A Framework for Analyzing Politics

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# The four varnas (classes, not lineages, of people), per the Bhagavad Gita:

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| ♥ | Brahmins (teachers and preachers) have the power to influence hearts and minds. |
| ♠ | Kshatriyas (warriors) have the power of physical force and civil authority. |
| ♦ | Vaishyas (landowners and merchants) have the power of wealth. |
| ♣ | Shudras (laborers and servants) have the power of number. |

# Aristotelian classification of societies

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|  | Rule by One | Rule by a Few | Rule by Many |
| Good | Monarchy | Aristocracy  | Politeia |
| Bad | Tyranny | Oligarchy | Mob rule |

# Societies can be classified by the balance of power among the varnas:

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| Type of Society | Description |
| Band society | Everyone is a shudra. Material culture is poor, there is no social safety net other than your immediate family, and homicide rates are high.  |
| Feudalism  | Kshatriyas and brahmins are separate but in league with each other and control most of the resources. Vaishyas, as a separate class, are relatively weak.  |
| Theocracy | Brahmins take on the kshatriya role (authority to use violence). The result is witch hunts, inquisitions, and holy war.  |
| Plutocracy | Vaishyas are in control. The kshatriyas and brahmins depend on the vaishyas for funding. |
| State capitalism  | The kshatriyas take over the functions of vaishyas and brahmins. |
| Mob rule | The shudras tear down the institutions created by the other varnas. Lacking proper moral guidance, the shudras then fall for a demagogue, who becomes a tyrant. |
| Constitutional democracy (politeia) | The power of the kshatriyas and vaishyas is limited by laws that are passed by representatives of the people (mainly shudras) and interpreted by judges (a type of brahmin). This desirable kind of society can exist only where the teachers and preachers (a brahmin role) have educated the shudras. |

# The role of Brahmins in good and bad societies

* By helping people figure out what is true and what is good, Brahmins could help people find good solutions to problems, including the problems that stem from social conflicts.
* Yet Brahmins are easily seduced by the Kshatriyas (who have the power of violence and physical coercion) and the vaishyas (who have economic power).
* In a theocracy, Brahmins can also be seduced by wealth and power itself.
* Since our Brahmins tend to come from a privileged background, they often unwittingly worship the “idols of the tribe” of the wealthy and powerful.

# Three types of educational policy

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| Colonial Massachusetts (and modern Finland) | Universal free public education and good teaching methods. |
| Antebellum South  | The rich educate their own children, neglect the poor whites, and make it illegal to teach any black people to read.  |
| Industrial Revolution | Universal free public schooling but with bad teaching methods (e.g., sight words instead of phonics) for the poor. Meanwhile, the children of the privileged get private schools or at least private tutoring.  |

# How to dumb down a school (and maybe provoke school shootings)

1. Refuse to use direct methods for teaching foundational skills (sounding out words, spelling, parsing sentences, doing simple arithmetic).
2. Do not ask children to learn foundational facts (e.g., important names, date, and places from history). Either neglect facts altogether or by teaching them in an illogical and disconnected way.
3. Rather than teaching things directly, expect children to “construct” all of the arts and sciences on their own, with minimal guidance.
4. Fail to give children honest and useful feedback.
	1. Give children meaningless praise
	2. Punish and humiliate children for things that are beyond their control
	3. Label children as diseased or disabled if the school is not serving them well.
5. Allow bullies to terrorize the smart children. If necessary, coach the bullies so that their bullying will be more effective.
6. Give special honor and privileges to student athletes, and allow them to misbehave.