest groups to unify and appeal to broader interests as well as use their limited resources more efficiently. For citizens who want to develop their capabilities and have to depend on their power of numbers to be politically effective, these are no small advantages. Fewer and bigger really is better.

IN BRIEF

Pluralist and Corporatist Interest Group

Characteristics	Pluralist	Corporatist
Number of interest groups	many	few
Internal organization	decentralized	hierarchical
Coverage	low density	encompassing
Relationship to government	lobbying	participates in policy-making.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The mothers first came across each other by accident as they visited police stations, military prisons, and government offices. They were searching for their sons, daughters, and husbands who had been kidnapped as suspected

subversives by the Argentine military after it seized power in 1975. In their desperation, mothers converged on the Plaza de Mayo in front of the presidential palace in Buenos Aires, the nation's capital, to demand answers. Every Thursday afternoon they would march around the plaza wearing white headscarves embroidered with the names of their "disappeared" family members. Week after week in hope and fear, month after month in sunshine and rain, and year after year in sickness and in health, they would appear demanding to know what happened to their abducted children and loved ones. Their witness helped shatter the fear and silence surrounding the military's rule and paved the way to the restoration of democracy in Argentina.²³

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, as they became known, is an example of a **social movement**. Social movements engage in more unconventional and confrontational forms of political participation to influence policy makers than interest groups or political parties. This may include peaceful assemblies in front of the presidential palace as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo did, protest marches that were the stock-in-trade of the American civil rights movement, or blocking the entrance to abortion clinics that pro-life activists use. Social movements are not as formally organized or hierarchical, tend to be more ideological and contentious, and move participation up to a more active and demanding level than other forms of political participation. Consequently, social movements tend to attract people with intense feelings about an issue who are more committed and willing to assume the increased risks that social movement activism entails. While social movements are often identified with liberal and progressive goals, conservatives have also formed social movements to influence policy makers. The ideological commitment to participate in social movements is not the monopoly of any one tendency but can be found across the political spectrum.

Social movements, according to Charles Tilly, first emerged in the 1700s when people began to engage in sustained campaigns that used disruptive performances to make claims on authorities. Social movement activists pressured officials and appealed to the wider public by conveying the worthiness of their claims in petitions and signs. They demonstrated the unity and breadth of their support in public assemblies and rallies, and substantiated commitment to their ideals by their personal attendance and sacrifice. Social movements engage in these tactics in order to advance two types of claims. First, some social movements want to promote group acceptance; that is, those who are considered outsiders want the same rights and privileges as insiders. The civil rights and feminist movements are examples of this type of claim in which blacks wanted what whites had and women demanded the same rights as men. Social movements also make claims on authorities to promote group goals, to enact changes in policy. This is not a simple case of outsiders wanting in, but of insiders forming a social movement because the normal channels are blocked and unresponsive to their demands. The environmental and antiabortion movements are examples of these types of claims.²⁴

The emergence of social movements was facilitated by the spread of democracy. Democracy contributed to this distinctive and innovative form of

political participation by removing prohibitions against mass rallies and other repressive measures; providing convenient and accessible targets in the form of legislatures and representatives upon whom social movements could focus demands; magnifying the political importance and respect given to sheer numbers; and increasing the significance of claims to represent "the people."²⁵ Where democracy flourished, so did social movements. Where democracy was sparse, it was difficult for social movements to gain traction (the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo being an exception).

Many early social movements were formed by occupational groups around economic demands. Peasant, farmer, and labor movements proliferated. But as industrialism gave way to postindustrialism, new forms of domination became prominent alongside familiar forms of economic power. The landlord's domination of peasants, the merchant's power over farmers, and the employer's control over workers were now joined by male domination of women, straights of gays, whites of blacks, settlers of indigenous people, and man of nature. Cultural domination, not simply economic domination, became a new source of social conflict, as groups affirmed their way of life, behavior, and needs against traditional standards that devalued them. These social movements were as interested in legitimizing alternative lifestyles as they were in promoting their policy goals. Politics was personal in a way that was not true for participants in older, more traditional social movements. New social movements were also distinguished from their predecessors by their flatter and more decentralized structures. They were much more skeptical of bureaucracy, which they believed would compromise their ideals. When the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and its founding coordinator Jody Williams, the ICBL had to wait nearly a year to receive its share of the money because it had no bank account or address to which the Nobel Committee could send it. New social movements believe that by prefiguring their goals in the means they used to achieve them and avoiding bureaucracy they could avert being domesticated and co-opted like the economically based social movements that preceded them.

As the breadth of issues covered by social movements increased, so did they expand in scope from the national to the international level. The increase in the power and number of international organizations created their own world of social movements to shadow them. This is best exemplified by the formation of the World Social Forum, which brings together global activists every year to discuss issues and network among themselves, which is modeled on the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum, which brings together political and economic elites to discuss issues and network among themselves. Globalization from above in the form of multinational corporations and international organizations is increasingly replicated by globalization from below in the form of social movements that cross borders. For example, when protesters greeted World Trade Organization representatives in what became known as the "Battle of Seattle," in 1999, coordinated protests also occurred in Britain, Canada, Ireland, Portugal, France, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, Pakistan,

and India. Social movement organizations are networked together across borders to coordinate activity, such as those surrounding the Battle of Seattle. Such linkages are made easier by the internet, which facilitates planning and dialogue among groups in different countries.

PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS

The debt binding clients to patrons in the Philippines is greater than any exchange of money can expunge. In return for protection, which may take the form of work, access to land, school tuition for children, or money for a medical emergency, sugarcane cutters give plantation owners their loyalty, gratitude, and respect. As one owner explained, "[plantation owners] control the community, because everybody is dependent on you, and you can have a say in everything they do."²⁶ When owners need political support they simply call in their debt.

Patron-client relations, in which a patron offers or withholds some material benefit in return for political support, are another way in which citizens are linked to the state. Clients exchange their vote or participation in a rally in return for some tangible reward, such as money, jobs, or better land to rent. As a party official in a rural part of Spain explained: "The citizen who is worried about resolving problems with the doctor or the school, or the problem of an unjust accusation before the courts, or of delinquency in paying taxes to the state, etc. . . . has recourse to an intermediary . . . who can intercede on his behalf, but in exchange for pledging his very conscience and his vote."²⁷ Patron-client relationships occur among those in deeply unequal relationships in which the haves are in a position to bargain for political support from the have-nots.

The bargain struck between patrons and clients is reinforced by **norms of reciprocity**, that people should help those who do favors for them. When patrons intercede on behalf of their clients or offer small loans to them, clients become obligated to their patrons. These feelings of obligation are powerful and cannot easily be dismissed or avoided because of the regular face-to-face contact that patrons have with clients on a daily basis. Moreover, exchanges create a sense of ongoing dependence by clients on patrons to ensure they continue to provide gifts in the future. When a client was asked whether she was required to attend political rallies in return for free medicine she received from a party broker, she replied, "I know I have to go to her rally in order to fulfill my obligation to her, to show my gratitude. . . . [I]f I do not go to the rally, then, when I need something, she won't give it to me."²⁸ Of course, clients can always cheat and not go to the rally. But patron-client relations are embedded in local social networks that provide feedback as to whether clients deliver on their end of the bargain. According to Susan C. Stokes, this turns the normal meaning of democratic accountability in which parties are held accountable by voters into its opposite in which voters are held responsible for their actions by parties.²⁹

Clientelism generates poverty, and poverty, in turn, generates clientelism. Clientelism flourishes when people are desperate for handouts. Their vote

and political support may not seem like much to exchange when people need food, a job, or medicine. The poor value the benefits that patrons can deliver today more than the promises of redistribution others might promise tomorrow. Living so close to subsistence and vulnerable to abuse from powerful officials, clients appreciate the safety net that patrons offer and consider themselves luckier than those without one. But clientelism also contributes to poverty. Political parties that depend on patron-client networks for support provide targeted relief to individuals at the expense of providing public goods that might have bigger payoffs for all. Clientelist parties tend to forego developmental projects that contribute to economic growth and enhance the quality of life for everyone in order to provide private goods to their supporters.

WEAK AND STRONG STATES

Linkages such as political parties, interest groups, social movements and patron-client relations, which connect citizens to the state, are important because they convey demands to the government. These wires carry the electrical current from the base of society to policy makers. But these linkages do not simply carry the current, they manage and transform it. The way in which they are structured—clientelistic or programmatic parties, pluralist or corporatist interest groups—affects which demands get through and which are discouraged, advantaging some groups at the expense of others.

Some countries are able to handle the electrical current that political parties and other linkage organizations convey, while others are overwhelmed by it. Their wires and circuits become overloaded, causing the machinery of state to fail. Such countries are called **weak states**. Weak states lack autonomy from groups in society. They can be captured by narrow interests, just as the Mexican state was captured by landlords before Zapata led the revolution to defeat it. They also lack the capacity to govern. They cannot translate their power into policy. This incapacity is not a small, innocent matter of inefficiency, such as when the postal service loses a package or pension checks are late, but can have lethal results. Drinking water that is supposed to be safe carries dysentery, and garbage that is supposed to be collected breeds deadly diseases. Millions of people in Africa die from AIDS not simply because anti-retroviral drugs are expensive, but because governments lack a public health infrastructure that could administer the complex protocols of AIDS prevention effectively.³⁰

Not only are weak states unable to implement policies, but many cannot even do the bare minimum of what defines a state, which is to maintain law and order. They exert little authority beyond the immediate vicinity of the capital city, leaving local strongmen or warlords to rule over the rest of the country. Afghanistan and Pakistan are examples of this, where the Taliban effectively rules over sections of these countries and their law and order replaces that of the government. In some countries, such as Somalia, the state has collapsed entirely. There is no state to enforce laws, leaving people at the mercy of local warlords.

Finally, weak states are characterized by corruption, the use of public office for private gain. Prime ministers pocket foreign aid that was intended for their citizens, police officers threaten people with arrest if they are not bribed, and teachers sell grades to students in return for cash. One tale of corruption concerns Chinese and African civil servants who knew each other from graduate school. The African visits his counterpart in China and marveled at his large house and the luxury cars in his driveway. He asked, "How did you manage this on a bureaucrat's salary?" The Chinese official responded, "Do you remember that highway you took to get here?" Then, tapping his chest, he said, "ten percent," meaning he pocketed ten percent of the cost of highway construction. Five years later when the Chinese official visited his friend in Africa, he marveled at his palatial home and the expensive cars in his driveway. He asked, "How did you manage this on a bureaucrat's salary?" The African official responded, "Do you remember that highway you took to get here?" The Chinese official was puzzled and replied, "What highway?" His friend responded, laughing and tapping his chest with satisfaction, "One hundred percent."

Strong states, on the other hand, display both capacity and autonomy. When we speak of capacity we are referring to the ability of states to implement policies effectively throughout their territory. They can process the electrical current coming in from political parties, interest groups, and other institutions that link society to the state and transform it into policy, which is then executed efficiently. They are able to defend their borders, maintain order within them, collect taxes, and execute policies with a minimum of slippage.

Strong states are not only characterized by capacity but they also display autonomy. Strong states are not captured by social interests but can make policy independent of them. Autonomy insulates the state from conflicts among social groups and permits the state to act in the public interest. Strong states that exhibit both capacity and autonomy are not necessarily authoritarian states. In fact, many strong states are democracies, such as Sweden and Germany, while many authoritarian states, such as Belarus and Laos, are weak. The government in these countries has a difficult time insulating itself from powerful social groups and implementing its policies.

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Why Do Some Political Institutions Work Better Than Others?

Problem

People's lives are better when political institutions deliver what they are supposed to: safe streets, clean water, and educated citizens. Yet some states perform better than others. In his book, *Making Democracy Work*, Robert Putnam asked why that might be so. He compared the effectiveness and responsiveness of fifteen new regional governments that Italy created in the 1970s to join five existing ones, each

Continued

of which essentially had the same legal, constitutional powers and responsibilities for public health and economic development. "On paper," writes Putnam, "these twenty institutions are virtually identical."³² Putnam likened the problem to a botany experiment in which genetically identical seeds—the new regional governments—were placed in different soil so as to compare how they developed; if their diverse settings made a difference in how the seeds grew.

Methods and Hypothesis

Putnam used qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the performance of regional governments. He conducted interviews with officials and community leaders, surveyed voters and, like an anthropologist, immersed himself in the various regions of Italy, "soaking and poking" around to gather information. But he also tested his intuitions and supplemented his evidence with quantitative data he collected from among the various regions in Italy. He hypothesized that the new regional institutions in Italy would be shaped by and reflect the social context in which they operated.

Operationalizing Concepts

Putnam developed indicators to assess institutional performance as a problem-solver and service provider: Good performance depended on:

1. how well institutions managed their own affairs, which was evaluated according to whether they met budget deadlines and the amount of government turnover;
2. how appropriate and extensive their legislative solutions were, which was measured by whether regional governments established day care centers that the national government subsidized, and how much of their agricultural funds they actually dispersed;
3. how responsive bureaucracies were, which Putnam tested by mailing letters to each regional government requesting information about a problem and evaluating the quality of their reply and if he received any at all.

Results

Putnam found those regional institutions that performed best were located in areas where there was a great deal of civic trust that was cultivated by a rich array of local voluntary organizations, such as sports clubs and unions. He found that good citizens and good government reinforced each other.

For Further Discussion

1. What circumstances contribute to a vibrant civic life that creates civic trust, which Putnam believes is so essential to good government? Why were some regions blessed with such fertile conditions while others were cursed with distrust and disengagement that was the source of poor government performance?
2. Can states create civic trust? Can states turn vicious circles of mutual suspicion among citizens into virtuous circles of mutual confidence?

Source: Robert D. Putnam with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

WEAK STATES, STRONG STATES, AND THE GOOD SOCIETY

Are stronger states better, in the sense of promoting people's capabilities? Or does the quality of life for citizens improve when states are weak? In order to distinguish strong from weak states, we turn to the Failed States Index developed by The Fund for Peace in conjunction with the journal *Foreign Policy*. The Failed States Index that appears as Table 3.1 in the Appendix used twelve indicators, including social factors such as the amount of internal violence, economic parameters such as stability, and political indicators such as the quality of its public services to assess state strength and weakness. States that performed the best on these indicators—what we would call the strongest—were labeled "sustainable." As Table 3.1 in the Appendix indicates, Canada and Australia were members of this select group. The index proceeds down to the next group, which included much of Western Europe and the United States, where state performance was good, or "moderate" as the Index referred to it. The next group of states, such as Mexico and India, earned a "warning" because there was cause for concern about the quality of these states. The Index issued an "alert" to the last and worst performing group of states, which included Somalia and Yemen, because it doubted their continuing viability, or because these states had collapsed entirely.

Physical Well-Being

A good society, we argued, is one that meets the physical needs of its citizens. People should be fed, sheltered, and healthy, and that the best way to measure this was to look at infant mortality rates. It is apparent from Figure 3.1 that state quality has a significant effect on infant mortality rates.³¹ As we move along the horizontal "x" axis of Figure 3.1, from the weakest to the strongest states, the average infant mortality rate improves. The average infant mortality rate for states on alert was 68.96 per 1,000 babies; for states that earned a warning it was 35.27; for states that were labeled moderate it was 7.55; and for sustainable states, the average infant mortality rate was just 4.23. According to these results, higher quality states—those considered in the top two categories—performed much better than those in the bottom two categories. But as stark as the differences may be between the top and bottom two categories, the differences within the top and bottom categories are also noteworthy, that is, between states rated "moderate" and "sustainable," and between states given a "warning" and those rated on "alert." Countries with states that were regarded as sustainable had average infant mortality rates that were almost twice as good as those whose states were considered moderate, and the same was true for the two lowest categories: countries with states that drew warnings had average infant mortality rates that were almost twice as good as those that were placed on alert. The quality of the state appears to matter when it comes to meeting people's physical needs. Strong states, which have the capacity to translate demands into effective policies and are not captured by social interests but enjoy some autonomy

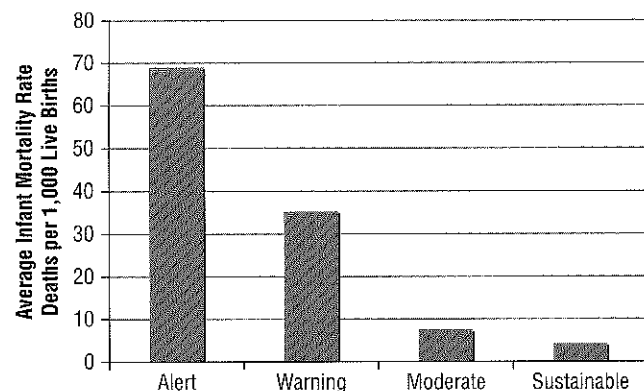


FIGURE 3.1
State Quality and Infant Mortality Rates

Failed State Index 2009

Data Source: The Fund for Peace, http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=391&Itemid=549

Country Comparison: Infant Mortality Rate Data Source: CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2091rank.html>

from them, are better able to meet the physical needs of their citizens than weak states.

Informed Decision Making

Good societies also equip their citizens with skills to make informed decisions regarding their lives. Citizens can read and write. When we look at literacy rates in Figure 3.2, we find again that the quality of the state matters. Most countries that scored well on the Failed States Index had high literacy rates, while those countries that were in danger of failing had lower ones. Both sustainable (99 percent) and moderate states (96 percent) on the Failed States Index had very high average literacy rates. But as the quality of the state declines below those rated as moderate, literacy rates drop precipitously. Countries that were issued a warning because their states were regarded as problematic had an average literacy rate of 83 percent, while countries that were placed on alert, the lowest rated group of states in terms of quality, had an average literacy rate of only 61 percent. Strong states better equip citizens with the skills to make informed decisions about their lives.

Safety

A good society is also one in which people are safe from violence. A disproportionate number of those countries listed as on alert for state weakness, such as Somalia, the Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka among others, have been wracked with civil conflict. Many of these countries have been in the headlines

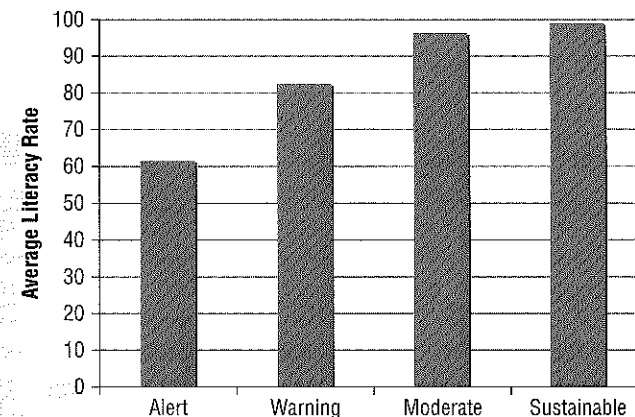


FIGURE 3.2
State Quality and Literacy Rates

Failed State Index 2009

Data Source: The Fund for Peace, http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=391&Itemid=549

Adult Literacy Rate (% aged 15 and above)

Data Source: Human Development Report 2009, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/89.htm>

for the number of casualties they have suffered as a result of the wars they have endured. Those countries rated as sustainable have experienced nothing comparable. Their citizens have been safe from political violence. Similarly, as Figure 3.3 reveals, states listed as on alert tended to average higher homicide rates, (14.32 per 100,000 citizens), than those states that earned a warning (12.53); states that were rated as moderate had still lower average homicide rates (3.58); and those countries considered sustainable had the lowest homicide rates of all, just 1.38 murders per 100,000 citizens. Again, the great divide appears to be between the top two categories on the Failed States Index and the bottom two categories. Clearly, countries with strong states are safer than those with weak states.

Democracy

Finally, as Figure 3.4 reveals, the quality of the state also seems to be correlated with the form of government, the extent to which countries have democratic or authoritarian political systems. Every state that was judged sustainable, the best score on the Failed States Index, also received a perfect 10 on the Polity IV Index, indicating they were the most democratic. As one moves down the Failed States Index, Polity IV scores fall, indicating less democracy and more authoritarianism. States judged moderate on the Failed States Index received an average Polity IV score of 6.68; states that received a warning on the state performance index received an average Polity IV score of 3.09;

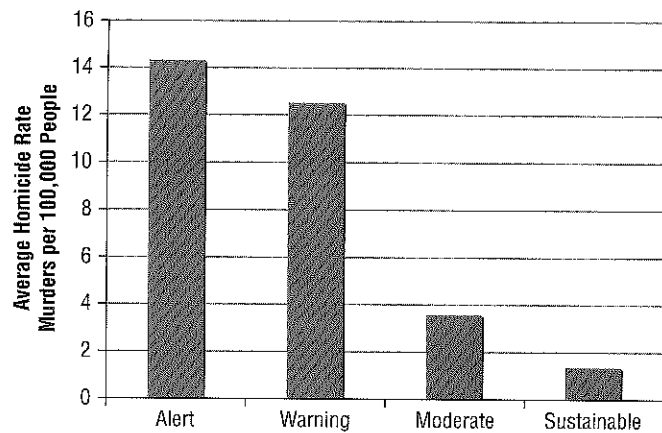


FIGURE 3.3
State Quality and Homicide Rates

Failed State Index 2009

Data Source: The Fund for Peace, http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=391&Itemid=549

Murder Rates around the World Data Source: Guardian.co.uk, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2009/oct/13/homicide-rates-country-murder-data>

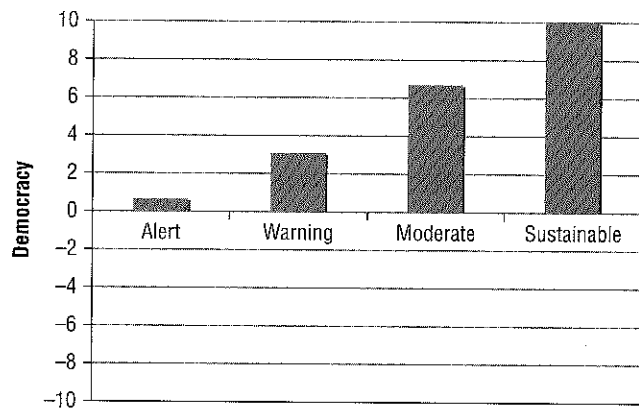


FIGURE 3.4
State Quality and Democracy

Data Source: The Fund for Peace,

http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=391&Itemid=549

Polity IV Country Reports, 2007

Data Source: Polity IV, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity06.htm>

and states that were placed on alert were the most authoritarian, with an average score of .93. Contrary to those who applauded the Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini for making the trains run on time, it appears that democracies have a better record in this respect than authoritarian states.

The alleged benefit of authoritarianism, that it is more efficient than democracy, is a myth.

CONCLUSION

States not only differ in their institutional design but in their effectiveness, their ability to actually govern. Some states are able to process demands and implement policies, while others have trouble making their rules stick. Strong states develop linkages to society that can manage the volume of demands that flow through them; in contrast, weak states are overwhelmed by political participation from below. Such linkages that connect society to the state include political parties, interest groups, social movements, and patron-client relations. Citizens engage in these different forms of political participation depending on the resources they have and their opportunities to deploy them. We then found that strong states are more conducive to developing citizens' capabilities than weak states. Infant mortality rates are lower, literacy rates are higher, people are safer, and political systems are more democratic in strong than weak states.

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FLASHCARDS

Learn the key terms in this chapter; you can test yourself by term or definition.



COMPARATIVE EXERCISES

Compare political ideas, behaviors, institutions, and policies worldwide.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Is more political participation by citizens always better? Can there be too much of a good thing when it comes to political participation?
2. Can democracy exist without political parties?
3. What are some of the differences distinguishing political parties, interest groups, social movements, and patron-client relations as forms of political participation? Under what circumstances do people use one as opposed to another form of participation?
4. How would you operationally define strong and weak states?
5. What can be done to improve state quality, to transform failed states into sustainable states?

KEY TERMS

Crisis of	Patronage 62	New Social
Governability 56	Interest groups 63	Movements 68
Political	Free rider	Patron-Client
Participation 56	problem 63	Relations 69
Opportunity	Pluralist interest group	Norms of
structures 57	systems 65	Reciprocity 69
Political Parties 59	Corporatist interest	Clientelism 69
Party Systems 60	groups 65	Weak States 70
Programmatic	Social Movements 67	Strong States 71
parties 62		

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Political Culture

