
The Government's Right To Rule And Citizens' Duty To Obey In A Democracy

This task will highlight the complicated nature of this question and include a Christian view on this topic and asks crucial questions about whether or not democracy is required for government to be legitimate and whether this democracy legitimizes the actions of the government, how does government come to enjoy the right to rule while citizens incur a duty to obey even if the policies of the government go against ethical and moral values

To reach a conclusion to this question it is important to first understand what the word legitimate means and the implications it has in this context in which it is being used the definition of the word is found in source c, legitimacy is a noun and is the quality of being reasonable and acceptable/the state of being fair or honest. Going by this definition we can begin to ask the question: Is democracy required for a government to be legitimate?

This question is relevant when you think about all the atrocities that have taken place in history while a "democratic government" was in power or a government that had essences of democracy. Take Hitler for example Hitler came to power in a democracy with a highly liberal constitution, and in part by using democratic freedoms to undermine and then destroy democracy itself. But did that make his government and the actions that they took legitimate, no it did not something such as mass genocide can't be considered legitimate no matter how you may try to justify it. This serves as a prime example of how Democracy does not make a government legitimate. Which now lead to the question posed in source A what makes a government legitimate, most people would reach out at the answer of democracy being a product of the will of the people that have voted which is consent of the majority.

Source A also states that According to the 2016 Democracy Index of The Economist Intelligence Unit, only 19 countries, out of the 167 studied, can be considered as fully democratic. It is also important to remember that Adolf Hitler and other despots have received vote majorities. But remember the question is not fundamentally about a governments authority, as stated in source A "Despotic governments exercise authority without being legitimate." But we can get closer to an answer by looking at philosopher John Locke who said that that no government is legitimate unless it is carried out with the consent of the governed, and that consent can only be rendered through majority rule. Therefore, if a government violates fundamental rights, Locke was particularly concerned with the rights to property, the people are entitled to replace the government. Less than a century later, Locke's views were reiterated in the U.S. Declaration of Independence. So we have a partial answer a government can be

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considered as legitimate when every decision is carried out by the consent of the governed.

Another thing that needs to be considered is The utilitarian concept of “beneficial consequences” is another philosophy used to legitimize a government; in this case, on the basis of utility. In the “beneficial consequences” view, the legitimacy of a government hinges on whether it foments the happiness of the citizenry, which can also be found in source A. An example of such theory would be when the undemocratic rule of Chilean General Augusto Pinochet is often offered as an example of the “beneficial consequences” argument. Pinochet assumed power in a coup d’état that overthrew the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. Pinochet’s military government implemented economic liberalization policies that produced what has been described as the “Miracle of Chile” where the country was, for most of the 1990s, the best-performing economy in Latin America. Legitimacy is vital to justify the governments use of their cohesive power . As a governments role is to create and maintain a right respecting society, government is only legitimate when it protects our individual rights. Another important aspect is where we as Christians should stand on this question which is addressed in source D “Moving forward many centuries the Israelites made known their desire to have a king over them so they could be like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8). God’s response was clear. It was not His desire nor for a people’s good to have a government of man over them. In 2 Chronicles 6:5 God reaffirms He chose no man to be a ruler over His people.

The Judeo-Christian scriptures nowhere teach that the voice of the people is the voice of God. It does teach that when people make demands of God that are not in harmony with His will, He may grant them to their sorrow and send “leanness into their soul” (page 501). Events of history to date would certainly confirm that governments of men are not a blessing but rather a curse and ultimately bring “leanness” into a people’s soul.

God warned the Israelites how the government of their choice would deal with them. It would engage them in wars. It would conscript their sons and daughters to fight and die in its wars. It would appoint them for itself to make implements of war. It would take their possessions — private property — giving them to its political favorites. It would remove their freedom and enslave them”, this highlights important questions to us as Christians such as if governments can even be considered legit by us Christians as it goes against gods intended will. As the only person that we should allow to rule over us is god. But the fact remains that government remains as it is needed right now so what makes government legit and what reasons are there for a government being necessary.

When again talking about government legitimacy it is important to ask why do good people obey bad laws? As asked in source B why do we try to legitimize a government where many laws are responsible for the massive economic inequality and the answer can be found in source B which

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is the Hierarchy principle which is basically the fear of the government that has power if you such as their ability to jail you if you do not comply with them. However In most of the world today governments claim legitimacy on the grounds that they were voted in by a fair election, however you could again argue so was Hitler, but that did not make his government legit government can again only be legit when it creates and maintains a right respecting society, government is only legitimate when it protects our individual rights.

As we go on the entire thing gets more complex but a conclusion to the question is offered later on in source B in the form of voluntary federation as it would be capable of preventing bad people from doing bad things in theory. Firstly the very legitimacy of the voluntary federation government requires all lawmakers to support the good principles of equality and mutual aid. In contrast, the legitimacy of the Federal government has nothing to do with support for these principles, the very principles that distinguish good from bad laws. Secondly as stated in the source "Secondly, when laws are made by meetings open to full and equal participation by all the good-principled people who will have to obey the laws, then it is far less likely that laws will be passed that the good people who have to obey them will consider to be bad laws." And thirdly "voluntary federation enables the local governments to act in unison, even, when necessary, to organize military forces to enforce good laws against the wishes of bad people who don't like those laws. Voluntary federation is one way for good people to unite and for/ make a good government where the rights of the people prevail.

So from all of the above information we could draw the conclusion that governments can only be considered legitimate when it strives to uphold the rights of its citizens I, as such a good solution to this issue would be looking at and implementing a type of voluntary federation as it is the best at tackling the core issue of the legitimacy of the government.

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