

CENTRALIZATION (ALSO D. CENTRALIZATION)

A. Centralization denotes a high concentration of power (measured by criteria of weight, scope and domain) by a few within an organized social group. Sub-categories of centralization would be of a geographical, functional or other kind. Decentralization is a low concentration of power. For special purposes, the term might be restricted by specifying the "degree of concentration" and by defining the respective "organized social group", denoting either geographical scope or power distribution among hierarchically superior or inferior loci.

Centralization is frequently used pejoratively, while decentralization usually carries a positive connotation. Other abstract terms are now used in the same area of meaning (e.g., control, integration, autonomy, hierarchy, discipline, coordination, etc.) which make it perfectly possible to treat at length of centralization and decentralization without even mentioning the terms.

B. Centralization came to be used frequently in the early nineteenth century, particularly in France, to denote a process of increasing governmental powers, especially over local political areas. The term was given wide currency by de Tocqueville who wrote:

Centralization is a word in general and daily use, without any precise meaning being attached to it. Nevertheless, there exist two distinct kinds of centralization, which it is necessary to discriminate with accuracy. Certain interests are common to all parts of a nation, such as the enactment of its general laws ... Other interests are peculiar to certain parts of the nation, such, for instance, as the business of the several townships ... When the power that directs the former or general interests is concentrated in one place or the same persons, it constitutes a centralized government. To concentrate in like manner in one place the direction of the latter or local interests, constitutes what may be termed a centralized administration ... It is not the administrative but the political effects of decentralization that I most admire in America" (A. de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (1st ed. 1835) tr. by H. Reeve, New York: Alfred, A. Knopf, 1945, pp. 86, 94).

C. Various forms of centralization (and decentralization)

may be distinguished:

- (1) E. Kelsen (General Theory of Law and State, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945, p. 304) declares, "The conception of a centralized legal order implies that all its norms are valid throughout the whole territory over which it extends".
- (2) A. Lepawsky (Administration, New York: Alfred, A. Knopf, 1949, p. 377) speaks of the "possibility of combining economic and social decentralization with a high degree of political centralization".
- (3) In a negative evaluation of trends of centralization, D.E. Lillienthal (T.V.A. - Democracy on the March, Middlesex, England: Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1944, p. 131) spoke of "over centralization [as] the tendency all over the world, in business as well as government". Similarly J.R. Pennock (Liberal Democracy, New York: Rinehart & Co. Inc., 1950, p. 178) points to a "steady and rapid movement towards centralization of government" both in England and the U.S.

(4) H. Lasswell and A. Kaplan (Power and Society, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950, p.225) treat centralization and decentralization in terms of "the territorial and/or functional distribution of power". For them "a unitary state is one in which the rule is centralized; a federal state, decentralized territorially; syndicalist, decentralized functionally ... The scope, weight, and domain of power are all three involved in centralization-decentralization".

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CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

(1) Class consciousness is used by writers in the Marxist tradition to denote the process whereby the members of a class (generally the "proletarian" class) become "aware" of themselves, idea of their collective identity and destiny; and the outcome of such a process. It is thus intimately connected with the idea of revolutionary class conflict (q.v.) and denotes the presumed will of the workers to recognize their common "enemy" - the capitalists -, their common "misery", and their common goal, triumph of the proletariat.

According to E.R. Popper, it shows how "the objective class situation (class interest as well as class struggle) gains consciousness in the minds of its members, or, to express the same thought in a language less dependent on Hegel, by which members of a class become conscious of their class situation" (E.R. Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies, 3rd rev. edn., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, Vol. II, p.115).

(2) Outside the Marxist context the term may be used in an operational sense to denote a given "high" degree of sharing of attitudes of isolation, solidarity, and collective purpose within a national sub-group, most of whose members also share a common skill, relation to the means of production, and style of life. In simpler (and less specific) language, one may say that class consciousness is a group's feeling that its social achievements are specially dependent upon its fortunes as a group. More specifically, again, one may say that class-consciousness exists when a "considerable" grouping in a society, possessing similar economic traits, achieves similar, high scores on tests of their perception of common traits, common needs, and common collective aims. In this sense it can be expressed in a constructed index. As such, it may then be usefully related and lend new meaning to

historical events, personality characteristics, indices of social mobility, the imminence of rapid social change (including political violence) and a host of other phenomena and indices.

Thus in Philadelphia G. Glantz, designating "class conscious" persons on a basis of a combination of "allegiance" and "orientation", attempted through questionnaire research to relate "class-consciousness" with "political cohesiveness" (G. Glantz, "Class Consciousness and Political Solidarity", American Sociological Review, April 1958, Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 373 et seq.)

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See also:

CLASS STRUGGLE
SOCIAL CLASS

PARTY

- A A definition embracing all phenomena that are regularly called party in this age is a difficult task unless it be reduced to its most general form, i.e. a party is a group framing general issues and putting forward candidates in elections.
- B (1) Factions, cliques, gangs, cabals, private armies, lobbies, pressure groups, special interests, clubs and caucuses are terms which, like party, denote voluntary associations to influence government. Party and faction were synonymous in Rome. In the early United States the terms were used interchangeably. Today they are rarely used to mean the same thing. Party has come to have a special and important connotation in the last century and a half. It refers to that paramount private association that is privileged to compete for control of a government. Government by legislature occasioned the emergence of modern parties. The word began to be used during the English Restoration period in something like its present sense. "On the whole, the development of parties seems bound up with that of democracy, that is to say with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives" (M. Duverger, Political Parties, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1951, p. xxiii). A strong monarchy, predicated on traditional principles, sees no purpose in parties. A rationalistic ethos justifies a competitive struggle of parties for control of the government. Burke was

was less the champion of traditionalism than the instrument of the dawning rationalistic, competitive theory of government when he produced his famous definition: "party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they ^{are} all agreed" (*The Works of Edmund Burke*, London: Oxford University Press, 1930, Vol. II, p. 82).

Burke's definition cannot be used in objective political discourse. Like so many other early definitions of key terms in politics, it begs the major questions it has to attack: whether parties are indeed devoted to principle, are united in order to promote anything, or have any relation to a national interest, whatever that may be. Burke himself could be most realistic, of course: "Party divisions, whether on the whole operating for good or evil, are things inseparable from free government." (E. Burke, Observations on ^{a Late} The Present State of the Nation, London: J. Dodsley, 1769, p. 1). Or, as Jefferson put it, "in every free and deliberating society, there must ... be opposite parties, and violent dissensions and discords; and one of these, for the most part, must prevail over the other for a longer or shorter time" (To J. Taylor, 1798, in *Memoirs, Correspondence and Private Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, London: Henry Colburn & Richard Bentley, 1829, Vol. III, p. 400). Yet Jefferson, like most writers, continued to assert the function of seeking the national interest in partial contradiction of reality and in lieu of other obviously important functions.

(2) Beginning with the studies of M. Ostrogorski

(Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties.

London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1902) a realistic and analytic approach to party study is manifest, and party definitions show the result. Weber wrote (Theory

of Social and Economic Organization, ^{orig. German ed.} trans. by A. ~~W.~~ R.

Henderson and T. Parsons, London: ~~New York~~ William Hodge & Co. Ltd.,

1947 1927, p. 373-4 that "the term 'party' will be employed to designate an associative type of social relationship, membership in which rests on formally free recruitment. The end to which its activity is devoted is to secure power within a corporate group for its leaders in order to attain ideal or material advantages for its active members. These advantages may consist in the realization of certain objective policies or the attainment of personal advantages or both.... By definition a party can exist only within a corporate group, in order to influence its policy or gain control of it."

(3) Some modern definitions stress the fact of the power drive of parties. Thus C.E. Merriam and H. Gosnell: "The party may be looked upon as a type of social group, primarily ^{it} concerned with social control as exercised through the government... The party system may be regarded as an institution, supplementary to the government, aiding the electorate in the selection of official personnel and in the determination of public policies, and in the larger task of operating or criticising the government" (American Party System, New York: The Macmillan Co., 3rd ed., ~~4th ed.~~, 1940 p. 420)

Also, C.J. Friedrich (Constitutional Government and Politics, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937, p. 297)

says: "A group of human beings, stably organized for the purpose of securing or maintaining the control of a corporate body...." Others focus on elections. Thus H.D. Lasswell and A. Kaplan say "a party (political) is a group formulating comprehensive issues and submitting candidates in elections" (Power and Society, New York: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 169). ^{B.} David Truman (The Governmental Process, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951, pp. 270-271)

writes similarly that "the political party has come to be thought of as the instrumentality through which choices are made among aspirants for office.....Whatever else it may be or may not be, the political party in the United States most commonly is a device for mobilizing votes...." The difference between the two types of definition is not large. Perhaps both forms may be used, depending upon circumstances. Thus rephrasing the broader (yet very specific) Weberian statement it may be said that "a political party is a voluntary society of propaganda and agitation, seeking to acquire power in order to procure chances for its active adherents to realize objective aims, personal advantages, or both;" and rephrasing the more contemporary and simpler definitions that "a political party is a group publicly organized to capture, through elections, the control of the government." However, it should be appreciated that definitions stressing

elections have difficulty in including totalitarian or "elite" parties such as the German National Socialist (Nazi) and Communist parties, whose methods, besides propaganda and agitation, and whose medium, besides elections, include physical coercion. Such parties reject the idea of remaining a "part" of politics and see violence as an adjunct to propaganda and agitation.

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See also **FACTION**
 PARTY PLATFORM
 PARTY RESPONSIBILITY