

# *Approaches to the Study of Political Theory*

## *Political Theory*

### Understanding Political Theory

This chapter explores the meaning of political theory and how it is different from political science. The traditional and the contemporary approaches discussed and how they have had an impact on the study of political science. The traditional or normative approach looks at different historical, philosophical, institutional and legal aspects. The contemporary approach delves into behavioural science and how politics can be treated as a scientific subject rather than just a theoretical one.

The study of various approaches of political theory initiates with a basic understanding of the differences between political theory and political science. Though it is difficult to identify the exact difference, most continental writers do agree that political theory deals with the fundamental problems of the state such as citizenship, rights and duties and different types of political ideals. Therefore, it wouldn't be incorrect to say, political theory creates the fundamental structure or layout to understand the specifics of political science.

The approaches to political theory can be broadly segregated into two main categories – normative and empirical. The normative approach consists of the traditional forms such as historical, philosophical, institutional and legal while empirical is the study of political theory through an angle of scientific approach.

The normative and empirical are also respectively referred to as traditional and modern approaches and both offer a variety of orientations to study and analyze the world of politics. Robert Dahl has also referred to them as empirical theorists and trans-empirical theorists where the former concentrates on facts against values and the latter believes in values against facts.

### **Differentiation between Traditional and Contemporary Approaches**

**Traditional Approach:** The traditional or the empirical approach studies in depth the political behavior from historical, philosophical, legal and institutional point of view.

### **The Historical Approach**

The historical approach concentrates on a selected period of time and also on the sequence of events within a particular timeframe. Sir Frederic Pollock defines it as “what institutions are, and are tending to be, more in the knowledge of what they have been and how they came to be, what they are than in the analysis of them as they stand”.

The historical approach believes political theory emerged as a result of socio-economic crisis and the impact they had on great thinkers. For instance, the socio-economic conditions of Greece produced Aristotle and Plato while the conditions of England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century resulted in theories by Locke and Hobbes.

The renowned Italian political thinker, Machiavelli gave history as an example to exalt the records of the Romans and thereby encourage his people to restore the glory again. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, political science became a separate branch and since then traditional political scientists have regarded history as a source for developing political analysis. Politics was considered as present history and this approach clearly gained prominence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Certain traditional political scientists such as George H. Sabine highlights that all the subjects touched upon by political philosophers should be included in political science. He believes through their writings one can figure out the validity of these theories because they deal with the core basics of political science that includes state, government, freedom, equality etc. According to Sabine, political theory revolves around three main elements – the factual, casual and the value based or valuationary.

All the three elements play a vital role because important political theories have evolved during periods of strain and stress. In the world history there have occurred two significant periods when political philosophy thrived during political and social crisis. For instance, political strife fuelled the creation of political ideologies through the great works of Aristotle and Plato in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and a similar pattern emerged in England between 1640 and 1690.

It was during this period that Hobbes, Locke and a host of their political thinkers evolved their theories and ideologies. Though the countries were witnessing

immense political strife, these ideologies emerged as a result of not only the crisis, but also the reaction these situations and circumstances left on the minds of the thinkers. Hence, it is important to understand the time, place and the circumstances under which a particular political theory was developed.

Sabine stresses that political theories play a dual role where the theories may belong to the abstract world of thought but also have a direct impact and influence beliefs that become the causes. These causes turn into historical events eventually. It is also important to understand not only the foundation of these theories but also to test the validity in terms of true or false of a particular political theory.

It is imperative to know that any political theory can be understood in two ways where it acts as a theory as well as a cause of events. The difference between the both lies in the fact that theory can be analyzed and its defects can be pinpointed. In the case of cause it is important to discern the motivations of political theorists and which particular class it may be of an interest to.

Finally Sabine concludes the importance of differentiating between facts and values and that political theory is a combination of political philosophy or political thought as well as political science.

Despite Sabine asserting that political theory is also made up of political philosophy, there are some who have criticized historical approach to a large extent. It is considered to be too deferential to tradition while some also believe it adopts a narrow view of politics. James Bryce thought historical approach can be misleading while Ernest Barker pinpoints that historical approach is restricted to a particular situation and cannot view all the aspects comprehensively.

### **The Legalistic Approach**

The legalistic approach is different from historical approach because it differentiates political science from history. The origin of legalistic approach can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the study of politics also included topics like law and legal systems. For instance political scientists studying the legalities of the Supreme Court of the United States is predominantly legal in nature. The political scientists studying the legal approach does not restrict himself to exploring the legal system as such but goes one step further and also focuses on the legal and constitutional aspects of political decisions. The

legalistic approach treats political science as a separate branch of study because they study in detail the legal aspects of the political system.

### **Institutional Approach**

The institutional approach shares quite a close connection with legalistic approach. This kind of approach came into being in the nineteenth century due to the reaction to the historical and legalistic approaches. Political scientists understand that the study of politics goes beyond the realm of legal constitutions and codes of countries. It is also important to concentrate on the executive, the legislature and judiciary too.

These three branches need to be studied in detail in order to gain insight into the political decisions taken. According to institutional approach what is more important is the understanding of the day-to-day functioning of these institutions than studying about their history or legal aspects. In this type of approach the political scientists concentrate more on the political structure rather on the political process.

The Behaviouralists believe that this type of system is completely descriptive where one can find detailed descriptions of political institutions but lack of any kind of explanation of the behavior of the political system. It is believed that institutional approach neglects the people who are actually responsible for ensuring smooth functioning of the political institution.

### **Criticism of the Traditional Modes of Political Analysis**

Historical, institutional and legal are some of the core approaches that form an integral part of the traditional mode of political analysis. Traditional political scientists study in detail these aspects to understand the political system and the way it operates. These are ideally descriptive modes because they do not elaborate or lay emphasis on the functions of the political system.

Furthermore, traditional modes are considered to be normative because the explanations are based on values and these values cannot be measured to determine if it can be proved or disapproved. This type of approach is based on moral values and this can be clearly understood from the example of Plato's theory of justice.

According to this theory the ideal life of citizens is based on the value, which Plato considers it important. It is not based on men who possess the complete knowledge and depend on facts to make a politically sound decision. Since the normative approach is primarily based on values, hence it does not use any kind of sophisticated scientific method to differentiate between fact and value. Hence,

normative approach is a statement of individual preference and not a statement of fact.

### **Behaviouralism or Empirical Approach**

Behaviouralism or contemporary approach is based on a scientific methodology, which follows fact-value dichotomy and remains dissatisfied with the achievements of the traditional political science. They reject the ideologies and philosophies associated with political phenomenon based on history, law and institution. According to this section of scientists the foundation of political knowledge should be based on the facts of political life and it should be given a factual treatment that one finds in natural sciences such as physics. Contemporary political science is about framing general laws and based on which a general theory can be developed.

The Behaviouralists political scientists believe the traditional method of understanding political science lacks the ability to create reliable political knowledge and it is primarily philosophical and ideological in nature. Traditional approach ignores the differentiation between facts and values and rather concentrates on the abstract formal concepts of state, sovereignty, law, liberty and equality. In a nutshell, the traditional approach is less empirical and in order to view political science from a scientific viewpoint it has to emphasize on scientific methodology and not on content.

Contemporary political scientists such as Lasswell, Dahl and Easton believe it is important to make political science more empirical in approach, the study of political science should contain sophisticated methods and the focus should be on understanding the process rather than the structure.

The focus should ideally shift from institution to activity and it should be analyzed in a configurative manner. They insist on adopting scientific methodology that would contain the use of sophisticated methods such as systems analysis, input-output analysis, decision-making and the communications approach. The political system is not treated as an isolated entity instead it is viewed as part of a larger system. Hence, this particular approach of political science follows a more rigorous methodology and has thereby enriched the field of study and made it extremely scientific in nature.

### **Achievements of Behaviouralism or Empirical Approach**

David B. Truman has closely studied the impact of the Behaviouralist Revolution on political science in his essay called 'The Revolution in the Behavioural Sciences'. As per his analysis, 'The developments and weaknesses of the

Behavioural sciences over the past quarter-century have been more striking in the realm of technique than in that of validated and expanded theory. In both there has been a growing influence on the work and thought of political scientists". Behavioural science has had an impact on two important areas where the first concentrates on the developments in the field of research technique and the second one is related to expanded theory and verified propositions. The research technique concentrates on the technical aspect while the second is based on the theoretical aspect of understanding the Behavioural Revolution.

### **Development in Research Techniques**

The basic objective that differentiates empirical from normative approach is the use of scientific tools because the traditional approach concentrates on the abstract while contemporary focuses on facts. There have been remarkable enhancements in the field of developing tools of research such as content analysis, case analysis, interview, sample survey, observation and statistics. Harold Lasswell was one of the first to utilize the technique of content analysis in his study of propaganda. Sample survey is yet another tool which has gained importance in the research of social science.

The increasing levels of sophistication that one finds in sample survey methods have largely contributed to the progress in techniques of measurement. Contemporary political scientists such as Lazarsfeld, Guttman and others have made a large number of advancements in detailed study of this discipline through the adoption of varied measurement devices. These sophisticated methods have helped them in conducting a more detailed study of the survey data and thereby reaching a conclusion based on the facts gathered through the survey.

Experimentation is one of the key methods of gaining factual insights and hence it has been used in different forms within the controlled laboratory setting as well as in the natural situation. The various techniques used to conduct experimentation include observing, recording and analyses of behaviour in small groups. Truman observes, that this type of methods either used within the laboratory or the field contributes towards gathering a large amount of information face-to-face and also provides stimulus to garner sophistication in the observational fieldwork.

### **Development in Theory**

While research technique is the first area, there is another area called the theoretical aspect, which has had an equally powerful impact on the study of political science from the behavioural point of view. However, measuring the contribution of theory in the empirical approach isn't easy considering it requires

a certain level of verification. Understanding behavioural approach through research techniques is much more rational and exact, but the development in theory of behavioural science is confronted with two major concerns. Firstly, the theories in the behavioural sciences are many and secondly the implications of the various theories have not been explored completely. However, it is still possible to analyze the impact of the behavioural sciences in terms of theory. As per David B. Truman the behavioural sciences or the contemporary approach have created two different bodies of propositions.

The first one concentrates only on individual behaviour or face-to-face groups and the second offers an inclusive explanation of a variety of actions that may not possess any particular institutional context. Although both the propositions may contain certain value, they do not offer a solution to the problems that students of politics encounter.

The impact of behavioural science theory is more fundamental and despite the growing influence of research technique, this fact cannot be ignored. There has emerged a divergence between political behaviour and institutional tendency due to the impact of behavioural science theory. The difference between the two lies in the approach adopted towards political institutions and it includes the types of data and technique used in the study of political science.

It is not sufficient to simply know about the divergence because it is also important to understand the reasons that led to divergence between political behaviour and institutional tendencies. Before the Behaviouralism approach emerged, political scientists focused on institutional studies and their respective historical, political and legal aspects. They completely ignored the human element that was integral to the functioning of the political institutions. The Behaviouralism approach was meant to change this and in turn bring into prominence the empirical aspect of political science.

A substantial portion of behavioural science theory is non-institutional, as it covers topics such as sociology, psychology and anthropology. In a way, this type of approach basically focuses on highlighting the effects of institutional pattern and the kind of impact it will have on individuals or an aggregate of individuals. It is not concerned with the process of describing the working or the functioning of the institution itself. The social psychologist's main intention is to study the behaviour of men in groups and to analyze the effects of group environments on the behaviour of individuals.

It is the responsibility of the social psychologists to study small face-to-face groups such as family, club, classroom and even neighborhood. This type of group dynamics has help in creating a body of fundamental and applied theory on the subject of leadership. Numerous developments in behavioural sciences have explored the importance of research technique and theory through experimenting it on an individual or a small group of people. It analyses and determines the behaviour of a small group of individuals through adopting various research techniques but primarily excludes larger organizations and inclusive institutions.

### **What is the impact of Theoretical developments in Behaviouralism?**

The theoretical developments have also created a substantial impact on political science. Political scientists knew the restrictions of applying theory of Behavioural science to their problems. They were surprised by the realization that the theory got seamlessly infused with empirical research and it became far more important to the concerns of the investigators.

This was not the case before the advancements that took place in research technique and theory. Scientific theory was given more importance and what was remarkable was, it led to an increased commitment to the discovery of uniformities that would help with the verification of hypotheses and also assist in searching for empirically supported generalizations.

### **The differences between the Traditionalists and Behavioural Approach**

When political institutions were studied from the viewpoint of Behavioural approach, it was noticed that it produced two schools of thoughts – the Traditionalists and the Behaviouralists. There are differences between both the tendencies and this is evident through the approaches each adopts. The Behavioural approach is skeptical about the validity of the formal description of a political institution.

The political scientists believing in Behavioural approach considers the approach in psychological terms and therefore the stress is on analyzing the behaviour of the legislators rather than on the formal structure of the legislature. Hence, the Behavioural scientists would require a host of different conceptual tools and analytical categories to analyze not only the policy forming process but also study the political parties, pressure groups and lobbies.

Where comparative politics is concerned, the Behaviouralists have adopted the functionalist approach and ignored the conventional formal areas such as executive, legislature, political party and bureaucracy. The Behaviouralists

believe in adopting “common response to the need for concepts and sets of concepts in terms of which governmental processes and structures may be analysed without the limiting assumptions imposed by conventional institutional categories”.

In contrast to the traditionalist approach, the Behaviouralists have selected to completely exclude the normative approach of studying political science, which is not entirely a beneficial process. Their definition of politics is limited to being extremely simple and is completely unrelated to any normative conceptions. In an effort to follow a more rigorous methodological process, they have ignored a great deal of significant details that is central to the normative approach.

Hence, in a way it can be said that the Behaviouralists may lack in political responsibility because they remain unconcerned with issues that are of fundamental importance. They try and elude themselves from problems of human welfare such as justice, liberty, rights and duties and security. In order to pursue a value free political science, they completely believe in extending the notion of ‘politics’ to the private associations but there remains an absence of public purpose to it.

Since the public is not involved, hence, the notion of power behaviour takes on a more trivial meaning and cannot be understood or analyzed in its true state. The empirical or behaviourist study of political science conforms to the ideology of not prescribing to normative theory for the investigation of what ought to be. It is because normative discourses are not limited to empirical and definitional statements.

Similarly, the Behaviouralist also believes there is no scope for aesthetic or moral arguments where empirical approach is concerned. Hence, most contemporary political scientists reject the notion that normative theory and aesthetics in political and social analysis is not required. They would argue, that this type of approach tends to yield a different form of knowledge, which may not be meaningless but do not consider it useful enough when compared to a more scientific and systematic approach of understanding political science.

One of the criticisms of this kind of approach is the tendency towards following mindless empirical approach. One of the claims by the behavioural thinkers were that theoretical analysis could be achieved through following the process of theory-free observation and then drawing out of the observation law like generalizations. However, later scholars such as Hempel and Popper rejected

this view and claimed that scientific research techniques could only be carried out if the relevant facts were guided either by clear theoretical expectations.

Another undesirable feature of behavioural research that stems from overtly focusing on empirical approach is the tendency to concentrate on easily available phenomena such as voting. It avoids concentrating on deeper structural forces that augment stability and bring about important changes in social and political systems. The early behaviouralists believed their approach to social enquiry as both value free and scientific and clarified their stance of not seeking to justify any political or ethical viewpoint. They sought to unearth the facts through impartial observation and facts gathered from scientific research techniques.

They believed that any kind of theoretical explanation is possible only after all the relevant facts have been impartially surveyed. But soon the realization dawned this is not possible because some kind of theoretical understanding was always required before the researcher could decide what needs to be observed.

Modern behaviouralists have now learnt to accept that the relativist view what one observes is partly a consequence of the theoretical position that the researcher would adopt in the first place. However, even now the modern behaviouralists believe that a good theory has to be relevant and consistent with observation gathered through the empirical evidence that is available. The criticism against behaviouralists is that they fail to look at the big picture of both the social and political transformation.

### **Political Analysis**

Political analysis is a kind of tool that political scientists use in explaining the political phenomena. The ancient political thinker, Aristotle utilizes an empirical approach to create a political analysis of the revolution. Modern political scientists proclaim that their study of political phenomena possess much more clarity in comparison to the ancient thinkers. They believe they are much more methodologically self-conscious, hence in certain regards they are better than their predecessors.

A group of political scientists may follow a particular school of thought and they may analyze political phenomena from a certain perspective. Contemporary political scientists are segregated into two different schools of thought – traditional and behavioural. Both the schools of thoughts are entirely different, as they follow different styles of political analysis.

The demarcation between both the approaches are not completely clear because they may be some political scientists who would like to be called complete traditionalists or complete behaviouralists. Hence, most political scientists possess an orientation that is a combination of both traditionalism and behaviouralism.

Though the both the approaches would like to distinguish themselves completely, there is a common ground because both of them deal with common set of issues. Though the approach to deal with the issues may differ because each will follow a particular orientation of facts and their style of describing and explaining a concept may vary drastically. Both the school of thoughts tries to find answers to the same set of questions and some of these questions include:

1. What is Politics?
2. What is the role of power in a political system?
3. What is the behaviour and role of men in politics?
4. What are the distinguishing features of the 'political man'?
5. What are the prerequisites for a stable economy?

These are just some of the questions that political scientists from any of the stream would try and analyze and thereby help understand the political system. Political analysis is about covering in detail the study of political system or even a generic political phenomenon and providing a complete explanation or accounting for such facts.

Irrespective of being a traditional or behavioural, a political scientist studies, analyses and describes on the basis of experience and observation. This is known as the empirical approach and it is not only restricted to the modern scientists because even the ancient philosophers also followed an empirical approach. But it is also a known fact that the political philosopher has seldom been a good scientist due to the failure of using sophisticated scientific methodology and scientific activity.

Robert Dahl questions on why one needs to analyze politics? He explains that escaping politics is not an option and to understand politics why shouldn't one plunge directly into the political life and obtain the knowledge through practice. Dahl answers his own question by stating that the skill required to analyze the politics is not the same as practicing politics and hence the objective of political analysis, is to go beyond the realm of what anyone would learn from experience.

### **What distinguishes Traditional approach from Behaviouralist approach?**

The traditional mode of analysis is quite different from the behaviouralist mode of study and the political scientists belonging to each of the streams follow a certain pattern in an attempt to construct political science theories.

The traditional political scientists explained political theory through the means of analyzing the descriptions of political concepts and the logical relationships between different politics and propositions. They adopt a normative approach or also known as value laden. They lay stress on the value and goals and follow an approach based on historical, philosophical, institutional and legal aspects.

On the other hand, the behaviouralists try and draw a contrast between political science and political philosophy. They emphasis is more on facts rather than values and based on the facts they distinguish political science from political theory. They follow a scientific mode of analysis because they believe in getting their facts validated through the adoption of research technique tools and experience thereby ensuring a certain theory can be proved.

### **Understanding empirical and normative propositions**

Empirical statements are based upon evidence drawn through the world of reference and hence can be verified. It is possible to discern if a particular empirical statement is true or false. Behaviouralist scientists believe that a true empirical statement has the ability to state a fact and this truth emerges through observation and experience.

However, this does not mean that empirical statements cannot be false because there are instances when a certain empirical statement may not be necessarily true. In this kind of approach, an array of methods is used such as experimentation or statistical control procedures. Hence, due to the scientific approach adopted in analysis and study of a political theory is the reason why it is known as empirical statement or proposition.

According to Dahl, this type of empirical analysis of political theory is both a science and art. He further states, 'whenever students of politics scrupulously test if their generalizations and theories against the data of experience by means of meticulous observation, classification, and measurement, then empirical political analysis is scientific in its approach. To the extent that this approach actually yields tested propositions of considerable generality, political analysis can be regarded as scientific in its results.'

Hence, Dahl explains that political scientists validate their theories and generalizations by adopting a range of scientific research tools and thereby observing and measuring the empirical results against the data of experience. This is the reason why empirical approach is categorized for following one of the most rigorous and scientific ways of deriving data and out of which emerges a particular political theory.

On the other hand normative propositions are based value judgment and therefore no one can with guarantee prove if it is true or false. The reason being that no amount of empirical data can clearly state if a particular value judgment can be approved or disapproved. A normative proposition lacks factual description because it is based on the statement of an individual. An individual's statement is a result of preferences and different aspects, which is primarily based on a certain thought, experience or the impact of a particular event or situation.

A normative approach can also be looked at from an angle where it is the individual's desire to attempt at molding or changing the value of others. The position of normative approach on scientific thinking has been called 'scientific value relativism'. This explains that scientific thinking is regarded as neutral in reference to normative values.

It views them as being relevant to individuals and cultures but cannot be viewed as absolutes. The normative approach primarily focuses on historical, philosophical, legal and institutional aspects and hence the valuable political theory derived is difficult to validate and create a judgment.

Due to the scientific nature of the Behaviouralist approach, it was known to dominate the study of political science in the 1950s and 1960s; however, the relevance of normative political philosophy still continues to be recognized. The scientific empirical approach has not been able to diminish the significance of classical political theory and many famous political thinkers are quick to defend and uphold this approach.

Some of the famous scholars who have defended the normative approach include the likes of Michael Oskshott, Hannah Arendt, Bertrand Jouvenal, Leo Strauss, Christian Bay and Eric Volgelin. There have been a number of contemporary writers too that have tried to use concepts in political philosophy to understand and analyze the current political problems and some of the well-known ones are John Rawls, Felix, Carl J. Friedrich, Richard Flathman and many others.

### Understanding Political Theory

In this section we gained an insight into the different theories that exist within Political Science. These theories directly impact the politics of any particular state and they form the basis for political scientists to study and draw the conclusion. We learned how the theory of political science can be learned through two different approaches i.e. Traditional and Behaviouralist. We also delved into the various arguments that political scientists have debated on for and against these two particular theories and the role they have played in shaping today's political environment.

# *Theories of State*

## *Introduction*

### Theories of State

Theories of State is explained in detail and the focus is on understanding the establishment of state under different political theories. A detailed study of different theories including the social contract theory, the liberal theory, the neo-liberal theory, the marxist theory and the communitarian theory are covered. Their features and characteristics are explained to understand and draw comparisons on their respective aspects.

The State is the most authoritative social and political institutions. Organizations have formed where there have been large groups of people. It is here that we see the foundation of States spring up.

There are a number of components to the State, such as sovereignty, population, land, and government. Sovereignty, however, is the most important characteristic applicable to the modern era. There are multiple definitions of the State, but the most notable, among contemporary writers, are from Garner and MacIver.

The State defined by Garner is “a concept of political science and public law, is a community of persons more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent, or nearly so, of external control and possessing and organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience.”

MacIver, on the other hand, has a more pluralistic view stating that “association which, acting through law as promulgated by a government endowed to this end with coercive power, maintains within a community territorially demarcated the

universal external conditions of social order.” This is arguably the best definition since it includes all aspects of The State.

Just as there are many definitions of The State, there are many theories as well.

## **The Social Contract Theory of the State**

It is an ancient concept that the ruler receives his authority based on an agreement between him and his subordinates. This idea was used mostly by Greeks, Indians, Romans, and medieval Christian thinkers; but most of the credit for creating a well-defined and complete definition of this theory goes to Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

### **I. The Statement of the Social Contract Theory**

This theory claims that the State evolved from a primitive condition of man known as the state of nature, which was a period in time when no State or law existed. The state of nature was believed to govern human relations at this suggested time in human history. Proponents of the Social Contract Theory have different opinions on what the state of nature was. The state of nature was too ideal, which meant it was inevitable for man to find it unbearable and establish a political order. Man gave up his natural liberty in order to be protected by a State, which was arranged by political law.

There are two types of the social contracts supported by advocates, the social contract and the government contract. The first type suggests individuals are main parties since they must agree with one another and with all, as opposed to the latter, which is an agreement between people and a ruler.

Advocates debate whether or not the theory is a historical fact or fiction, as well as the use of the theory. However, all in all, the theory has been used to justify the idea that the power to legitimate governmental authority must lie on the approval of the governed. The purpose was to protect the people’s rights and check the ruler’s arbitrary manner. Unfortunately, it has raised skepticism towards the State due to the assumption that governmental authority restricts man’s natural freedom.

### **II. Criticism of the Social Contract Theory**

This theory has been criticized from three different aspects – the historical, the legal and the philosophical or even known as rational.

#### **(a) Historical**

1. This theory, historically, has always lacked evidence. No scholar has proven that a State was founded based on a voluntary agreement between men seeking to leave a state of nature.
2. There are examples in history of governmental contracts, but those contracts were already binding for citizens living in a Civil State. No one has explained the origin of the State. Therefore, governmental contract should be considered a fact, and social contract a fiction.
3. Sir Henry Maine's, in his research of the early political institutions, was unable to find evidence to support the contractualists' analysis that the contract was the foundation of society.
4. The theory claims that primitive men were free individuals, who could make voluntary agreements with other men. Research shows that laws were more collective than individual. In early primitive society, membership of a social assembly determined the position of an individual. The individual had no right to alter his status through free contract. The individual had his set status in society. This very idea goes against the theory's assumptions.

#### **(b) Legal**

1. Contracts the primitive man allegedly made were not binding legally because no State existed to sanction it. Therefore, the contract would not have been valid.
2. If the contract aforementioned is invalid, then all contracts following it are also invalid. The rights derived from this type of contract would not be legally viable.
3. The theory suggests that there were natural rights, but no political awareness or authority existed so there was no law to ensure the rights would be enforced. Therefore, liberty and rights could not prevail in this type of environment.
4. There is only a binding effect on a contract if it is accepted voluntarily. The social contract, however, is considered to be perpetually binding. Hence, this approach in a way depicts an element of conservatism since it can bind the future generations to a particular set of ideas.

#### **(c) Philosophical**

1. It is incorrect to say that the relation between the State and the individual is a voluntary one because we are a part of a State as we are a part of a family. Membership is not something that is voluntary, but natural.

2. The State is a development and not a construct. Therefore the entire concept of the state of nature as well as the laws of nature is completely irrelevant.
3. The theory reduces the relationship between the State and the individual as a partnership. If the State breaches the contract, then the people can rise up and rebel against it. This contradicts the idea of the stability of the State.
4. The theory suggests a false conception of rights. The source of rights is shared recognition among individuals in a society of universal good of which the individual good is an inherent element.

### **III. Importance or the Value of the Theory**

Despite all the criticism and objections, the theory is still valuable and holds certain elements of truth. The most valuable contribution the theory has made is the development of democracy. Contractualists used the combination of political authority and what Willoughby calls “a predicated individual right to free self-determination of action,” to establish the foundation of democracy.

The emphasis on democracy and the free will of individual people to be the base of political authority proved to be a solution of the Divine Origin Theory, which bestowed rulers with “divine” power.

1. The Social Contract Theory emphasized the significance of the individual’s impact on the State and how they can modify political institutions with a collective effort. This shows that political authority was in the hands of the people.
2. The theory of sovereignty is the second most important contribution. Locke’s theory supported the idea of a political sovereignty, and Rousseau was a proponent of popular sovereignty.
3. Lastly, the separation of power theory appears in Locke’s civil government which was later developed by Montesquieu.

### **The Liberal Theory of State**

Liberalism is a difficult concept to define due to numerous reasons: First, there have been multiple ideas about liberalism by different scholars. Second, liberalism has become a set of ideas supported by number of scholars from various faiths and convictions. Third, liberalism is a philosophy that isn’t just static, but growing. Lastly, scholars look at liberalism with different lenses and perspectives.

In the beginning, liberalism was meant to help rebel against absolutism and feudal order, which was known as negative liberal. However, positive liberalism followed years later and eventually transformed into the liberal democratic State.

### **(a) State under Negative Liberalism**

Negative liberalism was increasing as a response to absolutism, which led the bourgeois class and statesmen to gather to establish a State with few functions and limited powers. It was then that the State was considered as a necessary evil. It protected the people from outside aggression while maintaining order, but it was evil because of the possibility of abuse of power and obstruction of the people's liberty.

Negative liberalists believed the State served the individual's interests, so there would be a harmony between the wellbeing of society and the individual. But in reality, the negative liberalism philosophy was that of capitalism.

Democrats and Marxists challenged the negative liberalism view the most. Marxists exposed the exploitative nature and called upon the people to revolt. This challenge forced liberal thinkers to alter their views on the functions of the State.

The second challenge from democrats sought participation by everyone in all the processes of the State as well as adult franchise universally. The people now had the ability to vote out the ruling ideology. This required State interference in economic and social areas to benefit the people and the ensuing rise of a positive liberalism State.

### **(b) State under Positive Liberalism**

Positive liberalism suggests the State should assume more political, economic and social functions. The State should:

- (i) Set minimum wages and maximum work hours.
- (ii) Regulate prices and control production and distribution for interests of society.
- (iii) Provide welfare and begin developmental projects.
- (iv) Tax capitalists to provide working class with welfare measures.
- (v) Intervene often to avoid concentration of wealth and bring about balanced distribution among the people.
- (vi) Create conditions necessary all-round progress of man.

- (vii) Protect weaker areas of the population being exploited by capitalist class.
- (viii) The state should take all the essential steps to eradicate class conflict.
- (ix) Nationalize main sectors of the economy, if in the interest of the people.
- (x) Reconcile disagreeing class interests to support harmony in society.
- (xi) Aim at wellbeing of society and protecting rights and liberties.

Individual rights were meant for self-development and should not be used against the interest of society because purpose of the State was for evolutionary growth of society and not revolutionary changes.

### **Evaluation of the Positive Liberal State**

The democratic doctrine has two main components, its individualistic basis and egalitarian complement.

The individualistic basis established the standard of a good society, the maximization of individual utilities and fundamental nature of man, the desire to maximize his utilities.

The egalitarian aspect finds man basically an enjoyer and creator of his own powers. They were reasserting old values but on a new and more democratic basis.

Robert Dahl and Sartori were two of the few liberal theorists who believed that a liberal democratic State would enjoy the best of both worlds, the individual freedom of liberal society and equality of a democratic society.

### **(c) The Liberal Democratic State**

In this case, government is run by representatives of the people who are held responsible by the people for their actions. Whether it is a direct democracy or a representative government, the people are in control and their will plays a crucial role in the organization and operation of the government.

### **Assumptions**

The liberal democratic system implies recognition of a few assumptions, which are:

1. Existence of democracy in a right sense because:
  - (i) Government is only a means to realize the greatest good of the greatest number;

(ii) Government's power is restricted by the laws which form the fundamental law of the land. McIver says government can only handle those things which are 'Caesar's';

(iii) Besides individuals, the State also has to deal with other relations "evolving independently, eliciting individual's loyalties, better adapted than the State because of their select membership, the special forms of organization and action for serving various social needs;"

(iv) The hint of pluralism proves the liberal democratic State rejects ideas of divinity of State pressed by scholars of idealist traditions like Plato, Rousseau and Hegel and by advocates of the imperative school like Hobbes, Bentham and Austin.

This inference informs us that modern pluralism is attempting to alter the discredited state or a State wishes to reduce it from its position of honor to a place of servitude.

2. It is the desire of a liberal democratic State to be a pluralistic society. This sort of system rejects the idea of State infallibility as stressed by the Hegelianised belief of idealism. The State oversees social affairs and tries to resolve conflicting interests.

3. Thirdly, a liberal democratic State supports secularism suggesting freedom of conscience and morality. A requirement of statehood for political organizations should be secularism to keep religious and communal influences, which have the possibility of undermining the democratic foundations, in check.

### **Characteristic features of Liberal Democratic States**

Besides the three assumptions, there are some characteristic features:

1. The liberal democratic State implies there is a government of the people through chosen representatives elected through periodical free and fair elections. Other requisites are methods of direct democracy in proposals, referendums and recalls to check misuse of power. There's also a judiciary to check misuses of power by the legislature and executive branches.

2. The laws written in accordance of the will of the people must be properly executed by the government. For this reason, politicians and civil servants must maintain a healthy relationship. Political executives should act democratically while the civil servants must behave politically neutral.

3. Separation of powers is used to avoid absorption of power by any of the three branches of government. For this purpose, there are checks and balances

between each branch to ensure stability of power. Also, there is a federalized model of organization to ensure cooperation in the operation of government so a consensus between the competing parties exists.

4. There are various interests in society which results in numerous interest groups that arise to struggle for power to defend and endorse their specific interests. It is the duty of the government to create a fair environment and coordinate among all the groups to ensure harmony. This means that most of the economic decisions in liberal democratic States aren't made by the government, but by private groups and through the use market mechanism (Finer).

5. Lastly, a liberal democratic State represents political modernization and acculturation. It supports political parties in creating closer bonds with the masses. Parties play a number of roles other than just being involved in decision-making. For this reason, Berger states that "In addition to representational, aggregative, articulative and decisional roles in government itself, parties have a role along with other organizations, in a variety of functions."

A.R. Ball (Modern Politics and Government; London; Macmillan, 1971) mentions the following eight characteristics:

1. There are multiples parties that compete freely for political power.
2. Competition is open and based on set and accepted procedures.
3. Entrance and recruitment to positions of power is open.
4. Periodic elections will be held with universal franchise.
5. Interest groups are able to influence decisions. Relations like trade unions and other groups should not be under strict government control.
6. Civil liberties such as freedom of religion and speech are protected by the government.
7. There is a judiciary independent from other branches of government.
8. Forms of mass media such as TV and newspapers should not be monopolized by the government and, within limits, should have the right to criticize government.

The liberal democratic State, no matter which country it falls into, stands for the conservation of representative government. Power is not concentrated, but divided and diffused in this democratic system.

### **Merits of the Liberal Democratic State**

It was believed that the greatness of a liberal democratic State compared to other forms of States rested in the effectiveness of three functions. First, it established order in society and its power was enforced with the permission of the majority. Second, it allowed for a peaceful change where the people could vote rulers of their choice. Third, it benefitted the majority of the population.

### **Evaluation of the Liberal Democratic State**

The liberal democratic State coincides with a capitalist economic system. With the exception of a few, all capitalist countries normally have liberal democratic political systems, which is not a coincidence.

When nations allowed adult franchise after the liberal State was institutionalized, democracy had to realign itself to a competitive and individualistic market society. While the liberal State was slowly democratized with allowing the right to vote, it began to unite itself with capitalism. Capitalism was a great liberalizing force since it was the rise of an individualistic society. There was nothing democratic about this form of economy but it was considered liberal in its fundamental assumptions.

In order for this society to operate, an accountable government was required which was fulfilled by the liberal democratic State. It became a welfare and regulatory State without having to changing the capitalist system. Macpherson states that by adding democracy to the liberal State would provide constitutional channels for major interests. By allowing the people to join the party system, the liberal State was not going against its principles. The liberal State was not diminished; instead it increased the strength of the market society and itself. "It liberalized democracy while democratizing liberalism."

### **The Neo-Liberal Theory of the State**

Neo-liberal thinkers believe the modern State as a malign influence which reduces freedom and sovereignty in society, and feel the modern State is a New Leviathan. They viewed the State as having too much power, which was expanded mostly due to a widely social democratic agenda. The agenda intervened with the goal of increasing of economic activity with the goal of redistributing profits of economic growth to guarantee welfare statuses of citizens.

The 1970s saw the rise of new left and right politicians in both the UK and US. Neo-liberalism or the New Right was the most popular of the parties. They won support to gain control of government and attempt to implement neo-liberal

policies. It was Friedrich Hayek who was the most thoughtful proponent of neo-liberal views.

### **Hayek's Idea on State**

Hayek felt freedom and justice were two important human values. He viewed himself as a democrat, but he was a strong supporter of individual freedom and disagreed with the idea of an unlimited government.

Hayek thought the State should have a very limited role, and that freedom would be protected only in a society with independent individuals acting through market-like dealings. The duty of the State does include the pursuit of its own ends but to provide a framework of the Rule of Law which the market ordered society can progress. The State should be reduced to the role of protection against outside threats, conservation of the Rule of Law, overseer of public goods which cannot be delivered by the market, and the aid for destitution. Through taxes, these aforementioned programs should be funded.

He goes on to argue that the State in a parliamentary form had an increase of power, which was sought after by different interest groups. These same interest groups which were putting pressure on government on certain issues. The organized interests were succeeding in promoting their own ideology at the expense of the general citizenry.

Social democrat governments, however, are considered worse than parliamentary government in his eyes. Its intervention in the market will result in low outcomes and lower social welfare. The socialists intervene to promote social justice, but for Hayek, justice is something procedural and only refers to enforcement of rules of general application. He does not believe in social justice. To him, it means undermining the justice of the market. It robs the wealth from the successful, increases dependency of the poor, entrenches the powers of special interests, and over-rides individual freedom. Socialists have been the worst offenders in "giving democracy a bad name."

### **Other Neo-Liberals' Ideas of States**

Public choice theory is based on political and economic science. It is concerned with general or non-market methods of decision-making. This theory allows neo-liberals to prove that the liberal democratic State has not been efficient.

Neo-liberals are against a welfare State, and view it as oppressive, expensive, and unpopular. They would rather support services based on market principles and limited government provisions. Critics of the market theory, however, argue

that neo-liberals have not taken the changing conditions of the market, like large monopolies, into consideration. Despite this argument and others about the market being non coercive, Hayek stresses the importance of traditions and moral behavior of society in which a market functions. He says that society will evolve naturally through experiences. This idea alters the market theory by admitting that market mechanisms may only work in the right social and moral conditions.

Neo-liberals support inequality because it encourages individuals with the potential to succeed and it incites drive and ambition. There will be an increase in standard of living as well as an increase in the gap between the rich and poor. When it comes to defining the poor, neo-liberals use the absolute terms that a person without the basic necessities to survive should be considered poor. It is the basic provisions that the State should provide to those who need welfare to sustain life.

Neo-liberals criticize pluralists for believing that interest groups are good for the State. They believe that interest groups prevent resources from being used efficiently.

### **The Marxist Theory of State**

The main idea behind Marx's theory is that the people should determine the form and nature of the State. He said that the State would disappear after it became a separate social sphere, which would occur after society became classless. Engels said that the State was a "power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it." The State has to use its power to prevent a divided society from falling into a civil warfare.

Marx's theory depends on one factor, class conflict. According to this theory, a State did not exist in the early stages of society since there were no differences in classes. Classes did not exist. The State only arose when there was an emergence of two hostile classes each protecting its own interests. The dominant class rose above since they were the owners of means of production. They used their power to exploit and oppress the labor class, and used the State to protect its interest. The State became an organization for the possessing class to protect itself from the non-possessing class.

### **Lenin's Views**

Lenin agreed with Marx's views. The State did not spring up to bring harmony and peace because the true cause was class conflict. He also concurred with Marx's view that the State is "an organ for the oppression of one class by

another, it is the creation of order which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes.”

### **Gramsci's Views**

Gramsci was the great Italian Marxist who believed in the Marxist theory but with to a different extent. He suggests that there were three forces which led to the State originating: forces of leadership, forces opposed to leadership, and auxiliary forces which gave indirect or direct support to forces of leadership.

Another difference is that Gramsci uses the term hegemony for the fact of ideological domination. He thought political domination needed more than just physical expression. Intervention of ideology was necessary, in his mind because “It is in this sense that the dominant ideology appears in the form of its ideological apparatuses which give expression to political power.”

### **Conclusion**

Marxists theory of State suggests that the State did not always exists, and only came to exist due to class antagonism. However, this is not convincing because there are positive sides to the nature of political authority. The State has been used for protection, peace, order and welfare. Most scholars and liberal thinkers agree with Aristotle's view that “State came into being for the sake of life, it continues to exist for the sake of good life only.”

### **The Communitarian Theory of State**

This state is similar to the liberal State with a few differences. Communitarians believe that the communities shape the individuals. Communitarianism is more of a theoretical position more than ideology, but is adopted by different ideologies. Left-wing ideologies have used it to bind the idea of community to social equality. Centrists used the views to believe that community is based on the acceptance of shared responsibilities and rights. Right Wing ideologies argue that community needs respect for authority and set values. While the different ideologies used Communitarianism in their own light, Communitarianism developed into its own school of thought during the 1980s and 90s.

### **History and Importance of Communitarianism**

Communitarianism was a response against imbalances in society and political thought occurred from the spread of liberal individualism. A number of liberal philosophers, such as Barber, Sandel and Walzer, advanced communitarian theories. They argued that liberal individualism was the cause of the disintegration of society due to the lack of morality. A satisfying moral identity,

to them, could only occur through an attachment to community. The influence that communitarians have on liberalism and social democracy has increased and liberalism may develop further in Eastern European countries. It may also be the cause of interesting developments of liberal thought as democratic ideals are spread to countries with drastic economic problems and minimal experience of democracy and freedom.

Opponents of communitarians argue that it has both authoritarian and conservative implications. It is evident that there is conservatism due to their defense for existing moral codes and social structures. In the end, it is understood that Communitarianism is a sect of liberalism and liberal thought attempting to bring back Aristotle's 'politics of common good.'

### **The Post-Colonial State**

The emergence of post-colonial States was due to the awakening of nationalities. Helio Jagnarib suggests that there are three types of post colonial States: the colonial fascist State, the national reformist State, and the socialist State.

In a colonial fascist State, power lies with certain coalitions: foreign capitalists, native capitalists and landowners, military elite, and the bureaucracy. The State usually has a military dictatorship or an oligarchy of landowners.

The national reformist States with sovereignty exercised by the intelligentsia, bourgeoisie, army officers who seize control through coup d'état and bureaucracy.

The socialist State has the main function of raising a large peasant population to a status of self-sufficient industrialized community through central planning. Most countries that use this form of State have gotten rid of pre-capitalist and capitalist social relations, in their monetary life and have organized their economy on a socialist basis.

**Ideologies in the post colonial States: (a) Liberal democracy:** Rousseau's idea of democracy which is different from Western liberal individualism and Marxian socialism.

Macpherson states that post-colonial States idea of democracy is distinctive. These States received their independence only after a struggle against colonial rule, and these struggles were organized movements under leaders who gained huge support for their vision. It was a vision that rejected ideas of liberal-individualism and Marxist class analysis, and was aligned closer to Rousseau's principle of mass democracy and general will.

Their idea of democracy is not liberal-individualist because their culture is not attuned to competition (like their competitive market society.) Additionally, the colonial State did not support free political activity or private enterprise. These States were divided by different categories, so political competition would mean national disunity. There was an emergence of a single nationalist party occurred and, in the post-colonial stage, it meant that there would be single party dominance with minor parties in opposition but ineffective.

Single party dominance was necessary not only for gaining independence but for modernization and economic development. Both of those require a non-liberal nation State governed by a vanguard nationalist party. The opposition is ridiculed and titled anti-national, requiring to be suppressed. In this condition, there is no competitive party system or maintenance of civil liberties. This usually continues until there is economic development. The other factor is that there needs to be loyalty to the nation over than a tribe, caste, region or community.

Despite these non-liberal features of this political system in post-colonial States, there is a sense of democracy because the public can express itself through the single nationalist party. The party is committed to the goals of sovereignty and quick socio-economic development, which is shared with the general public.

### **(b) Marxist Socialism or Marxian Concept of Democracy**

Nationalists agree with most of Marx's analysis of Western capitalist society except his idea of class struggle because revolution is irrelevant to their countries. They also reject the idea of the State as a method for class domination, since they see their struggle against Western capitalism as a national, not class, revolution.

### **Nature and Role of the State in Post-Colonial Societies**

The State understands the need for quick economic development. History has shown that underdeveloped countries of post-colonial States are not able to escape the cycle of structural underdevelopment without a social revolution.

Formal State systems are republican in character, while their real political systems are usually authoritarian, but they are not monarchies or complete dictatorships. Constitutions exist but their constitutionalism is dominated by leaders of dominant parties. They have a political elite usually controlled by a very conservative military elite. Normally no developed parliamentary system exists, but where parliamentary regimes do exist, fragmentation of political

power of progressive social groups arises. Multi-party systems have been the result in some States.

The State usually supports mixed economies with both public and private sectors. There are conflicts, sometimes, in economic policies due to the desire for self-sufficiency and external aid for developmental purposes. Therefore these States have to rely on central planning which requires an authoritarian political structure. A parliament would not be as efficient in this case due to conflicting opinions. Radical elites in these States have rejected the Western democratic ideology and embraced Rousseau's concept of mass democracy.

The authoritarianism does end in totalitarianism due to the practical inefficiency and technological backwardness. An oral agreement to liberal democratic norms is maintained. An authoritarian State is considered necessary during the transition period from underdevelopment to development, but democracy is still the goal to be attained. Post-colonial States have constitutions and legislatures with elements drawn from developed nations. Those two things are what provide legitimacy to authoritarian rule in post-colonial State.

#### Theories of State

Through this chapter we have learnt the core fundamentals of different types of theory of states. The characteristics and features of each of the theory of state are quite different, which is clearly evident through the distinctive approach each of them adopts. Besides, providing an insight into the different theories such as Marxism, Communitarian, Liberal and Social, this chapter also highlighted the political theories that the post-colonial states adopted.















