

WEEK THREE AND FOUR (3&4)

TOPIC: BASIC CONCEPT IN GOVERNMENT

POWER

It is the capacity to affect someone else's behaviour by the imposition and application of sanctions. These sanctions may be negative or positive thus, the political people may have the ability to control others by promising those who support the government with wealth and honour or may threaten to deny such rewards to those who oppose them. However, sanctions are used when there is no compliance.

FORMS OF POWER

1. **Political powers:** the elected president or prime minister of a state possess political power. It is a power derived from the people and for the people
2. **Economic power:** an individual in possession of economic resources produces such influential issues in a state. It can also command respect and can control emotions and actions.
3. **Military power:** the armed forces Army, Navy and air force controls the instrument of violence in a country. This instrument can be easily manipulated to overthrow a civilian government and defence of the state against aggression.
4. **Physical power:** it is the application of force to ensure obedience. The outcome of this application could bring discomfort or even cause a disaster in the end.

SOURCES OF POLITICAL POWER

1. **Constitution:** the constitution spells out how power should be acquired and exercised.
2. **Through elections:** power held by the people is transferred to a body called government.
3. **Through coercion:** power may be acquired through the use of force. Countries in Africa, Latin America have experienced severally through coups ie military interventions in government.
4. **Through charisma:** power can be acquired and reacquired through intelligence or a person's charisma
5. **Through economic resources:** this may include money or property. An individual can acquire political power and respect through the possession of economic resources.
6. **Through the position of authority:** authority and power are complementary. So positions of authority confer power on the person exercising it.
7. **Through inheritance:** this is based on heredity. It most times is found in royal families. Power is acquired when the kingship or queenship is vacant.

AUTHORITY

This refers to the formal or legal rights to work and enforce laws and policies which citizens are expected to obey. It contests the acceptance of the right to rule as conferred by the people irrespective of the sanctions. The rulers, for example, may have the rights of legislation ie to make laws. In democratic settings, the source of power and authority is still the will of the people.

KINDS OF AUTHORITY

1. **Institutional authority:** This is a group of individual who legitimately occupy public offices with the capacity to determine public and direct the execution of goals and policies. For example the school principal, the authority of heads of state and government/native authority and official authority.
2. **Functional authorities:** This is the power which is accurate to a group of people or an individual as a result of the position he holds in an organization. It is the power which is lawful and conforms with

the accepted norms. It is a legitimate right to direct or command respect from humans and to gain other resources.

TYPES OF AUTHORITY

It must quickly be noted that while types of authority specify the differences there can be of authority they are not entirely different from the sources/origin. As the differences stem from the origin.

1. **Traditional authority:** this is found in simple traditional societies where chiefs or Council of Elders exercise authority based on customs and traditions of the people.
2. **Charismatic authority:** This is an authority derived from the belief in the exceptional ability of a leader which inspires allegiance among the followers.
3. **Legal/rational authority:** This is derived from the constitution, a modern democratic state exercise through the organs of government.
4. **Delegated authority:** this is given to someone to exercise functions and is responsible for specific areas. It is best described as a shared responsibility or division of powers.
5. **Political authority:** this authority is conferred on a person holding political office.
6. **Technical authority:** it is based on the level of expertise an individual acquires on the job.
7. **Coercive authority:** it is the ability based on the use of force.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POWER AND AUTHORITY

POWER	AUTHORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has the capacity to affect another's behaviour	Has a formal and legal right to make and enforce laws
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power could be legitimate or illegitimate	Authority is based on acceptance and mostly legitimate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power cannot be delegated	Authority can be delegated with legitimized responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punishment is not as serious as the authority	Authority is legitimized and severe punishment goes with it

LEGITIMACY

A legitimate government is one that is constitutionally elected and is acceptable to the populace.

FACTORS THAT DETERMINE LEGITIMACY

1. **Popular participation:** For a political system to be accorded legitimacy, the various interest groups such as political parties, pressure groups, etc must be allowed to take part.
2. **Popular Support:** A government is said to be legitimate if it receives the popular support of the citizens.

3. Good Government: people accord legitimacy to a government which meets up their expectations of good governance.
4. Foreign Diplomacy: The foreign policy adopted by a government of a country determines the legitimacy other nations will accord to such government.
5. Leadership: A leader that performs creditably well in office will make people to accept his regime as a legitimate one.

SOVEREIGNTY

Sovereignty may be defined as the absolute power of the state to exercise supreme legal authority over its own affairs within its territory without any form of external control. Jean Bodin introduced sovereignty to political theory.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOVEREIGNTY

1. Absoluteness: The modern sovereign state issues orders which are binding on all citizen and associations within the territory and receives orders from none.
2. Permanence: Sovereignty is permanent as long as the state exists.
3. Indivisibility: the powers of sovereignty which are supreme, absolute, final and coercive cannot be divided or shared.
4. Comprehensiveness: The power of sovereignty is wide in scope and all embracing which is binding on all persons or groups within the territorial jurisdiction.
5. Absence of Foreign control: The power of a sovereign state is supreme within its territorial jurisdiction without any foreign control.

TYPES OF SOVEREIGNTY

1. Legal Sovereignty: This is the power to make and enforce laws in a given state.
2. Political Sovereignty: The people exercise this power through the ballot box by voting for those they want to delegate to power.
3. Defacto Sovereignty: This is the sovereignty acquired by force e.g Armed Forces Ruling Council by General Ibrahim Babangida.
4. DeJure Sovereignty: This is sovereignty acquired in accordance with the laws of the land as against the use of force.
5. Internal Sovereignty: This is the supreme power of the State to make and enforce laws within its territorial are of jurisdiction.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Differentiate between power and authority.
2. Explain the kinds of authority .