

Introduction

So long as there is a power difference between individuals, or groups, and it's exercised, there exists politics. Almost all social relations involve politics - the relationship between a father and a son, between a foreman and a daily laborer, and etc. As to Aristotle, man is by nature a political animal¹; and that only gods and beasts can exist without the confines of the sheltering city. Politics, therefore, exists in every aspect of human life. It also means that, it is not only the politicians who exercise power and play politics, but all of us do when we are in some kind of interaction with others.

Societies, ranging from clan groups to nation states, have always used customs, norms, rules, values and regulations to govern relationships between members. They regulated the interests and behaviors of individuals, groups and communities. So, political institutions refer to the social institutions or to that complex of social norms and roles that serve to maintain social order, to exercise power, to compel conformity to the existing system of authority and provide the means for changes in the legal or administrative systems.

Political institutions are those relatively permanent institutions whose concern is the study of how different aspects of power is distributed and exercised.

Political Sociology: Its Meaning and Subject Matter

¹ Aristotle recognizes no basic difference between political and social associations. To him all associations are political in as much as they aim at a common good through joint action; the state differs from other associations in that it aims at the highest good, the general advantage of all.

Political sociology is a science that stands across the gap between the two important social science disciplines-sociology and political science. It is a product of cross-fertilization of sociology and political science. It examines the link between politics and society and analyses the relationship between social structure and political structure, and social behavior and political behavior in society.

The subject matter of political sociology includes the following:

1. Political sociology studies the interrelationship between politics and the society or the interplay between political and social institutions as mutually interdependent and complementary to each other.
2. Political sociology studies the social origin of politics in general. The understanding of the roots of political thought, the views and the ideas of the major political thinkers is the subject matter of the sociology of politics.
3. Political sociology studies the distribution and exercise of power in the society. How are the different aspects of power distributed within the society?
4. Political sociology also tries to understand the structure of the political process.

Political Science and Political Sociology

Political science is a discipline in the social sciences that has two branches: political theory and government administration. Political theory studies the origin and development of political ideas and thought, while government administration tries to describe the formal structure and functioning of the government. Political science restricts itself to the study of power as embedded in formal organizations. Traditionally the discipline is concerned with the study of the state, the government, and public administration. None of these does study the political behavior in depth.

Political sociology, on the other hand, emphasizes on the study of political behavior, (as can be exemplified in voting behavior, political party affiliation and popular participation in decision-making and the like, in more depth than the political science - and that is the difference between the two.

Political sociology, as compared to the political science, has got a number of advantages:

- It allows a student to deal with the relations and structures of the society as a whole, not with the segment of it. It studies power as distributed in all the relationships in the society, not only as embodied in the formal governmental structures. It sees the state and the government as only one aspect of the political institutions; which in turn are part of the society in which they exist.
- It tries to have a holistic approach. Political sociology tries to link up politics with the general theories of society.
- It allows the examination of the variety of structures and institutions that might otherwise be missed-politics in private organizations, in the family, in working places, etc.

By understanding these kinds of distinction between the political sociology and political science, we can define political sociology as a branch of sociology that is mainly concerned with the analyses of the interaction between politics and society.

It is the study of politics at four levels:

1. The political conflict and struggles between states, namely the sociology of international relations;
2. The nature and the role of the state within societies;
3. The nature and organization of political movements and parties; and
4. The participation of individuals in politics, as shown, for example, in voting behavior.

Political Thought

Early Intellectual Roots: The Greeks

Political sociologists place themselves in a number of traditional thought, particularly in the analyses of the so-called the problem of '*the social order*', defined as the process where by the interaction of the members of a social group become patterned or stable over time and the form which they take from time to time.

Efforts to provide answer to the problem of the social order and distribution of power in the society go back at least to the Greek thinkers. And all modern political thinkers can't afford to exclude the influence of the Greek thinkers on modern political sociology. The reasons could include:

1. The Greek socio-political thought was fairly systematized and the problem of social order was nearly spelled out.
2. There occurred a transition from naïve monism² to that of critical dualism³.
3. The Greeks were the first to discovery the problem of the autonomy of the individual and its place and participation in the society.
4. At the time when the theory of society was developed, Greek was like Europe as the time when sociology was developed.

The imperishable contribution of the Greeks to Western civilization lies in the cultivating of man and nature through reason. In the pre-Greek world, advanced people had learned to live with nature by wresting from it, through patient observation, some of its secrets, and by applying them to gainful purposes. The pre-Greek conception of nature viewed physical phenomena as essentially individual, unique, and incalculable rather than about recurrent

² Naïve monism is a belief that society lives in unchanging circles of taboos, laws and customs, which are felt to be inevitable as the rising sun, the cycle of seasons and of similar obvious regularities of nature.

³ Critical dualism is a conscious differentiation between man enforced laws and natural regularities, which are beyond his power.

regularities of inanimate events, but they were the first to develop-going beyond observation and knowledge-the scientific attitude, a new approach to the world that constitutes to this day one of the distinctive elements of western life.

In the field of human relations, too, Greek inventiveness and originality lay, not in this or that political theory, but in the discovery of the scientific study of politics.

Plato (427-347BC)

Because he believes that people are ignorant and he characterized the mass as usually acting in mob, and because he sees the mass usually as irresponsible, he rejected democracy as an efficient form of government. For him, there is no order in democracy. His understanding of the democracy, of course, is very much different from that of the modern understanding of the concept. For him, democracy is the system of government where everybody directly participate in the decision making process. And he rejects it as he says there should be a division of labor. This division of labor shall enable individuals to occupy social positions based on their fields of specialization.

Therefore, he tries to replace democracy by the Republic where only men of virtue should participate in the decision making process.

The Republic is opposed to democracy on two levels of argument: a more obvious explicit level and a less obvious implicit level. The explicit opposition of the Republic to democracy rests on the threefold division of the population in to rulers, fighters, and producers (farmers, artisans, traders). A numerically small aristocracy of rulers, in command of a well-trained body of soldiers and administrators, governs the third class, or producers, which constitutes four-fifth of the total population. Plato claims that the threefold class division of the city is an extension of the principle of the division of labor. Ruling or defending a state, Plato argues, is just as much a specialized craft as shoemaking from making furniture; he is equally excluded from ruling, or defending and administering, the city-functions that constitute special and specialized crafts. The democratic theory of politics challenges Plato

not only in his basic assumption that the capacity to govern is possessed by only a small class, but that such capacity can be transmitted, in general, by selective inbreeding. This platonic concept of a hereditary aristocratic ruling class, not too hermetically closed to talent from below, is rejected by the democratic theory of man and the state that wisdom and understanding may be found in the most unexpected places, in log cabins as well as in stately mansions-in fact, that it is more likely to be found in log cabins.

Plato assumes (in the Republic as in his other writings) that Truth is something eternal, unchanging and unchangeable, and that it can be made accessible to a select few through an ingeniously devised training reserved for the future fighters and rulers. The platonic conception of the Truth is challenged by the modern view of the truth as something much more tentative, hypothetical, fluid and changeable and subject to constant checking and verifying. Further, modern philosophers insist that truth is intimately related with experience, that it can never be fully grasped, that it is an endless process of testing new hypotheses against new experiences, that is not something that exists prior to man, but that is consistently made and remade in doing, rather than discovering in intellectual speculation or in flash of mystical insight.

Plato using the fable developed by Socrates describes the city population of the Republic as composed of three groups and indicates their capacity accordingly:

The Gold people: the class or rulers (guardians in the narrower sense) intellectuals, who have the capacity to administer the masses, to whom he referred to as the philosopher-kings.

The Silver people: the class of military and civilian executive aids (auxiliaries) warriors, soldiers, physically equipped and strong; who can defend their country.

The Iron or the Bras people: the class of producers and the handworkers' ordinary citizens, merchants, artisan, workers, farmers. Plato was an aristocrat who exhibited the bias against labor and business so characteristic of aristocrats in all ages, and the lack of regulations of

the economic order of the producing class in the Republic indicate the contempt of the noblemen for the prosaic existence of those who must work for a living.

According to Plato, the perfect society could only exist when power is in the hands of the Gold people who can understand the absolute moral truths. The rulers should not be allowed to have private property and even their own family. The life of the rulers of the Republic should not be different from that of the rest of the population. If they are allowed to possess private property they would be self-seeking, and self-centered. He contends that the Gold people should be allowed for selective inbreeding, in order to transmit their intellectual and ingenious thinking abilities.

Nevertheless, Plato anticipated the eventual decline of the best state and its degeneration into progressively lower types of constitution. The first of these forms of the state is timocracy, based on the ambition and love of honor and war, “so commonly admired.” The second is oligarchy or plutocracy, the rule of the wealthy; the third is democracy, the rule of the people; the fourth, and the most imperfect, is despotism, which develops inevitably out of the anarchy of the democratic state. In his classification of forms of state, Plato considered democracy the second worst type of government.

Aristotle (384-322BC)

Aristotle opens his book the Politics with two important ideas: 1. the state is a community, and 2. that it is the highest of all communities, which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good. Aristotle may not be the first to consider the state a community, but he was the first to define it clearly as such, and thus he laid the foundation for the organic conception of the state, one of the two major types into which all political theories of the state may roughly be divided. According to him, the state is a natural community, an organism with all the attributes of a living being. The other major type views the state as an instrument, a mechanism, a piece of machinery to be used for purposes and ends higher than itself. This type, called the instrumentalist view of the state, is

actually older, having being propounded by the Sophists a century before Aristotle; however, it was rejected by Plato and revived only in the modern times by Hobbes, Locke, and John Dewey.

But Aristotle maintains not only that the state is a community but that it is the highest community aiming at the highest good. The family is the first form of association, lowest in the chain of social evolution, and lowest on the rung of values, because it is established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants. The village is the second form of association, genetically more complex than the family, and aiming at something more than the supply of daily needs, meeting at least some rudimentary and primitive cultural wants that the family cannot satisfy. The third and the highest form of association is the city state, highest in terms of social evolution and highest in terms of value and purpose: while family and village exist essentially for the preservation of life and the comforts of the companionship, the state exists for the sake of a good life, and not for the sake of life only, and political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not for mere companionship.

In considering the general problem of the various forms of the government, Aristotle says, in an obvious reference to Plato, that there are some who would have none but the most perfect. The knowledge of the best state may have some values as a norm and standard, but on the other hand, the best is often unattainable, and therefore the true legislator and statesman ought to be acquainted, not only with (a) that which is the best in abstract, but also with (b) that which is best relatively to circumstances. Where the attention Plato is centered on the desirable kind of state, Aristotle holds that we should consider, not only what forms of government is best, but also what is possible and what is easily attainable by all. Each forms has its perversion, of which there are also three; tyranny, oligarchy and democracy (the rule of the poor).

In classifying the forms of the state, Aristotle distinguishes governments that are carried on with a view to the common interest from those that serve private interests, whether of one,

of few, or of many. Of true governments, there are three: kingship (the monarchy), aristocracy, and constitutional government.

1. The Monarchy⁴: of the three true forms, Aristotle holds monarchy to be the most ideal kind of government. If a man pre-eminent in virtue can be found, who surpasses in virtue and political capacity all the rest, he cannot be regarded as a part of the state, subject to the law like everybody else. Since there is no law for pre-eminent virtue, monarchs are themselves a law. Their superior virtue and political capacity give them the right to practice compulsion and still live in harmony with their cities, if their government is for the interests of the state. Like Plato, he puts virtue of the rulers above the consent of the ruled, although both would prefer to have the ruled submit voluntarily to their rulers to avoid the necessity of compulsion.
2. The Tyranny: results from the corrosion of the monarchy. This, as that of the monarchy, is a form of government where there is only one ruler. But he is a cruel, unjust and corrupt one. He rules for himself, not for the mass.
3. The Aristocracy: Aristotle defines aristocracy as a government formed by the best men absolutely, and not merely of men who are good relatively, that is, in relation to changing circumstances and constitutions. But Aristotle admits that, in addition to such a pure form of aristocracy, which is based on the merit and virtue only, there is a type of aristocracy that also takes in to account the elements of wealth. Generally, however, Aristotle speaks of monarchy and the aristocracy as the perfect state, the government of the best, both forms aiming at the general good; the main difference between the two consist in the fact that that the monarchy virtue is centered in one pre-eminent man whereas in aristocracy virtue, and therefore the power, is diffused among several men.

⁴ It is a kingly rule; there is one sole ruler. It can be defined as a system of government where there is only one educated ruler-like the philosopher king in the case of Plato.

4. The Oligarchy: the deteriorated form of aristocracy is oligarchy in which the government by the wealthy is carried on for their own benefit rather than for the whole state. Whereas merit and virtue are the distinctive qualities to be considered in selecting the rulers in an aristocracy, wealth is the basis of selection in an oligarchy.

5. The Polity (the Constitutional Government): it is defined by Aristotle as that constitutional form of state where citizens at large are administered for the common interest. This form of government avoids both the extremes of oligarchy and democracy. Constitutional government is a compromise between the two principles of freedom and wealth, the attempt to unite the freedom of the poor and the wealth of the rich, with out giving either principle exclusive predominance. Aristotle concedes that the doctrine of the multitude being supreme rather than the few best, though not free from difficulty, yet seem to contain an element of truth.

6. The Democracy: the degenerate form of constitutional government (polity) is called by Aristotle democracy and defined as a system in which the poor rules. It is government by the poor, and for the poor only, just tyranny is government by one for his own benefit, and oligarchy government by the wealthy few for their class benefit. But of the degenerate forms, government of the poor for the benefit of the poor (democracy) is the most tolerable of the three.

Points on Aristotelian political sociology:

1. The basis of classification is the ethical values of the ruler-particularly the moral and the intellectual virtues. The ethical and moral values and the technical and manual virtues are not evenly distributed among the members of the society, and therefore he who has the more intellectual qualities should assume the position for leadership.

2. He believes in what is called the cyclical theory of social change, that there is no straight line of progress from the simple to the complex, and from the bad to the good.

Early Intellectual Roots: the Roman

Cicero (106-43 B.C.)

The only political thinker who has exercised enduring influence throughout the ages is Cicero (106-43 B.C.). Characteristically, he was not a professional philosopher and leader of a school or academy of his own, but a lawyer and statesman whose works are reflections on politics rather than on political theory.

Cicero's two main works on government are his Republic and Laws, written in obvious reference to Plato's two works of the same title. Superficially there is a great deal in Cicero's two works that appears to be a close imitation of Plato and Aristotle. Yet when it comes to the inner meaning of Cicero's political views, his temper and outlook, there is a remarkable freshness and difference. Most important of all, perhaps, Cicero had a sense of the world, whereas Plato and Aristotle were never be able to go beyond the conception of the city-state as the ultimate in the political organization. Both Plato and Aristotle had no place for mankind in their political theories; the world is divided in Greeks and others, who were barbarian and-as Aristotle clearly avowed-inferior to the cultured Greeks, who had the right to enslave them. By contrast, Cicero had a more universal outlook, fostered by his political and administrative experience in Rome and the empire.

Cicero believed that the whole universe is one commonwealth of which both gods and men are members, and that there is a law valid for all nations and all times. Whereas the Greek view, as typically expressed by Aristotle, held that some people were superior to others, Cicero said that there is no human being of any race who, if he finds a guide, cannot attain to virtue.

One of the characteristic assumptions of both Plato's the republic and Aristotle's politics is the implicit faith that, once general principles of government are laid down, the process of government can be safely entrusted to the rulers. Philosophy, not law, is the queen of both Plato's and Aristotle's masterpieces. By contrast, Cicero-the Roman and the practicing lawyer, the experienced administrator, the fighting statesmen-always speaks of the law whenever he discusses the state: in one of his briefest definitions, the state is a community of law. The rule of the law is important to him, and he says that although we cannot agree to equalize men's wealth, and equality of innate ability is impossible, the legal rights at least of those who are citizens of the same common wealth ought to be equal.

In his reflections on the various forms of the state, Cicero follows the Aristotelian principle that the distinguishing criteria is the end of the state; when its purpose is justice, it makes little difference whether the form is kingship, aristocracy or democracy. More skeptical than Aristotle, however, Cicero did not advocate any of the three desirable forms of the stat, because he feared that kingship might develop too easily in to tyranny, aristocracy in to plutocracy, and democracy in to anarchical mob rule. Cicero therefore considered a balanced combination between kingship, aristocracy, and democracy the best constitution; his belief in the virtue of the mixed constitution went back to Aristotle, but it was also a lesson of Roman political history that an astute observer like Cicero could hardly have missed.

Where Cicero goes further than Aristotle is in his stress on popular consent as the foundation of legitimate government, and on liberty: liberty has no dwelling place in any state except that in which the people's power is the greatest, and surely nothing can be sweeter that liberty; but if it is not the same for all, it does not deserve the name liberty. The principle of popular consent as a source of the law was a commonplace to a Roman lawyer; the conception of the people as a political and legal force in the process of government acquired in Roman constitutional hierarchy connotations and undertones similar to those the word people has acquired again in modern times in the world wide struggles for

democracy and popular government. Plato and Aristotle know of the polis, the city-state, and of social classes, but not of the people. The conception of the people in western thinking is a contribution, not of Roman philosophy, but of Roman public law.

The Medieval Political (Christian) Thought:

St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.)

The medieval period fills the ten centuries between the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century and the revival of ancient thought and learning in the fifteenth century.

When the Visigoths sacked Rome in the A.D. 410, a popular explanation was that it was the fault of the Christians. Christianity had been officially tolerated in the Roman Empire from A.D. 313, and eighty years later it became the official religion of the state, paganism being proscribed and prohibited. Because the fall of Rome in A.D. 410 occurred so soon after the triumph of Christianity, many pagans and perhaps even some Christians were inclined to see a connection between the rise of Christianity-so long as considered officially subversive movement-and the weakening of Roman power.

St. Augustine was moved especially by the pagan attacks that attributed the fall of Rome to the victory of Christianity. He set out to answer two main questions. The first concerns the pagan challenge to Christianity. The rebuttal of paganism, however, is only the more negative part of "The City of God" (a book by St. Augustine). Having demonstrated the hollowness and the inconsistency of paganism, materialism, and worldly success, Augustine proceeds to his more constructive task: the vision of the heavenly city, as contrasted with the earthly city.

As a theologian and passionate Christian who took his faith seriously, St. Augustine was primarily concerned with ways of life and not with organizations of life. The great struggle in the universe is, then, not between the church and the state, but between the opposing ways

of life: in the earthly city, the love of self, the lust of power predominates, whereas in the heavenly city the love of god, even to the contempt of self, is the foundation of order. St. Augustine therefore divides the human race in to two parts, the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to god. And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with god, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil. St. Augustine himself thus emphasizes that the two communities of the heavenly and earthly cities can be called cities only in mystical or allegorical sense.

If man is to become worthy of entry in to the eternal kingdom of heaven, the city of god, there must be some agency on earth, St. Augustine realizes, that leads in the right direction. Although the central meaning of heavenly city is a way of life dedicated to the service of god, St Augustine also uses this term mystically, that is symbolically for the church. It is part of the heavenly city that exists on earth and lives by faith, and it lives like a captive and stager in the earthly city.

Just as the heavenly city symbolically represents, but is not identical with the church, so the earthly city is symbolically reflected in the state. Strictly speaking, the earthly city is not identical with any empirical social or political organization but is the community of the unrighteous, including sinful members of the church and excluding righteous citizens of the state.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274)

St. Thomas suggests two reasons for the necessity of the government even in the state of innocence, before the occurrence of sin and evil: first, man is naturally a social being and so in the state of innocence he would have led a social life. Because there must be some organization of social life, government emerges as the specific organ of looking after the common good. Second, if one man surpasses others in knowledge and justice, it would be wrong to disregard such superiority for the benefit of all. St. Thomas thus bases the need for

government on man's social nature, and the organization of government on the superior wisdom and morality of the ruler for the benefit of the ruled.

St. Thomas agrees with Aristotle that man's social impulse is the origin of the state, and the good life its purpose. But from here on St. Thomas, the Christian theologian, goes beyond Aristotle. For the Greek, bound to this world, the good life of the community included practical and spiritual ends that could be attained by joint communal effort here and now. St. Thomas cannot be satisfied with the community as the ultimate point of reference and the creative source of spiritual values. His Christian, other worldly concern leads him to the view that the Aristotelian doctrine of the good life is still one step short of the ultimate purpose of existence, because through virtuous living man is further ordained to a higher end, which consists in the enjoyment of God. Whereas Aristotle, whose philosophy and ethics were humanistic and this worldly, saw the end of man in values that exist within himself, St. Thomas sees, in addition to such man-centered values, an extrinsic good that does not exist in man himself and that is yet the supreme value, namely, final beatitude which is looked for after death in the enjoyment of God.

Because society has the same end as the individual, the ultimate purpose of social life is not merely virtuous living, but through virtuous living to attain the possession of God. If man and society could attain this supreme end by human power, the king (as the supreme representative of human power) could guide them in the right direction. However, St. Thomas argues, the possession of God can be attained only by divine power, and human government is unable to guide men towards this end. The ministry of the kingdom of God is not in the hands of earthly kings, but of priests, and above all the chief priest to whom all kings are to be subject as to Christ himself.

St. Thomas has always looks on the world in hierarchical terms, and his system of values is hierarchical, too. Applying the Aristotelian principle that the one to whom it pertains to achieve the final end commands those who execute the things that are ordained to that

end, St. Thomas arrives at the conclusion that secular government is subject to the church because the former is concerned with intermediate ends, whereas the latter is concerned with the ultimate end, the salvation of souls.

As to the nature and form of political authority, St. Thomas Aquinas starts with the premise that government is related to the divine order. Therefore, because the commandments of God include the duty of obedience to superiors, disobedience to the commands of a superior is a mortal sin. St. Thomas follows Aristotle in classifying the forms of government in to good types, in which the interest of the governed is served, and the bad types, in which the interest of the ruler or the rulers prevails. But, whereas Aristotle, with some hesitation and only under qualified circumstances, preferred the monarchy as the best form of government, St. Thomas is much more unequivocal in his choice of monarchy.

Aristotle preferred monarchy because he believed that it was not likely that superior moral and intellectual qualities could be found in more than one man; his hesitation in committing himself absolutely can be attributed to his doubt that the right man can be found. St. Thomas, on the other hand, derives his preference for the monarchical form of government from his religious view of the world. He noticed that in the whole universe there is one God, Maker and Ruler of all things. In the multitude of bodily members, the heart rules all the others; among the bees, there is one king bee, and generally every natural government is government by one. The governing element represents, in a multiplicity of things, their purpose and guiding principle. In political society, the main practical task and purpose is the unity of peace. St. Thomas identifies unity with peace; he is therefore led to the conclusion that one ruler is most likely to maintain the peace that goes with complete unity, whereas a government made up of several persons might endanger social peace and stability through disagreement.

But St. Thomas seeks to delimit monarchy so that it will not disintegrate into tyranny⁵. First, he prefers elective to hereditary kingship: elective heads ruled both papacy and empire. Second, he suggests that the king's power be so tempered that he cannot easily fall into tyranny. St. Thomas stresses the important concept that all should take some share in the government, and he also views sympathetically the idea of the mixed constitution in which aristocracy supplements monarchy and popular elements of participation in government.

Renaissance and Reformation Political Thought:

Only in the fifth century Athens has the world seen the dazzling artistic brilliance and fabulous intellectual vitality that characterized the Renaissance. The rebirth and rediscovery of antiquity were both cause and effect: on the one hand, the renaissance helped to revive the rational, this-worldly, secular, scientific spirit that had lain dormant through many centuries of medieval encasement; on the other hand, the renaissance was itself the effect of man's growing relentlessness as well as of changing social and technological conditions.

The most important discovery of the renaissance—more significant than any single work of art or any one genius—was the discovery of man. In antiquity the sense of tribal kinship had not favored the growth of individualism, of isolation from the community. Displacing God, man becomes the center of the universe; the values of this new solar system are inevitably different from those of the God-centered universe.

Among the centers of the Renaissance, Florence was always first, reaching at its climax in Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), who most perfectly represented, and lived, the renaissance ideal of universal man, creative in painting and the arts, inventive in science and engineering and accomplished in philosophy and letters. In the study of politics, the new learning finds its clearest expression in Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527).

⁵ St. Thomas relates the tyranny of the ruler to the sins of the ruled; tyrants rule by divine permission, as a punishment for the sins of the subjects. If God is to help them against the tyrant, the people must desist from sin.

Renaissance and reformation are inextricably interwoven with the birth and growth of the modern national state. In the field of secular thought and experience, the renaissance brought about the rediscovery of the ancient world and witnessed the immense broadening of man's horizon through the discovery of the New World. In the field of religious thought and experience, the renaissance opened the gates to a new religious world through the Protestant Reformation.

The first leaders of the reformation denied any revolutionary intentions and merely claimed to return to the early sources of Christianity, faith and the Scriptures. In this sense, Protestantism was a part of the general process of rebirth, the religious aspect of the renaissance. In the fifteenth century, the conciliar movement had attempted to reform the church from within but failed. Yet in its very failure it had revived the important conception of the congregational character of church authority, with its corollary that office was in the nature of trusteeship rather than an inalienable power. When reform from within failed, revolution from without took its place.

Prior to the thirteenth century, as long as the church had withstood the attacks of critics who did not take any religion seriously, it was able to win easily, either by disregarding its critics, by trying to persuade them, or by burning them alive on the stake. The strength of reform movements from the thirteenth century on lay in the fact that the critics of Rome were passionately religious. They assailed the papacy for having lost the original ideals of Christian faith and for having become corrupted by the worldly ambitions of lust, wealth and power. For three centuries, therefore, the reform movements within the church had to be held down by all sorts of compulsion and kept in isolation; in the end, the pressure for unity within the church proved stronger than the forces for reform.

In the sixteenth century, however, the reformist tendencies-now driven into revolution by the obstinacy of the church-were more successful because they were allied with other social forces of the time. Nowhere was the issue purely religious; in all countries it was mixed with

political, dynastic, economic and diplomatic considerations. Although the age of reformation was truly religious, unscrupulous persons to cloak less lofty aspirations readily used religion.

From the viewpoint of the expansion of political liberty, the first protestant church, Lutheranism had little effect, either in Germany or elsewhere. Martin Luther (1483-1546) stressed the inner aspects of religious experience, faith rather than good works: faith alone is the righteousness of a Christian and the fulfilling of all the commandments. Luther argued that liberty is in the conscience and spirit of man, and has no relation to his political or social condition, for that is making Christian liberty an utterly carnal thing. His ideas on government and the relations of the rulers and the ruled were most clearly and systematically expressed in his book "Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (1523). Luther emphasized that government is ordained by God, and that the subjects must obey their rulers, even though their rule be unjust or cruel. His profound pessimism about men in all stations-rulers and ruled-was reflected in his statement that the world is too wicked, and does not deserve to have many wise and pious princes. Frogs need storks.

As long as Protestantism was mainly Lutheran, it made little headway in France. But there was a vigorous tradition of anticlericalism and antipapalism in France from the Middle Ages on, and the sense of urgent change grew stronger in the sixteenth century. Protestantism became a national force in France, with an intellectual character of its own, after the appearance of a French leader, John Calvin (1509-1564).

Unlike Luther, Calvin admitted the right of resistance to tyrannical rulers, provided that resistance was in the hands of the magistrates and organized estates, rather than lawless mobs, or in the hands of a secular savour selected by God to deliver the people from tyranny. In the total doctrine of Calvin, the stress was more on obedience than on resistance.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1519)

The most revolutionary aspect of The Prince⁶ is not so much what it says as what it ignores. Before Machiavelli, all political writings-from Plato to Aristotle through the Middle Ages to the renaissance-had one central question: the end of the state. Political power was assumed to be a means only- a means in the services of higher ends, such as justice, the good life, freedom, or God. Machiavelli ignores the issue of the end of the state in extra political (ethical, religious, cultural) terms. He assumes that power is an end in itself, and he confines his inquiries in to the means that are best to acquire, retain, and expand power. Machiavelli thus separates power from morality, ethics, religion, and metaphysics, and sets up the state as an autonomous system of values independent of any other source.

If he follows the value system of the state, the statesmen may violate other value systems, such as religion, ethics, or morality. Machiavelli thus develops the idea of the reason of the state, under which many acts are permissive, even obligatory, that would be considered heinous crimes if judged in the courts of religion or morality.

In the actions of rulers the end justifies the means. Let the prince therefore aim at concurring and maintaining the state, and the means will always be judged honorable and praised by every one. In The Discourses, Machiavelli defines the reason of the state even clearly: for where the very safety of the country depends up on the resolution to be taken, no consideration of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, nor of glory or shame, should be

⁶ 1. Constant readiness for war: a prince should therefore have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study, but war and its organization and discipline, for that is the only art that is necessary to one who commands, and it is of such virtue that it not only maintains those who are born princes, but often enables men of fortune to attain to the rank. And one sees, on the other hand, that when princes think more of luxury than of arms, they lose their state. The chief cause of the lose of states, is the contempt of this art, and the way to acquire them is to be well versed in the same.

4. Cruelty and clemency: is it better to be loved or feared? There arises the question whether it is better to be loved more than feared, or feared more than loved. The reply is that one ought to be both feared and loved, but as it is difficult for the two to go together, it is much better to be feared than loved, if one of the two has to be wanting. Still, a prince should make himself feared in such a way that if he does not gain love, he at any rate avoids hatred; for fear and the absence of hatred may well go together, and will be always attained by one who abstains from interfering with the property of his citizens and subject or with their women.

allowed to prevail. But putting all other considerations aside, the only question should be: what course will save the life and liberty of the country?

Machiavelli never praises immorality for its own sake; his basic attitude is not one of nihilism: he neither assumes that there are no values in this world, nor wishes to create a world in which all values would be destroyed. Machiavelli is aware that civilization implies some sort of values. His amorality implies therefore, not the denial of moral values in all situations, but the affirmation that, in the specific situation of the statesmen, the rules of power have priority over those of ethics and morality. What is evil from the viewpoint of morality and religion may therefore be good from the viewpoint of the reason of the state, if it serves to acquire, retain, or expand power.

Good and evil are thus reduced from absolute categories, and it depends on the basic assumption of a system of value whether a particular action is good or bad. If the basic assumption and the objective of conduct is friendship, service, fellowship, justice, or God, the individual action will be judged good or bad to the extent that it agrees with, or deviates from such assumptions and goals. If, as for the ruler, the basic assumption is power, the decision as to whether a particular action is good or bad will depend on the extent to which it furthers the gain, retention, and growth of power. Assuming power as the end of politics, goodness thus coincides with efficiency: an efficient means of acquiring, consolidating, and expanding power is good; an inefficient means, bad.

Efficiency in politics thus is analogous to virtue in morals or religion, and inefficiency replaces the concept sin. Machiavelli himself still uses the term virtue for the successful ruler, but he mean the ambitious, ruthless, crafty, successful ruler, and not the ruler who is regular churchgoer, mindful of other men's wives, and generally a practicing moralist.

Machiavelli's views on morals and religion illustrate his belief in the supremacy of power over the other social values. He has no sense of religion as deep personal experience, and

the mystical element in religion-its supernatural and suprarational character-is alien to his outlook. Yet he has a positive attitude towards religion; albeit his religion becomes a tool of influence and control in the hands of the ruler over the ruled. Machiavelli sees in religion a poor man's reason, ethics, and morality put together, and where religion exists it is easy to introduce armies and discipline.

The role of religion as a mere instrument of political domination, cohesion and unity becomes even clearer in Machiavelli advice that the ruler support and spread religious doctrines and beliefs in miracles that he knows to be false. The main value of religion to the ruler lies in the fact that it helps him to keep the people well conducted and united, and from this viewpoint of unity it makes no difference whether he spreads among them true or false religious ideas and beliefs.

Unlike later Machiavellians, Machiavelli himself was saved from extremism by prudence and moderation. In both The Prince and The Discourses there are numerous passages in which Machiavelli counsels the prince to be temperate, not to be uselessly cruel or arrogant, for to incur hatred without any advantage is the greatest temerity and imprudence. The ruler should use threats or insults, because neither diminishes the strength of the enemy but makes him only more cautious and dispose to hate.

As one examines the references to rulers in The Prince more closely, one finds that Machiavelli was not interested in all forms of state, nor in all forms of power. What fascinated him above all was the dynamics of illegitimate power; he was little interested in states whose authority was legitimate, as in hereditary monarchies, but was primarily concerned with new dominions both as to prince and state. He realized that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more doubtful to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. His primary concern with founders of new governments and states illuminates his attitude on the use of unethical means in politics. The founders of the new states are, in effect, revolutionaries, and it is inevitable that in reducing politics to

war and revolution, one arrives at an outlook in which the extraordinary becomes the ordinary and the abnormal the normal.

Because of his admiration for the outstanding man (and only outstanding man can successfully found a new dominions), Machiavelli was little interested in the institutionalized framework of politics. He realized that in a period of institutional instability there is less need of the adventurer. In fact, as Machiavelli clearly sees, democrats hate war and revolution: the normal restraints and decencies are then imperiled by the necessity for sheer physical survival, and the habits of institutional stability are more easily subverted than in normal peace time.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

Unlike most defenders of the absolute government, who start out with the gospel of inequality, Hobbes argues that men are naturally equal in mind and body. As to strength of the body, the weakest has enough strength to kill the strongest, either by assassinating him secretly or by allying himself with others for the purpose. With regards to mental faculties, Hobbes finds ever a greater natural equality. Prudence is a matter of time and experience that can be acquired by everybody. Most persons think that they have more wisdom than their fellow men, but this in itself, Hobbes remarks cynically, is proof that men are equal rather than unequal.

This basic equality of men is a principal source of trouble and misery. Men have, in general, equal faculties; they also cherish like hopes and desires. If two men desire the same thing, which cannot both obtain, they become enemies and seek to destroy each other. In the state of nature, therefore, men are in a condition of war, of every man against every man, and Hobbes adds that the nature of war consists, not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto. Force and fraud, the two cardinal virtues of war, flourish in this atmosphere of perpetual fear and strife, fed by three psychological causes: competition, diffidence, and glory. In such a condition, there is no place for industry, agriculture,

navigation, trade; there are no arts or letters; no society,, no amenities of civilized living, and worst of all, there is continual fear and danger of violent death: and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Pessimism as Hobbes may seem, he is not hopeless about man's ability to overcome the mess in which he finds himself in the state of nature. The fear of death is the passion that inclines men to peace: the attractions of power and glory give way to the desire for securing, as a minimum, life, and-if possible- the means of ample existence. Once man realizes that his fear of death is primarily due to brutal competition, resulting in perpetual war of all against all, reason shows the way out: to accept the principle of not doing that to another things which seem unreasonable to be done by another to yourself.

However, on the basis of Hobbes analyses of the nature of man, a contract among men not to do to one another what they would not wish to have done to themselves would not be sufficient. Though man has the capacity to learn prudence and moderation from his fear of death, his desire for power and glory may tempt him to break his pledge unless there is a restraining power strong enough to keep him to his promise, because covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. If men are peaceable enough, Hobbes notes, to observe covenants without a superior authority for their enforcement, there would be no need for government in the first place, because there would be peace without compulsion. To make the counsel of prudence, born of the fear of death, issue in effective peace, a sovereign authority-one man or an assembly of men-must be created to whom all power is transferred.

The social contract of Hobbes is made between subjects and subjects, not between subjects and the sovereign. The sovereign is not a party to the contract, but its creation. In this conception of the social contract, the sovereign cannot commit any breach of covenant, because he is not a party to it.

The question of the best form of state is not one of logic, according to Hobbes, but of convenience, that is, of the aptitude of the state to produce the security and peace of the people for which the government is instituted. However, on purely practical grounds Hobbes considers the monarchy the best form of state because it suffers less from competition for office and power than do aristocracies and democracies; also, it is easier for one than for many to act resolutely and consistently. Hobbes was solely concerned with the practical question of effective government and legitimacy did not interest him at all.

Sovereign power is incommunicable and inseparable, and Hobbes attacks any institution, town or private corporation, that may weaken the supremacy of the state. He is strongly opposed to division of powers or mixed government.

To keep the authority of the state strong, Hobbes advises the sovereign not to allow the growth of groups and institutions that intervene between the state and the individual. Hobbes is particularly anxious to prevent churches from interfering in any way with the activities of the state. He reminds the clergy that it is not essential to the commonwealth, and that the safety of the church depends on the state rather than the state on the safety of the church.

Worth noting essentials in the Leviathan:

- ✓ First, the government is set up, according to Hobbes, by a covenant that transfers all power and authority to the sovereign.
- ✓ Second, Hobbes assigns to the state the ordinary business: to maintain order and security for the benefits of the citizens.
- ✓ Third, Hobbesian state is authoritarian, not totalitarian. Above all, Hobbes pleads for equality before the law, so that the rich and mighty have no legal advantages over the poor and obscure persons.
- ✓ Fourth, Hobbes holds that the sovereign may be one man or an assembly of men.

- ✓ Fifth, Hobbes recognizes that war is one of the two main forces (the other being the danger of internal disorder) that drive men to set up a state. But whenever he speaks of war, it is *defensive* war, and there is no glorification of war, let alone of *aggressive* war, in the Leviathan.
- ✓ Sixth, the Hobbesian sovereign desires merely-for purposes of maintaining the peace-outer conformity of the subjects to the law. The subject is bound to obey the law, but not bound to believe it, and human governors can take no notice of his belief and interior thought. What Hobbes is concerned about is social peace, not Truth.
- ✓ Seventh, and finally, the Hobbesian state doesn't completely swallow the individual: a man cannot lay down the right of resisting them that assault him by force to take away his life. Since the purpose of a civil society is the preservation and protection of man's life, Hobbes recognizes the inalienable right of the individual to resist when his life is at stake, because man by nature chooses the lesser evil, which is danger of death is resisting, rather than the greater, which is certain and present death in not resisting

The Hobbesian theory of politics rests largely on a hypothesis-the solitary, combative, competitive character of man-that is only a half-truth. It is difficult to see how the brutes who lead a life of nasty savagery in the Hobbesian state of nature should suddenly display the prudent reasoning and cooperative effort that go in to the making of the social contract creating the sovereign. A group that knows the institutions of the contract is well beyond the state of nature, and it would perhaps be truer to say that contract is the product of society rather than society the product of contract.

John Locke (1632-1704)

Like Hobbes, Locke starts out with the concept of the state of nature. Yet from this starting point on, Locke travels in a different direction and arrives at a different destination. Unlike Hobbes, whose state of nature is little different from the jungle in which force and fraud reign supreme, Locke takes an optimistic view. In the Hobbes state of nature there is no

natural law, only natural rights, each individual doing as he sees fit his preservation and enhancement of power. By contrast, Locke's conception of man in the state of nature is not noticeably different from man in the organized society. Lock cannot conceive of human beings living together without some sort of law and order, and in the state of nature it is the law of nature that rules: the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that the law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.

The law of nature, through the instrument of reason, defines what is right and wrong; if a violation of the law occurs, the execution of the penalty is, in the state of nature, put into every man's hands, whereby every one has a right to punish the transgressors of that law to such a degree, as may hinder its violation. Locke notes that without some agency of enforcement there can be no, law, and that in the law of nature the injured party is authorized to be judged in his own case and to execute the judgment against the culprit.

The law of the state of nature is thus deficient in three important points. *First*, it is not sufficiently clear. If all men were guided by pure reason they would all see the same law. But men are biased by their interests and mistake their interests for general rules of the law. *Second*, there is no third-party judge who has no personal stake in disputes. Men who judge their own conflict are apt to be carried away by passion and revenge. *Third*, in the state of nature the injured party is not always strong enough to execute the just sentence of the law: thus mankind is quickly driven in to society. The purpose of the social contract is to establish organized law and order so that the uncertainties of the state of nature will be replaced by the predictability of known laws and impartial institutions.

After society is set up by contract, government is established, not by a contract, but by a fiduciary trust. The legislature is the supreme power to which all other powers, particularly the executive, must be subordinated. Yet the legislature is only relatively supreme among

organs of government. Above the legislature there is still something higher: the people. Locke conceives of the institution of the legislature as a fiduciary power.

When Hobbes described the establishment of society and government, he carefully confined the act of covenant to the subjects; they set up the sovereign, transferring to him all power.

There was no contract between subjects and the sovereign, only between subjects and subjects, because Hobbes was anxious to avoid a conception of the government that had duties, under a contract, toward the governed. Similarly Locke confines the act of covenant to the sitting up of society but not of government; yet his aim is exactly the opposite of Hobbes's. Locke's government is not a party to any contract with the people, because he does not wish to give the state any rights against the people. Locke's state never becomes the Hobbesian sovereign but always remains an instrument of the purposes that a society sets for it. As a strong believer in natural law, Locke assigned to government the task of finding the law rather than that of making it in the Hobbesian manner. Law precedes the state in Locke, but follows it in Hobbes.

Hobbes was strongly impressed with the need for compulsion to maintain social cohesion that he could not envisage society without government. The dissolution of the government meant for him the end of all order and restraint, the cessation of civilized living, and the return to the barbarous state of nature. Locke enunciates one of the principal doctrines of classical liberalism by drawing a sharp distinction between the state and the society. Of the two, society is by far the more important and enduring. The dissolution of the government doesn't entail that of the society, whereas if society is dissolved, it is certain that the government of that society cannot remain. But when government is dissolved, Locke doesn't anticipate chaos-as did Hobbes-but trusts that society will set up a new government to serve its ends and purposes.

Absolute monarchy is, according to Locke, no form of civil government at all, and, in fact, worse than the state of nature. In the latter, everybody is judged in his own case, whereas in absolute monarchy there is only one person who has that liberty: the king.

Locke's insistence that there is a higher law above the law of the state has led to the conception, so deeply ingrained in the traditions of democratic nations, that obedience to the law is a high, but not the highest, civil virtue. Opponents of democratic government have charged that making political rule dependent on consent of the ruled lays ferment for frequent rebellion, as Locke puts it. Locke does not deny the charge, but asserts that his hypothesis invites anarchy and rebellion no more than any other. *First*, when the people are made miserable, they will rebel under any form of government. *Second*, Locke emphasizes that men do not revolt up on every little mismanagement in public affairs. *Third*, government by consent, coupled with the right of the people to rebel is the best fence against rebellion. The more the channels of free communication and consent are maintained in a society, the less the need for revolution.

Locke's defense of the right to rebel seemed to the makers of the American Revolution highly reasonable. Thomas Jefferson, in many respects a Lockean rationalist and lover of freedom and toleration, expressed the American version of Locke's theory of rebellion in the classical phrase that the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.

Modern Political Thought:

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Marx's Philosophy

The notion of labor is fundamental in Marx's thought. Basically, Marx argued that it is human nature to transform nature, and he calls this process of transformation "labor" and the

capacity to transform nature labor power. For Marx, this is a natural capacity for a physical activity, but it is intimately tied to the human mind and human imagination:

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.

Beyond his claim about the human capacity to transform nature, Marx makes no other claims about "human nature."

Although "labor power" for Marx is human nature, he did not believe that all people worked the same way, or that how one works is entirely personal and individual. Instead, he argued that work is a social activity, and that the conditions and forms under and through which people work are socially determined and change over time.

Marx's analysis of history is based on his distinction between the means of production, literally those things, like land and natural resources, labor, and technology, that are necessary for the production of material goods, and the social relations of production, in other words, the social relationships people enter into as they acquire and use the means of production. Together these comprise the mode of production; Marx observed that within any given society the mode of production changes, and that European societies had progressed from a feudal mode of production to a capitalist mode of production. In general, Marx believed that the means of production change more rapidly than the relations of production (for example, we develop a new technology, such as the Internet, and only later do we develop laws to regulate that technology). For Marx this mismatch between base and superstructure is a major source of social disruption and conflict.

Marx understood the "social relations of production" to comprise not only relations among individuals, but between or among groups of people, or classes. As a scientist and

materialist, Marx did not understand classes as purely subjective (in other words, groups of people who consciously identified with one another). He sought to define classes in terms of objective criteria, such as their access to resources.

Marx was especially concerned with how people relate to that most fundamental resource of all, their own labor-power. Marx wrote extensively about this in terms of the problem of alienation. As with the dialectic, Marx began with a Hegelianian notion of alienation but developed a more materialist conception. For Marx, the possibility that one may give up ownership of one's own labor -- one's capacity to transform the world -- is tantamount to being alienated from one's own nature; it is a spiritual loss. Marx described this loss in terms of commodity fetishism, in which people come to believe that it is the very things that they produce that are powerful, and the sources of power and creativity, rather than people themselves. He argued that when this happens, people begin to mediate all their relationships among themselves and with others through commodities.

Commodity fetishism is an example of what Marx and Engels called false consciousness, which is closely related to their understanding of ideology. By ideology they meant ideas that reflect the interests of a particular class at a particular time in history, but which are presented as universal and eternal. Marx and Engels point was not only that such beliefs are wrong; they serve an important political function. Put another way, the control that one class exercises over the means of production includes not only the production of food or manufactured goods, it includes the production of ideas as well (this provides one possible explanation for why members of a subordinate class may hold ideas contrary to their own interests). Thus, while such ideas may be false, they also reveal in coded form some truth about political relations. For example, although the belief that the things people produce are actually more productive than the people who produced them is literally absurd, it does reflect the fact (according to Marx and Engels) that people under capitalism are alienated from their own labor-power. Another example of this sort of analysis is Marx's understanding of religion, summed up in a passage from the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right:"*

Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

Marx's Critique of Capitalism

Marx argued that this alienation of labor power (and resulting commodity fetishism) is precisely the defining feature of capitalism. Prior to capitalism, markets existed in Europe where producers and merchants bought and sold commodities. According to Marx, a capitalist mode of production developed in Europe when labor itself became a commodity -- when peasants became free to sell their own labor-power, and needed to sell their own labor because they no longer possessed their own land or tools necessary to produce. People sell their labor-power when they accept compensation in return for whatever work they do in a given period of time (in other words, they are not selling the product of their labor, but their capacity to work). In return for selling their labor power they receive money which allows them to survive. Those who must sell their labor power to live is a "proletarian." The person who buys the labor power, generally someone who does own the land and technology to produce, is a "capitalist" or "bourgeois." (NOTE: Marx considered this an objective description of capitalism, distinct from any one of a variety of ideological claims of or about capitalism).

Marx distinguished capitalists from merchants. Merchants buy goods in one place and sell them in another; more precisely, they buy things in one market and sell them in another. Since the laws of supply and demand operate within given markets, there is often a difference between the price of a commodity in one market and another. Merchants hope to capture the difference between these two markets. According to Marx, capitalists, on the other hand, take advantage of the difference between the labor market and the market for whatever commodity is produced by the capitalist. Marx observed that in practically every successful industry the price for labor was lower than the price of the manufactured good.

Marx called this difference "surplus value" and argued that this surplus value was in fact the source of a capitalist's profit.

The capitalist mode of production is capable of tremendous growth because the capitalist can, and has an incentive to, reinvest profits in new technologies. Marx considered the capitalist class to be the most revolutionary in history, because it constantly revolutionized the means of production. But Marx believed that capitalism was prone to periodic crises. He suggested that over time, capitalists would invest more and more in new technologies, and less and less in labor. Since Marx believed that surplus value appropriated from labor is the source of profits, he concluded that the rate of profit would fall even as the economy grew. When the rate of profit falls below a certain point, the result would be a recession or depression in which certain sectors of the economy would collapse. Marx understood that during such a crisis the price of labor would also fall, and eventually make possible the investment in new technologies and the growth of new sectors of the economy.

Marx believed that this cycle of growth, collapse, and growth would be punctuated by increasingly severe crises. Moreover, he believed that the long-term consequence of this process was necessarily the empowerment of the capitalist class and the impoverishment of the proletariat. Finally, he believed that were the proletariat to seize the means of production, they would encourage social relations that would benefit everyone equally, and a system of production less vulnerable to periodic crises.

Max Weber (1864-1920)

His ideas are discussed in detail in the following sections: bureaucracy, the theory of domination, and etc.

Concepts in Political Sociology

Politics

In a very narrow, restrictive sense, limiting the concept to formal government structures, Weber defines politics as “striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power whether among states or groups within a state”. For him politics refers to the peculiar social structure known as the state. This definition of the concept excludes politics in stateless societies, in business organizations and in other non-formal non-governmental institutions.

On the other hand, the sociological conception of the term stresses the presence of politics in all social relationships. In this tradition, politics is argued to be used for the resolution of human conflict, and for the allocation of resources in the society. Therefore, it is a process by means of which society makes decisions and evolves policies and it is also an instrument for the exercise of power and influence in the society. And again politics is argued for the maintenance of public order not necessarily through the employment of the police, the courts but also through chiefs and other personalities.

Politics has got to do with the exercise of power in all social relationships, so long as there is a power difference. Politics, therefore, from this perspective is endemic to social life.

The State and the Government

The State

The definition of the state includes the following three elements:

1. Set of social institutions: the state recruited personnel man these institutions.
2. There is always geographically bounded territory: the set of social institutions exist within the geographically delimited territory. The state claims legitimacy and sole sovereignty in the defined territory.
3. State monopolizes the making of rules and evolving of policies within that territory.

On the basis of these, Weber offers a definition of the state as “a community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical forces within a given territory”. For him the state is a compulsory political association, for it is through state apparatus that societies resolve conflicts and achieve their stated and unstated social, economic and other objectives. It the necessary social machinery through which the society maintains public order and peace.

Marxist view of the role of the state differs from that of the Weberian perspective in that it contends the state represents and operates in the interest of the dominant classes in a given territory, the interest of those in power.

The Government

The term the government refers to a collection of people who occupy positions of authority within the framework of the state. It can also be used to refer to the regular implementation of the policies and decisions on the part of the officials in a political apparatus. These people in the government apparatus have formalized goals; backed by the army and they work in a defined territory.

Therefore, the state refers to the organized social institution; and the government refers to the collection or group of people who at a given point in time occupy a position of authority in the state. Whereas it is difficult (although not impossible) to revolution ally change the state system, which endures with slight adjustment in its evolution and adaptation to the prevailing situation, the government system, as the people occupying the statuses therein leave and got replaced by others, can change.

Power, Authority and Legitimacy

Power

Although much is written on the subject there is no one generally agreed upon definition of power, so remaining to be an area of heated debate.

Some scholars defined power as an ability to do or act. Positions, valued by the society, enable individuals or groups to act on their will. Weber contends on power as if it is an aspect of most social relations.

Most writers (Marx, Weber, Parsons and Mills) who attempted to define power characterized it as a capacity or ability for certain units, of individuals, of groups, of organizations, of classes, etc., to make certain decisions for or impose their will over other social units.

Although power is exercised in every social relationship and in all locations, the context in which it takes place gives its unique structure and form. Based on this, therefore, we can have three different but interrelated forms of power: social, economic and political. *Social power* is power exercised in social and interpersonal relations. It is the ability to induce and influence decisions at group, community and society level. *Economic power* is power based on the possession of economic means of production-the wealthy people. *Political power* is power by virtue of political offices and positions in the government exercise this power.

All these forms of power involve a significant influence and control over other people's behavior and circumstances.

Authority and Legitimacy

In all societies, some forms of power relations are institutionalized and become part of the social structure of the social organization. They are given the stamp of legitimacy, therefore considered right, fair and natural. When such legitimacy is involved, power changes its name and becomes authority.

Authority

Authority is an institutionalized power, a power accepted as natural, fair, right by those who are subjected to its influence. It is a socialized form of power, and therefore, it belongs to the position not to the individual who occupies a position in the social, political, or economic structure of the society.

For Weber there are three different forms of authority or legitimate domination.

Traditional authority is an authority system based on the acceptance of the power of the ruler to dominate because the system has been exercised for long period of time. It is based on belief systems and customs and it is an inherited and ascribed status.

Charismatic authority is an authority system based on a person's exceptional and exemplary qualities.

Rational legal authority is an authority system based on the rules and regulations. This rational legal authority is what we find in most governmental and other bureaucratic institutions in modern societies.

Some contemporary sociologists added a fourth type of authority: *professional authority*⁷, which is based on expertise (knowledge, profession, etc) e.g. medical doctors, architects, etc.

Power and Authority: Points of Intersection

There are four possible points of intersection between power and authority.

- ✓ A government may have both power and authority and therefore can make laws and effectively enforce its policies. Democratic types of governments are examples.
- ✓ A government may have power, but no authority. These are governments that exist because they have the control over the army and the physical force. Their laws and policy decisions are accepted by the people, not as legitimate ones but by fear of punishment. The power of the government is not accepted as legitimate because those who are subjected to it do not accept it as natural and fair. Dictatorial governments are examples.
- ✓ A government may have the moral authority and the claim for mass support, but no power to exercise. There are governments that claim the sole legitimacy of ruling the mass, but without the necessary power for enforcing their policies. Governments in exile are examples.
- ✓ A government may have neither power nor authority. Such a government is very susceptible for attack both from the inside and/or outside.

Legitimacy

Legitimation is a process through which the social system or some aspects of it comes to be accepted as appropriate and generally supported by those who partake in it. Although it has been originally referring to the existence of the king or the queen in their appropriate

places, it nowadays refers to people's attitude about the government regulations as right or wrong.

Of course, any government depends on its effectiveness⁸ and the legitimacy of their political systems for its stability and continual existence.

There are four possible ways how a government could achieve legitimacy:

- ✓ *By governing well*: that is what we call effectiveness: ensuring economic growth, providing defense against invaders, providing justice to all, improving the living standard of the people, etc. In general terms, governing well means prolonged effectiveness and constant economic development. The survival of any government system is dependent up on its ability to meet the needs of the population for a prolonged period of time. Even for democratic form of governments, bringing economic development is important for the maintenance of their legitimacy.
- ✓ *By fair structuring of the government system*: if legislators are elected, if the people are fairly represented and have a say in all the activities that are going on in the country's affair, the subjects are more likely to submit to the government and provide it with legitimacy.
- ✓ *By governing for long period*: long established governments are generally well accepted by their citizens than newly established governments that have got a shaking legitimacy, as people would not trust whether they have to support or not. People tend to consider long established governments as natural and legitimate and they, therefore, would not think otherwise.

⁸ Effectiveness refers to the social and economic growth and development that a government could bring about to its subjects.

- ✓ *By manipulating national symbols:* by using all those things like the national flag, the history of the country and arousing the patriotic feeling of the people will facilitate the legitimacy move of the incumbent government. Manipulating national symbols, addressing some issues that touch the emotions of the citizens will most probably enable the government to command the acceptance of the people. Nonetheless, when the other elements of legitimacy are not present, symbols by themselves will never create legitimacy and the government will eventually collapse.

Types of Political Systems

Totalitarianism and Democracy

Totalitarianism and democracy are the two extreme and ideal types in the classification of political systems. There are differences in societies regarding the amount of power that the ordinary people have to influence the decisions of the government. Most political systems fall in between these two extremes.

Totalitarianism⁹:

History is full of regimes in which power is concentrated in hands of individuals or small bands of individuals. These groups of people can use unrestrained power in every matter that goes in the society. There is no restriction in the power they exercise. If one refuses or compromises their power, he will be subjected to severe punishment. Aristotle and other philosophers, with some difference in the connotation of the term, called this type of government tyranny; and the period in their reign absolutism.

Totalitarianism is any political system in which a citizen is totally subject to state authority in all aspects of day-to-day life. It goes well beyond dictatorship or typical police state measures, and even beyond those measures required to sustain total war with other states. It involves constant brainwashing achieved by propaganda to erase any potential for dissent, by anyone, including most especially the state's agents.

⁹ Authoritarianism

The term authoritarianism is used to describe an organization or a state which enforces strong and sometimes oppressive measures against the population. It is distinguished from totalitarianism both by degree and scope, authoritarian administration or governance being less intrusive and in the case of organizations not necessarily backed by the use of force. For example, the Roman Catholic Church can be accurately described as authoritarian; however, in modern times it lacks the means to use force to enforce its edicts and is not a totalitarian organization.

The distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism was a crucial part of the Kirkpatrick Doctrine, which asserted that the United States could cooperate with authoritarian nations with bad human rights records because they were more capable of fundamental reform and less dangerous than totalitarian nations.

In an authoritarian state citizens are subject to state authority in many aspects of their lives, including many that other political philosophies would see as matters of personal choice.

Typically, the leadership (government) of an authoritarian regime is ruled by an elite group that uses repressive means to stay in power. However, unlike totalitarian regimes, there is no desire or ideological justification for the state to control all aspects of a person's life, and the state will generally ignore the actions of an individual unless it is perceived to be directly challenging the state. Totalitarian governments tend to be revolutionary, intent on changing the basic structure of society, while authoritarian ones tend to be conservative.

Totalitarianism is defined as a system of government where societies controlled by small powerful groups (an elite) where ordinary citizens lack effective control over the government's decision-making process.

It is a system of government where one party controls all the economic, the judiciary, the military, political and etc power in the society. This party attempts to restructure the values of the society, even the private personal life of the citizens. The government strictly manages all the major social institutions in the society, directly or indirectly.

A scholar by the name Carl J. Friedrich gave us some description of totalitarian state systems.

✓ A totalized or all-embracing ideology

One finds only one ideology that totally embraces every other ideology in the society. One can't find other or different views of the world. That single ideology gives explanation for everything that goes on within the society. There is not alternative to that dominant ideology.

✓ A single party

The party is dedicated for the protection of all-embracing ideology.

✓ Police power based on terror

There is a wide spread informers network. The police divide and create an atmosphere of suspicion and fear among citizens. The government governs through the employment of physical force and coercion.

✓ A monopoly of communication medias

All forms of the media are controlled. Everything that will be displayed on public will strictly be censored in light of the interests of the incumbent government. The media's main objective is to teach good things about the government.

- ✓ The monopoly of the agency of the criminal justice system and the armed forces, including the police, the courts, and the prisons.

The entire law making and the law enforcement agencies are under the strict control and supervision of the government. These agents are the principal sources of power for the existence of the system.

- ✓ A centralized economy and the control of all organizations

In order to meet the policy objectives of the party, the economy is subjected to a single direction, a command economy. Government owns everything, private investment is not encouraged; and they are under government control, if there are any.

Democracy¹⁰:

governing.
However, the term is also sometimes used as a measurement of how much influence a people has over their government, as in how much democracy exists. The word democracy originates from the Greek "demos" meaning "the people" and "kratein" meaning "to rule" or "the people to rule" which meant literally: "Rule by the People."

A modern democracy implies certain rights for citizens:

- right to elect government through free and fair elections
- freedom of speech
- the rule of law

Democracy is the most widely cited concept in philosophy, sociology, political science and in other social sciences disciplines. Governments of the modern era claim for democratic legitimacy and democratic form of government, for of the very favorable public attitude attached with democratic forms of government, states all over the world over advertise their democratic attributes.

The word democracy is made of two words: “demo” to the people and “cracy” to the government. Until recent times, the concept was not held in such good esteem. The discussion on democracy as a form of government could be traced back to the Greeks. Nonetheless, for Greek thinkers it was an inefficient form of government. It was equated with a mob rule.

A historical review of democracy reveals the fact that perspectives on democracy are not the same in the 5th century Athens and the 19th and 20th century modern states. The Athenian democracy was direct popular government; all citizens, excluding the slaves and the foreigners and women, used to participate in decision making. All freemen take a direct part in the decisions of public stake. However, such a democratic structuring is very difficult and extremely costly to implement and therefore, rare, in modern times. Therefore, now we are talking about a representative democracy.

Democracy in modern times could be defined as a system of government which basically involves the government of the people, by the people, for the people, where ordinary people have some control over government decision making.

Democracy in the modern complex societies provides constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials. It is also a system of government, the largest possible part of the people influences government decisions through their representatives. Therefore,

-
- human rights
 - freedom of assembly
 - freedom from discrimination

democracy today refers to the system of government acting under constitutionalism. Authority or legitimacy to rule is achieved through delegation and trusteeship.

Though, modern democracy is not just a rule by the majority, it demands the existence of the rights and opinions of the minority. Otherwise, it becomes the tyranny of the majority.

Therefore for a system of government to be fully democratic it has to fulfill the following criteria:

✓ Regular, free and fair election:

There should be a regular periodic election where everyone can stand as a candidate for an office and/or vote freely without intimidation.

✓ Effective participation in the government:

On certain vital national issues, citizens have to be given the opportunity to express their ideas and preference as to the final outcome. Referendum and direct popular participation should be carried out, if demanded by the situation.

✓ Competing political parties:

In order to insure a possible range of options for the voters to choose among, political parties with their own different ideologies and policies should be organized.

✓ The right to vote and voted; and vote must be allocated equally among the citizens.

✓ Freedom of expression and free and independent mass media.

✓ Freedom of association and belief:

The freedom of belonging to associations on social, political or cultural interests of people, and the freedom of individuals to believe should be respected.

- ✓ Civil rights such as the right to protest and demonstrate:

Citizens' rights not to be arrested and detained by the police without trial must be respected.

- ✓ An independent legal system:

The court system should be independent of the control of the dominant group or party. All citizens should be treated equal before the law.

Sample Ingredients of the Democratic System

Democracy is not an easy system of governance to create and maintain. Several elements are demand it to maintain itself as a system. These elements (ingredients) are not the same in all societies.

1. *Substantial Middle Class*

People that are neither poor nor rich form a democratic foundation. If there are too many poor, it creates an inherently unfavorable environment for a democratic system. If there are more members of middle class, they develop an aim at reform, not on revolution and to stability of the democratic system.

2. *The Level of Education*

As country with many educated citizens has a much better chance for sustaining democratic system of administration. Therefore, education is very important in order to maintain a democratic system.

The higher one's education is, the more likely that person to believe in democratic values and support democratic principles. There is a strong correlation, but the characteristic of educational system should be taken in to consideration.

3. Economic Development

Democracy is very much related to the state of economic development. The more well to do the country is, the greater the chance that it will sustain democracy. From Aristotle to present thinkers argue are only in wealthy societies that the mass of the population intelligently participate in politics. It also appears that most of the countries that lack enduring democracy lie in the under developed section of the world. Weber has also written that modern democracy in its clearest form can occur under capitalist industrialization.

Political Culture

Political culture is the accumulated store of the symbols¹¹, belief¹², values, attitudes, norms, and other cultural products that shape and govern political life in a society. It includes both the material and the non material aspects and it is passed form one generation to the next through the process of the so-called political socialization. Political socialization is the process by which individuals in a given society become acquainted with the political system and which to a significant degree determines their perceptions of politics and their relations to political phenomenon.

Political Participation

Political participation is an instrument through which people can influence the selection of government leaders, their actions, policies and decisions. Depending on various factors, it ranges from non-involvement to the holding of political offices. There are a number of arguments regarding the different types of political participation. For example, Lester Wilberth in his classification of the American people holds that there are three major categories of political participation based on their level of participation in the political process: the gladiators (who are active in politics that comprise between 5 to 7 per cent of the total population), the spectators (who have a rudimentary or minimal involvement in

¹¹ Symbols refer to the statue of the heroic figures, the motto, national anthem, the monuments, etc.

¹² Belief refers to the national history, the attitude towards patriots, the politicians, and other leaders, etc.

politics, and it constitute about 60 per cent of the total population),and the apathetic (who do not involve themselves in any type of political participation, which represents about the 33 to 35 per cent of the total population).

A more elaborated classification of the American population on political participation is made by other political sociologists and it is made up of six categories.

Those who are totally passive

(22%)

Those whose political activity is limited to the periodic voting

(21%)

The localists, those whose political activity are confined to political process and issues around their locality

(20%)

Parochials, those who would participate in politics as long as the situation affects their interest

(4%)

Campaigners, those who would involve themselves in politics only in relation to the political process or issue on which they are campaigning

(15%)

Those who are totally active those who are involved in all types of political processes and activities

(18%)

A hierarchy of political participation (highest to lowest)¹³:

Holding Political Offices

¹³ The following hierarchical classification of political participation could be applicable in all societies; but the concentration (the percentage) of the people at each stage or level of the hierarchy differs from one society to the other.

Seeking Political Offices

Active Membership in Political Organizations

Active Membership in Quasi-Political Organization

Participation in Public Meetings and Demonstration

Passive Membership in Political Organizations

Passive Membership in Quasi-Political Organizations

Participation in Informal Political Discussions, (the family, work places, peer groups)¹⁴.

Some Interest In Politics Maintained Through The Mass Media, Press, Etc.

Voting¹⁵

Non-Involvement in Politics¹⁶

However, based on their research findings many scholars in political sociology contended that political participation is essentially a minority activity, only few people participate in politics. They claim for ample correlation why political participation varies according to the socio-economic characteristics of individuals in a given society as it can be observed from the following comparative analyses:

Socio-Economic Characteristics	High Level of Political Participation	Low Level of Political Participation	_____
Education	The Educated	The less educated	_____
Class	The Middle Class	The working / the lower class	
Gender	Men	Women	

¹⁴ Such an intermittent type of political participation is more likely to be formed where there is a crisis situation or when there is an election for a political position.

¹⁵ The act of voting is the minimum active form of political participation and it requires the least commitment and it is over when the election process is over.

¹⁶ Here the situation is that the people, because of some personal (or by choice) or because of some reasons that are beyond their control, fail to participate in any type of political activity.

Age	Middle Aged	The young and the old people	
Marital status	Married	Single	
Area of residence	Urban Residents	Rural residents	Infl
Ethnicity	The Majority	The minorities	uen

Influencing Government Policy in Democratic States

What are the ways that people can use in influencing the decisions made by their representative democratic governments? Two major mechanisms are discussed in the following section.

1. Political Party Membership

Membership in political parties' enables individuals to take part in the formulation of party policies. If the party wins a government office, those policies could be the policies of the government. As political parties are interested in administering by holding political offices, membership in such parties gives an individual an opportunity to influence the trend of social, political and economic development of a country.

2. Pressure / Interest Group Membership

Pressure groups try to put pressure on the government and its legislators to formulate and implement policies that work in their members favor. They are the association of individuals concerned with influencing the government in a manner favorable to the group members' interest. They are important in democratic countries as they serve as a channel to represent the opinions and interests that may escape the due attention of the government and keep the government in touch with the public opinion.

Pressure Groups and the Political Parties: Contrast

1. Whereas political parties seek to promote and/or defend a general cause, pressure groups usually promote and defend a limited and specific cause.
2. Pressure groups advocate the interests and preferences of their members and, like the political parties; they employ different techniques to solicit the public interest. However, unlike political parties, pressure groups are not interested in holding governmental offices. They try to influence those in power towards certain policy directions. But there are instances where interest groups develop in to political parties, like the Labor Party in England.

Types of Pressure or Interest Groups

1. Protective or Defensive Groups

A pressure group concerned with defending the shared sectoral interest of the members of the group is called protective or defensive group. The group strives to influence the government to formulate policies that would protect and/or defend the interests of its members (e.g. Trade Unions, Professional Associations, etc).

2. Promotional Groups

Pressure groups concerned with the promotion of a particular cause rather than protecting and defending the interests of a particular group are called promotional pressure group. Here the cause is broader than for protective pressure groups. These groups intend to promote the benefit the general public rather than the exclusive interests of the members (e.g.: Anti-Apartheid Movement, Green Peace, Anti-Smoking Movement, Anti-HIV Movement, etc.).

Strategies pressure groups employ in influencing political decision making includes one or a combination of Lobbying, Funds political parties that support a cause, Advertisement, Holding public meetings and demonstrations, Organizing petitions, Opinion polls, Strikes, etc.

Theories of Political Process

Theories in political sociology try to explain how power is distributed, who rules given society, and what techniques and strategies that the rulers use in subordinating the ruled.

The Elite Theory

A superior social group in a society in terms of ability, privileges, etc. is described as elite. Elitism is a doctrine that assumes some groups always get an upper hand and rule the mass.

The elitist perspective found an early expression in the works of 19th and 20th century European sociologists as V. Pareto, G. Mosca, R. Michels, and C. Mills. They contended that the concentration of power in the hands of elite group is inevitable in modern societies. They portrayed all societies as dominated by the few who rule and many who are ruled. The masses can't and don't govern themselves.

At the core of the elite theory lays the conception that a society is divided in to two groups and there are minorities (the elite group) who rule the society and make decisions in a society.

There are three different approaches under the elite theory

Elite theorist

Approach

Vilfredo Pareto	Psychological Approach	
Gaetano Mosca	Organizational Approach	
Robert Michels	Organizational Approach	V.
Wright Mills	Institutional Approach	Paret

o (the Italian): Psychological Elitist

Pareto suggested that any society is consisting of two classes: the higher stratum (the elite) and the lower stratum (the mass or the non-elite). Pareto believed that every society is ruled by a minority, a group that possesses those qualities that are necessary for political and social leadership. Those who get at the top are the best and they are called the elite, consisted of those successful individuals in education, economy, politics, etc. The elite group has got two sub-divisions, where we have the governing group and the non-governing group.

For Pareto, the governing elite is the ruling class which directly or indirectly influences the political decision making process. The non-governing elite is made up of those persons who hold a leadership positions in a society (such as the engineers, the lawyers, the physicians, the social scientists, etc.), but who are not directly involved in the political decision making process.

Pareto rejects the Marxist notion of Economic Determinism that people become leaders because of their economic resources. He argues that the elites are largely the products of their individual human attributes. The elite have got better and superior qualities. As he emphasized the individual unique qualities for leadership, his approach is referred to as psychological. He contended that the elite have got superior psychological abilities in order to get obedience from the mass.

Pareto views history as an endless alternation or circulation of power elite: new elite comes to replace the older. He argued that no matter what form of government, there is always a circulation of elites and it is always the privileged minorities (the elite) who run the show.

G. Mosca and R. Michels: Organizational Elitists

Both personalities believed in the existence of the so-called the elite group and they contend that its domination of the society rests on its organizational abilities and position. For them, the organized minorities rule or manipulate those that are the less or unorganized mass.

G. Mosca (the Italian): Organizational Elitist

He argued that in all societies two classes of people could be discerned, which he referred to as a class destined to rule and a class destined to be ruled. According to him, whatever the form of the government, power is always concentrated in the hands of few organized minorities that dominate the disorganized majority.

The minority (the elite) dominates the majority (the mass) because of its highly organized system of communication involving superior individuals. These qualities of the minorities are results of their elite social background rather than their biologically inherited factors. For him the majority is usually disorganized. Individuals in the majority stand alone.

Mosca divided the elite in to the upper stratum, a small group of political decision makers, and the lower (the sub-elite) stratum, the whole middle class in a society that performs in lesser leadership positions. The second group includes those individuals in the public institutions, managers, scholars, physicians, the technocrats, etc. and is so vital in any society. They serve as a channel or as a bridge of information between the minority and the majority and provide information for decision making. This group is also a source of recruitment for the upper elite group.

Mosca believes that the stability of any political organization or government depends on the level of morality and intelligence the second group attained and the *bustle* accomplished by the group. Mosca agrees with Pareto that there is always a circulation of elite, in an endless chain, and it is always the elite group that rules the society not the majority.

R. Michels (the German): Organizational Elitist

Michels work on political theory was a reflection of his first hand knowledge of the German Socialist Party and the Labor Unions in the Soviet Union and other European countries.

For him, there is always a tendency for parties and labor unions, or other socialist parties to change themselves to an oligarchic rule. For him, this is an inherent tendency in all bureaucratic organizations. Thus, he coined his famous phrase “the Iron Law of Oligarchy”.

The Iron Law of Oligarchy asserts that even ideal democratic organizations will eventually develop in to a bureaucratic (oligarchic cal) form of administration (a rule by the few or elite group). A group may be established to pursue the most ideal democratic principles, but there is a permanent tendency to be transformed in to an oligarchical rule.

Why Do Oligarchies Emerge?

1. Complexity of Modern Organizations

In complex societies, it is practically impossible to directly engage all members of a society in all matters (considerations of time, space and energy). At the same time, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach at a consensus while involving too many people in the process. To the solution, the majority should select and appoint representatives to facilitate the decision making process.

However, these people who enjoy the privileges of the positions they are instated, would want and therefore use different techniques to monopolize and perpetuate themselves in power-and this results in an oligarchical system of rule. In other words, it can be said that the growth of complexity of the tasks and division of labor in the modern world leads to the rise of an oligarchical rule. An Iron Law of Oligarchy dictates that complex societies always become oligarchic in which the power of the state is monopolized by the elite.

2. Apathy or Incompetence of the Mass

As the mass is usually apathetic, slavish, or indolent, it's permanently incapable of self-governing. Not only the mass, but also the rank and file members of a party or a movement look up to the leaders for direction, and they, therefore, enforce the process of the rule by the few (an oligarchical rule). For Michels, the leaders, therefore, would take the advantage of these qualities of the mass to perpetuate them in power and monopolize institutionalized power.

3. The Lure of Leadership Positions

Leadership positions in a society are attended with packages of privileges, which tempt the leaders to exploit all possible techniques to stay in power. Revolution usually takes place when power is monopolized by few individuals. Contrary to its aim, it overthrows one tyranny and replaces it with a new form of tyranny and oligarchy.

C. W. Mills (the American): Institutional Elitist

In his book the "Power Elite," Mills argues that elite groups in America are part of the power structure of the society and therefore, their power is institutionalized. For him, the USA is dominated by three complexes of overlapping elite groups whose key members constitute what he calls "the power elite": the industrial, the military and the political. Key members of the group make decisions that have major national and international consequences.

According to C. W. Mills, the power structure of the America population could be depicted in terms of three classes: the power elite (the class of the corporate businessmen, leaders of the federal government, the rich people, the military leaders, the political leaders), the middle class (the class of the intellectuals, the scholars, the white collar workers, and the leader of interest groups), and the mass (the class of the exploited and disorganized mass).

For Mills, the power elite is a minority in size and that works as a cohesive unit. Members of this group are integrated on the bases of their social and psychological similarities and common interests. The power elite controls the major resources in American society and commands the major institutions such as the legal, executive, the legislative branches of the government to its own interest.

He commented that the power elite in the United States are usually made up of individuals with the following criteria: Male-White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestants. Much of the Americas national and international policies are initiated, designed, planned, and carried out by the members of this group.

The members of the middle class, on the other hand, serve the interests of the power elite by providing valuable information for the decisions that have to be made by the power elite. They yield up for the power elite.

At the bottom of the hierarchy found the mass who expect the government to take care of their accustomed daily life activities. Politics for this group of people is something extra.

Mills summed up, power in American society is monopolized by the big businessmen, federal leaders, and military leaders; and the rest of the population has a secondary, irrelevant role in the decision making process.

Concluding Remarks

- Elite theory tries to answer the question “Who is selected for a particular position in a society and how?” The theory proposed an answer to the question by investigating the socio-economic backgrounds of the rulers. According to the elitist theory the elites are usually drawn from the upper class of a given society in terms of their ethnic, educational, income, etc. backgrounds.
- Elite theory assumes that the relationship between the governor and the governed is manipulative and therefore depends not on pure force but in understanding of mass psychology. The theory assumes that the mass is responsive to symbols, sentiments, and ideologies. And these symbols and ideologies could serve to create an emotional tie or smooth relationship between the mass and the elite.
- Elite theory has a low view of the mass. It underestimates the human nature. According to the elitist theorist, the crowd is useless unless there is a head. It can be driven or manipulated by leaders easily.

Pluralist Theory

The strongest opposition to the elitist theory of politics comes from the Pluralist School of Thought. The theory has developed, just like, Mills’ institutional theory of power, from the analyses of the American politics, but the conclusions are very different.

According to the pluralist model, power instead of being concentrated in the hands of a group or class, is treated as diffused among many interest groups competing against each other’s for the full possession of it. It doesn’t accept the existence of a single superior group, an elite group that monopolizes power in the society. In stead there are many

functional social units that compete against each other's. Therefore, no one group is strong enough to monopolize power.

According to the pluralists, government policies are compromise between the various interests groups within a society: business groups, religious groups, trade unions, ethnic groups, etc. A policy is an outcome of the participation of all these groups; and the government's role is like a broker, a balancing agent among the competing interest groups and making sure that the various groups with their sectoral interests fit in to the rules of the game. The pluralists see power as politically fragmented or diffused among the different sectors of a society. Competition among the several groups prevents any group from monopolizing power and then becoming a dictator.

Pluralists assume that politics works in what they call check and balance technique. (For example, in the United States, when the Democrats become or start to monopolize power the mass vote for the Republicans and vice-versa. So long as there is an open system election, peoples' ideas and interests are represented in the decisions made in a society).

A leading pluralist thinker in American Political Sociology, Robert Dahl suggested that policy decisions are outcomes of different and competing group interests. In his book "Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American Society" (1961), he argued that, there are plural interests and in response to the question "Who governs?" he answers "it depends on the issue". In one issue, one group may become decisively influential, while in another other groups. This pluralist system, for Dahl, is essentially democratic because individuals can influence decision making through popular participation. He described such a system as polyarchy-the rule of the leaders of several groups who have reached a stable understanding with each other or the rule of many in which the state and its political structures provide an arena or environment so that interests can bargain and compete over policy proposals.

Elitism and Pluralism: A Comparison

	Elitist theory	Pluralist theory
<u>Society</u>	Society is dominated and led by organized minorities (the elite). The rest of the society is an unarticulated mass.	Society is an interaction network of individuals and groups reflecting diversity of interests and values in which no group is dominant.
<u>State</u>	State is an organ manipulated by organized minority who run it for its own interests.	State is one of the many political institutions regarded as democratic because it represents the interests of many interest groups.
<u>Social Order and Change</u>	This school of thought is afraid of social change; whenever social change occurs, it comes for the above; circulation of elites.	Change is regarded as a gradual process based on conflict between competing groups. The emphasis is on stability.
<u>Inequality and Stratification</u>	It is assumed to be inherent, inevitable and necessary between the elite and the mass.	It is present in a society, but the influence and the benefits are widely distributed.
<u>Politics</u>	It is the means by which the elites govern and manipulate the mass	It is a mechanism of mediating the various and conflicting interests.
<u>Political Participation</u>	It is mechanism through which the silent majority is manipulated by the elite minority.	It is mechanism through which special interest groups influence decision making process.
<u>Power</u>	It is centralized in the hands of those who occupy the highest positions.	It is diffused and distributed among the many groups.

The Functionalist Theory¹⁷

¹⁷ Reading: J. V. Zanden, *The Social Experience: An Introduction to Sociology*: 1990; pp 472-73.

Functionalists contend that there is a good reason why the state arose and why today it has assumed a dominant position in contemporary life. They say that society must maintain order and provide the common good.

Functionalists cited four major or primary functions of the state:

✓ Enforcement of Norms

Where people lack formal political institutions, they enforce their folkways and morés through the spontaneous and collective action of community members. In modern complex societies, however, characterized by a preponderance of secondary relationships, a special body or organization is required to assure law and order-the state.

✓ Planning and Direction

Rapid social change dictates that people can no longer rely on the gradual, more or less spontaneous evolution of folkways and morés to provide the guidelines for their daily lives. New norms become indispensable. In addition, the complexity and scope of many activities generate and require a specialized mechanism of coordination and integration. These and many other activities dictate central direction. These tasks should be performed by individuals or by group of individuals; and these individuals must have the power and authority to implement their plans.

✓ Arbitration of Conflicting Interests

Because such resources as privileges, prestige and power are scarce and divisible, people find themselves in conflict over them. The entire social fabric would be imperiled in conflict among different social strata, races, religions and special interest groups were to become deep and intense. Some agency must be capable of containing conflict within tolerable limits and that agency is the state.

✓ Protection Against Other Societies

If a society is to maximize its position against adversaries and to provide protection against the aggression of other groups for its people, it needs a state to centralize control and mobilize the population.

The Conflict Theory¹⁸

The conflict perspective contends that the state is a vehicle by which one or more groups impose their values and structures of inequality on other groups. The state has its origin in the desire of ruling elites to give permanence to social arrangements that benefit themselves.

Structuralism and Conflict Theory: A Comparison:

	Functionalist Theory	Conflict Theory
<u>Society</u>	It is a social system with shared values, needs and goals.	It is an arena of competing and conflicting interests.
<u>State</u>	It is a sub-system contributing to the maintenance, integration and goal attainment of a society.	It is an instrument of coercion by the ruling class in order to induce compliance.
<u>Social Order and Change</u>	An emphasis is on integration, order and stability. Change is viewed as a social system adapting to its environment.	Society is in a constant state change and conflict, conflict, not consensus, is the dynamic force in society.
<u>Inequality and Stratification</u>	It serves as an integrative system maintaining stability and social order.	It hinders integration and is the chief source of conflict. It arises out of the unequal distribution of resources.
<u>Politics</u>	It is a mechanism for achievement of collective goals and plays a mediating role in the resolution of conflicts.	It helps one group to get what it wants at the expense of others.
<u>Political</u>	It is a means through which citizens	It is assumed that those who

¹⁸ Reading: J. V. Zanden, *The Social Experience: An Introduction to Sociology*: 1990; pp.473-75.

Participation

and special interest groups show their support to the polity. In an exchange for citizen participation and support the polity offers responsible leadership and fulfills broad societal demands to the people.

benefit the most tend to participate mostly. Polity is not equally responsive to the demands of all citizens and groups.

Power

It is a legitimate medium of exchange and mobilization of resources in the polity for the attainment of collective goals.

It is an illegitimate and self-serving mechanism for the benefit of few dominant groups at the expense of the powerless.

Weber's Theory of Legitimate Domination¹⁹

Domination is defined by Weber as the probability that specific commands or all commands will be obeyed by a given group of persons.

He had tried to provide an answer to the question "Why people obey authorities?" He was particularly interested in the motives that underlie peoples' choice to obey orders and authorities. These motives, for Weber range from habits (customs) or affective ties to rational calculation of advantages. They also show that the relationship between the ruled and the ruler is reciprocal.

Weber identified three ideal-types of legitimate domination: the Traditional Authority, the Charismatic Authority, and the Rational Legal Authority.

1. Traditional Authority:

¹⁹ Read on the following topics and personalities as their ideas are not included in the hand out: For Coercion theory refer to the ideas of T. Hobbes and J Locke and Marxist theory as a theory of political process.

This authority is obeyed based on the belief that that has been the way things have been done do far. People obey such an authority because it has existed for long period of time being transferred from one generation to the next. It is usually based on the ascriptive characteristics of the rulers-those people who rule inherit their power or the will to command through customary ways.

2. Charismatic Authority:

This authority is obeyed mainly because of affectional tie between the ruler and the ruled. The leaders may possess some exceptional, extra-ordinary and exemplary qualities (that could be real or imaginary) that the followers admire. Charismatic rulers govern the society, group or community because of their charisma and personal devotion. However, such an authority is fluid and ill-defined, no hierarchy of power exists, and there are no rules and laws to govern relationships. Charismatic authority is usually unstable because there are no rules in arranging smooth transfer of power.

3. Rational Legal Authority:

It is a system of authority, which is based on rational calculation of advantages; i.e., it is based on rationally produced laws, norms and leaders are appointed or elected by through legal procedures. Here people obey the laws, not the individuals implementing them. Weber says that this form of authority produces a particular type of organizational structure known as the bureaucracy²⁰.

²⁰ The term the bureaucracy is misused in our daily life language; it is used as almost synonymous with re-tape, excessive use formalities, rules and regulations. However, bureaucracy is something, which in fact a modern society should use to organize work and the modern society can't effectively perform without it. It is the only efficient way to coordinate, organize and run organizations. It can also be defined as a hierarchical organization designed rationally to coordinate the work of many individuals in the pursuit of large scale administrative tasks and organizational goals.

Sociology of Law

As sociology is the scientific and systematic study of social phenomenon, and as law is a crucial element of this social phenomenon, sociology, by extension, studies law. Sociology of law is the study of legal institutions of the society in light of sociological concepts, theories, and approaches. It can also be defined as the study of social control norms, which constitute the law as its important aspect, whose analyses is a long standing tradition of sociologists.

In the modern world, limited to our knowledge of societies, no one can find a society without some regressive principles, laws, norms and rules that govern the behavior of individual members. These principles, laws, and rules could either be written or oral, implicit or explicit; some form of law is inherent to all known cultures, whether they are simple or complex, industrialized or agrarian.

The search for the definition of the concept the law has lead to the development of different traditions. The first tradition defined the law as being naturally laid down by God above the rulers: the absolute laws. This approach to the law is the classical religious or theological approach.

The second approach, which excludes the law in primitive societies (societies without formal legal institutions because it maintains that the law is formulated by the legislators), is the legal secular tradition. The tradition defines the law as those norms issued from recognized legal institutions.

Roscoe Pound defined the law, emphasizing its existence in all societies, as a social control through the systematic application of the forces of a politically organized society. The law serves as a mechanism of social control that a society maintains conformity to the norms. People could either be punished or rewarded for their behavior based on their conformity or violation of sanctioned norms.

On the other hand, law can sociologically be defined as a system of standardized norms regulating the human conduct, deliberately established for the purpose of social control. Law refers to the norms, rules and regulations that are chiefly selected from the morés of a given society. This indicates that not all morés are laws. Some morés are maintained by society as conventions.

Evolution of the Law

Three stages of the law:

1. The Primitive Law: this is the law of the primitive societies before the emergence of the feudal system. It is based on primitive cultural customs that are characterized by the lack of formal legal institutions or organization. It is the law of the pre-literate societies to resolve daily problems of members.
2. The Archaic Law: this law is better advanced than the primitive law as it follows some sort of court system and there exists legal institutions, although they're archaic

(simple). This law characterizes the period of the Ancient Europe, Middle Ages in Africa, and the Roman Empire.

3. The Mature Law: this stage characterizes the professionalization of the law and the emergence of the analytical jurisprudence or the science of the law. Here the law is handled not by religious persons or traditional shamans, but by specialized staff who handled and administers the law-the lawyers, the jurists, the prosecutor, the police, the correctional facility officers, etc.

Background to the Sociology of the Law

The roots of the sociology of the law lay rather mainly in the jurisprudence than in sociology. Its base is the school of law than in sociology; however, it's not just an outcome of an autonomous work of the jurists.

The first jurist to be mentioned for his contribution to the origin and development of the sociology of the law is R. V. Jhering. He considered the society as an arena of competing interests and argued the function of the law is to mediate such competing interests.

The other jurist, R. Pound, argued the function of the law is social engineering and in order to achieve such objective he urged sociological studies to be made.

E. Ehrlich pointed out that, within the same tradition of Jhering and Pound, lawyers and jurists must be aware of the existing social conditions and practices in order to bring formal law into harmony with the norms and traditions of the society.

Charles Louis de Montesquieu (1689-1755)

Montesquieu's chief work, on which his reputation is founded, is his *Spirit of the Law* (*De l'Esprit Lois*, 1748). From the traditional viewpoint, the basic principles of the law could be rationally ascertained, and law was characteristically the thought in universal terms. The

tendency of the philosophy of natural law was to minimize actual legal differences, treat them as accidental, and as not pertaining to the essence of the law.

Montesquieu confines the concept of the natural law to the state of nature, “before the establishment of society”. Once mankind sets up a society and government, there are three kinds of laws: first, the law of nations, which applies to their mutual intercourse; second, political law, which applies to the relations between the government and the governed (*constitutional, public, and administrative law*); third civil law, which regulates the relations of citizens among themselves (*private law, such as the law of contracts*). He says that the law in general is the human reason inasmuch as it governs all, the inhabitants of the earth.

Montesquieu argues that laws should be relative to the climate of each country, to the quality of the soil, to its situation and extent, to the principal occupation of the natives, whether husbandmen, huntsmen, or shepherds; they should have a relation to the degree of liberty which the constitution will bear; to the religion of the inhabitants, to their inclinations, riches, numbers, commerce, manners and customs. In such a way he indicates how the law should be made.

In addition, laws are not arbitrary products of a rational thinking, but are compromises with the existing social factors, processes and traditions of the society. He, therefore, says it is ill advisable for a country to adopt and apply laws from other cultures.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

He did not have a firsthand interest in the law; he identified the Law of Three Stages in the evolution of man and society: the theological, the metaphysical and the positive or scientific. He had also identified what kind of law exists in association with the different stages regulating the different social, economic, etc. institutions and relationships.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)

Spencer proposed that legal institutions evolve as other institutions in the society; and Law is not merely a body of formal rules possessing objective validity but is an institution that the development of which is an inseparable part of the social process.

Karl Marx (1818-83)

Marx considered the law as an ideology of the ruling class that conceals the existing class division and inequality in the society and exploitation of the labor class. The legal system of a nation promotes the interests of the dominant class; it's an instrument or weapon of domination of the capitalist class.

H. S. Maine

Maine is an evolutionary theorist who had made a distinction between the static and the progressive societies. He argues that the evolution of law in society is from the status legal relationship to a contractual relationship. In primitive societies, law is based on status, whereas in modern societies it is based upon contractual agreements.

In primitive societies, decisions are made by senior members of a family, a community or the society at large. At this level, the individual is not able or allowed to act on his behalf without notifying the family or the community. He is part and parcel of the community. Later on, people moved to the contractual relationship based on the agreement of individuals which can be terminated when it becomes unnecessary.

Emilé Durkheim (1858-1917)

In his book '*The Division of Labor in the Society*,' he gave us an account of legal development or evolution. He argued that the development of the law is from repressive or punitive or penal to restitutive or cooperative law.

Durkheim discusses the law in relation to social integration. Division of labor is a basic feature of social organization, not only just an economic phenomenon, with significance for the nature of the social bond and for the autonomy of the individual and groups.

In his attempt to understand the modern society better by comparing it with an early stage of social evolution, he distinguished between two types of social solidarity, mechanical and organic, the latter representing a later stage of development. Durkheim suggested that each of these stages were associated with, and indicated by, a distinctive kind of law.

Mechanical solidarity is based on likeness and sense of common identity. People are bound together by the fact that they have been brought up to act and think alike, follow similar life routines, and share a common conscience. The main source of cohesion is symbolic experience. This solidarity is mechanical: the cohesion that unites the elements of an inanimate body. All members of a group are subject to strict social supervision; the individual is scarcely distinguished from the group to which he belongs. In the stage of mechanical solidarity, social control through the law is largely a matter of upholding the symbolic order. Group identity is reaffirmed when punishment is meted out to deviants who violate what is sacred to the group. To enforce and reassert the common conscience, the community resorts to punitive law and repressive sanctions, as the violation of norms threaten the very basis of the society.

Organic solidarity, on the other hand, is based on functional differentiation, analogous to a complex living body with specialized organs, each dependent on the others, and the whole dependent on the functional integration of the parts. Similarly, differentiation makes people and groups interdependent, and the outcome is organic solidarity.

With the development of organic solidarity based on the division of labor, another type of law becomes predominant. This is restitutive law, which is the law of cooperation. Its purpose is to restore social equilibrium by '*making a man whole*'; i.e., to compensate him for

losses incurred when someone fails to discharge his lawful obligation. The classic branch of restitutive law is the law of contracts. In this law people deal with their interests through contractual agreements. Therefore, legal sanctions are mostly civil whose main purpose is deterrence.

Leonard T. Hobhouse

In his book "*The Material Culture and Social Culture in Simple People*," Hobhouse claimed that there is a general trend to all societies to control their environment and develop political, judiciary, religious and other institutions. He systematically developed an evolutionary theory of law: from primitive redress or blood feud to civilized justice. Individuals in primitive redress take the law in their own hands; they rely on their own capacity to rectify the breach of social norms than on the court or justice system, where the guilty party gets a formal sanction or punishment.

Max Weber:

Weber argues that the evolution of the law is from the formal and substantive irrational to rationality or logically coherent system of principles and rules. He vied that an early law is largely irrational and partial.

Sociology and the Law

Contributions of sociologists to the development of the theory of law:

1. Sociologists independently of jurists have developed their own theories of the nature of the law.
2. Jurists have found the sociological approach very useful in making the law and legal analyses.
3. The sociological analyses of socio-legal institutions constitute the great bulk of materials to which jurists can use, particularly in the field of legislation.

4. Sociologists have advanced a theory of social change which may be of great help to jurist in determining the lag between the law and culture and in adjusting the law to the changing culture.

Major Area Concerns of the Sociology of the Law

1. Sociology of law is primarily concerned with the way in which the formal norms of society (legal practices) and enforcing agents act towards each other and towards deviants and criminals.
2. Analyses of the social role of the criminal, lawyer, judge, etc and how they relate to the general structure of the society.
3. Sociology of law studies the laws governing the development of human society and the effects of legal provisions.
4. Sociology of law shares with political sociology a concern for the nature of legitimate authority and social control, the social basis of the constitution, the evolution of civil rights, and etc.

In general, the sociology of law studies the relationship between the legal institutions and law enforcement state machineries on the one hand, and other wide ranging social processes going on in the realm of the family, education, polity, religion, and economy, on the other.

Rules of the Law and Rules of Conventional Morality

Whether its character is modern or traditional, law shares some common elements with religion and morality. In many instances, the Holy Books are the major or primary sources of the law.

Although they are very much interrelated, there are differences between these issues: morality and the law. For example, in the case of the law, obedience is obligatory with different levels of punishment on its violation. But for morality obedience is not obligatory, but for personal and group satisfaction. In addition, legal principles are usually precisely codified, written, and formulated than conventional moral issues; and in violation a person faces formal legal punishment. But in violation of conventional morality the same person may face only the informal negative and unfavorable reactions from other group members.

The strong relationship between the law and morality could be illustrated by the belief that when laws express the moral attitudes and principles of a group, they will be obeyed and accepted by the citizens and effective legal enforcement is relatively trouble-free. On the other hand, when laws lack a firm moral basis and the support of the people, effective enforcement is less likely. Maintenance of legal regulations depends on the attitude of the people towards laws and a moral climate of a given country. That is why some argue 'when morés are adequate then laws are unnecessary; when morés are inadequate then laws are ineffective'.

There are arguments and counter-arguments on whether a society should maintain morality through legal sanctions. Some social scientists argue that controlling behavior, for example, sex and alcoholism, through legal actions is an invasion of privacy of individuals by the state. People should be given the ultimate right to decide on their behavior as things like sex are something natural and private. They contend that we should not equate sin with crime; sin is something different which could be attended by the church, but crime is something else.

Some other group of social scientists wants to argue morality should be enforced through legal sanctions. Their argument is that crimes involve victim or victims who affect the state: there is always a victim for every crime. Public morality is the cement of society and it must be maintained by legal sanctions to prevent social disintegration.

Natural Law and the Modern Law

The Natural Law

The law derived from nature and binds society together in the absence or in addition to the positive law. It is a collection term referring to those norms that develop with the creation of man.

For Plato, natural law is a law that governs the universe. The medieval Christian thinkers, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, argued that God imposes natural law and it was expounded by the head of the Catholic Church. Human beings are bounded by certain rules of conduct which binds them together; these rules are not established by themselves but have been given to them together with their human nature.

Different personalities in the Renaissance period have played a significant role in the development of the concept of natural law. They argued man possessed certain fundamental rights in the state of nature. People are endowed, by their very human nature, with the rights to live, to possess property, to pursue happiness and to enjoy liberty. These rights are natural to a human being, they are not privileges. We cannot exist as humans, without the natural rights.

The UN human rights declaration document, which was endorsed in 1948 was essentially a natural law document based on these natural rights: it has clearly stated the fundamental rights of people; it is strongly associated with democracy, liberty and freedom.

Human rights document, the first several articles deal with the basic human civil, political, cultural and economic rights, which are considered as inherent to our human nature.

Such natural law thinking was reinforced by a number of different developments:

- ✓ The incorporation of human rights into the written constitution of many countries.
- ✓ The rise of Nazism and Fascism dictatorships.
- ✓ The spread of Totalitarianism form of government in Asia and Africa.
- ✓ The emergence of Communist societies that deliberately refuse to all the norms of morality and culture.

Features of the Modern Law:

- ✓ Modern legal norms are uniform and one doesn't find variation in their application.
- ✓ The legal system is hierarchical and bureaucratic that it has a regular chain of command.
- ✓ Professionals ran the law: priests, notable persons are replaced by trained agents, lawyers and jurists.
- ✓ The system is amendable: it can be changed or modified.
- ✓ The modern law is political; i.e., it is connected with the state which monopolizes the hold of the law.
- ✓ The legislative²¹, the judiciary²² and the executive²³ functions are separate and distinct in modern law.

²¹ The legislature is that organ of the government which initiate law in relation to the norms and values of the society.

²² The judiciary interprets the law and imposes sanctions on those who transgress the laws set forth by the legislature.

²³ The executive is that section of the government concerned with the enforcement of the rules and sanctions laid by the judiciary.

Functions of the Law:

The major functions of the law include:

1. Maintaining and looking after the values that society feels to be right.
2. Social control: the law essentially enforces the rules of the right conduct as a primary means of social control. The law makes sure that wrong doers didn't go unpunished.
3. Settlement of disputes: conflict over advantages may arise in any society; and one of the basic functions of the law is to offer some means as to how people resolve conflict and settle disputes.
4. It serves as an instrument of social change.
5. The law directs and guides economic conduct in market economies by coordinating the activities of those parties confronting against each other's.

Economic Sociology

Economic institutions determine and coordinate the process of production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services in a society. They are usually the study area of economists. Yet, sociologists also study them, for economic institutions affect all other aspects of society and vice versa. There is a mutual interdependence between the economy and the socio-cultural aspects of society. Sociologists, therefore, can't ignore the study of economic institutions; and do that through its economic sociology subfield.

Economic sociology is the application of the general frame of reference, variables, explanatory models of sociology to those complex activities concerned with production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services.

Subject Matter of Economic Sociology

1. It focuses on the economic activities and how they are structured into organizations, how they are organized according to statuses, values and norms that usually regulate economic activities (contract laws) and sanctions (rewards and punishments).
2. It focuses on the relationship between sociological variables as they manifest themselves in economic and non-economic contexts. This relationship can be viewed from two aspects: intra-unit and inter-unit focus. In the intra-unit focus, sociologists take a given concrete economic unit, for example a factory, and they study power and authority relations, groups that exist in the unit, employee-employer relationships, employee-employee relationships, etc. The broader, inter-unit focus,

studies relationships between economic units and their social environment: factors at societal level as they affect economic process, labor management, public policy, etc.

3. It studies the distinctive sociological aspects of the central economic variables (money, saving and investment).

Economic Sociology and Economics

Economics and economic sociology study the same complex economic activities. But there are differences between these fields of study as each field operates with different class of dependent and independent variables and explanatory models. For instance, economic deals with purely economic variables: relations of price and supply, supply and demand, monetary flow, cost-benefit analyses, input-output ratio, savings and investment, labor, capital, commodities, etc. Sociology, on the other hand, deals with both formal and informal organizations; with the roles, statuses, values and norms that exist in the economic institutions; with strains that result from economic shortage or poverty, crime, alcoholism, suicide, mental disorder as manifestations to economic poverty.

In addition to these sociologists study a number of social factors that influence economic institutions: the contribution of education to the productivity of labor, the impact of incentives in production, employer-employee relationships on production, the impact of values and preferences on price of goods, etc. In other words, they study enterprises as social organizations, not just as economic ones. In addition to the economic benefit analyses, social benefits are emphasized that can't be calculated in terms of money.

Another difference between economic sociology and economics is the methodology they employ in the investigation of the phenomenon under consideration, in this case the economic process. Sociologists use comparative method (Weber's study of *the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is a typical example), whereas economists depend more on mathematical and statistical methods and models. In addition, the survey method is widely used in economics to collect facts about households and firms, assets and plan of

expenditure. In sociology, however, the survey method is widely used, but they are conducted to assess attitudes and opinions towards economic issues; towards expenditure, investment, etc.

Background to the Economic Sociology

Herbert Spencer

For Spencer the evolution of the society is from militant to industrial and to ethical (perfect) form. In arguing this, he tried to describe the economic activities that characterize each of these forms of societies. He suggested that, cooperation in the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services is compulsory in militant society. Whereas, in industrial society, cooperation is voluntary and it is regulated by the means of the market forces.

In industrial societies, economic activities flourish independent of the direct control of the government based on competition and market based economy. He was an advocator of the laissez faire economic policy – where unrestrained free-trade and competition would promote economic development and stability. He believed a government should promote competition and free-trade economy; it should not control or regulate economic activities. The government should leave the business sector to individuals and should not involve in the economic activities.

He defined the state, accordingly, as a limited company formed by individuals to protect their mutual liberty. The proper duty of the government is to maintain equal justice and protect order. This is the opposite of a command (centralized) economy where the government makes every decision about the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services.

Emile Durkheim

In The Division of Labor in the Society, Durkheim talked about the different forms of specialization of social functions and he argued that division of labor is intrinsically connected with the type of social order or social solidarity. Societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, there we find division of labor based on sex, age and other natural characteristics. He pointed out that, cooperation in such society is compulsory that people should cooperate whether they like it or not. In complex societies, where division of labor is based on specialized role structure, there is freedom from any domination. Cooperation is voluntary and such societies are integrated by organic solidarity. He says that the state of anomy occurs when the division of labor fails.

Max Weber

In his book Capital, Karl Marx had contributed a great deal to economics and economic sociology. According to him, whatever its stage of development, any society is based on its economic foundation. He believed in economic determinism: everything is a manifestation of the economy. The economic structure of the society influences (or to a greater extent shapes) the other aspect of the society. Changes in the economic system will be mirrored by changes in the legal and idea system and other aspects of the society.

For many, the works of Weber were thought to be oppositions to the works and ideas of Marx. Others think that the ideas of Weber are extensions of the ideas of Marx. And still others allege much of the works of Weber were an attempt to clarify and modify the ideas and works of Marx. Despite all this, the famous philosopher Leo Strauss once wrote, "Whatever may have been errors, Max Weber was the greatest social scientist of the century".

In contrast to the proposition of Marx, Weber argues that ideology can play a key role in influencing and changing the economy of a society. Unlike Marx, did not see the idea system of religion as opium of a society.

Weber's analysis contrasts Marx's: Marx considers religion to be a dependant variable and the economy an independent variable, whereas Weber argues that religion could be an independent variable that could cause changes in other social structures, including the economy.

Weber: the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

In one of his major works in sociology, Max Weber tried to trace the impact of protestant religion on the spirit of capitalism. He says the major explanatory variable for the emergence of capitalism in the West was the set of religious ideas created by the religious revolutions of the 16th century.

As he was a pragmatic sociologist, he conducted a study in societies with mixed religious systems in order to provide evidence for his contention that religious ideas and values could influence the economy. He alleges that he found out those who are technical and commercial owners and the leaders of the economic system are overwhelmingly Protestants. Their religion was the main motivational factor for these people to choose those occupations, but other religious systems fail to produce ideas systems that encourage people to those occupations.

He discussed the spirit of capitalism in relation to Calvinism. Calvinism is idea system that only a small number of people are chosen salivation, and in addition, it alleges that people are predetermined to be among the saved or the damned. This idea of predestination leaves people in the state of uncertainty. To reduce the anxiety of living the state of uncertainty, Calvinists developed some signs of salivation-economic success. Such a religious attitude, therefore, advocated and encouraged hard working, accumulation of capital (saving), and investment as virtues of a moral man. In such way, Calvinism had contributed for the emergence and development of capitalism.

He then, came up with certain values that are associated with protestant religion and that are so important to capitalistic economic development:

1. *Acquisition Rationality*

Calvinists are supposed to avoid worldly pleasure, be thrifty, and despise waste; they couldn't use wealth in traditional ways. They could use their capital to expand, their business activities. In general, Calvinism advocated the accumulation of capital, saving and investment rather than conspicuous consumption and extravagancy.

2. *Financial Rationality*

Calvinists are not expected to save what they have acquired, but they are also expected to invest in much industrious ventures for further economic prosperity and for increased interest.

3. *Work Rationality*

Calvinists believed that work is intrinsically good and at that time is acquired a religious importance or significance. The Greeks, for example, despised work, but Calvinists regarded work as a personal calling or mission. Calvinists advocated hard working, diligence; and these and other values of the protestant religion have helped the transformation of North Europe from Feudal-Agrarian to Industrial-Capitalist society.

4. *Individualism and Competition*

Calvinists believed that man is alone before his maker, that he should not trust the friendship of man that only God should be his confidant. Each individual could seek success as the sign of grace, and this striving was consistent with economic competition.

According to Max Weber, Protestant religion did not hold ground in all Europe. He mentioned of Italy and Spain as lagging behind in economic development as they were predominantly Catholic. He argued that, Protestantism provided a good ground for

capitalistic economic development. For him, on the other hand, the great classical oriental religions, did not offer supportive cultural framework for the rational pursuit of economic games.

Work

Sociologist and other scholars in other fields of study have been interested in the question “Why people work?” They identified self-interest (in its broadest sense includes the interest of the family and friends), as a major motivation to work in all societies. In addition, work is a major social mechanism for placing people in the larger social structure and for providing them with identities. People work to gain a contributing and rewarding position in the society. Other diverse factors identified include: a sense of duty, to escape form boredom, to derive a sense of accomplishment, a desire for approval, a wish to conform to customs and traditions, a feeling of emulation, a pleasure in craftsmanship, etc.

Alienation at Work

Alienation is a Latin word that has diverse meanings depending on the area of application:

- A legal definition: it refers to the transfer or sell of goods or rights.
- A psychological definition: it refers to the state of insanity.
- A sociological definition: it refers to the dissolution of the link between the individual and the group.
- A religious definition: it refers to the dissolution of the link between the individual and God or gods.

All the pioneers in sociology are concerned with the changes in the workplace that come with the industrial revolution. Regarding the higher degree of division of labor that characterizes capitalism, Durkhiem says ‘as labor becomes more and more differentiated, individuals experience anomy’. In his analyses of organizations in capitalist system, Weber

argues that one result of impersonal bureaucratic organizations is the creation of cold, calculating and uncaring individuals. He says alienation is common among employees of bureaucratic organizations (they feel hostility to the work they undertake).

Karl Marx offered the most penetrating analyses of alienation or the dehumanizing aspects of capitalism. The word alienation is used by Marx to describe the sense of disconnectedness that is supposed to be present among the workers in capitalist societies that results from feelings of powerlessness as a result of the division of labor. It also refers to a pervasive sense of powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement.

The argument is that, what singles out man from other animals is that he has the capacity to control nature by creative activity. He can plan, design and execute. Therefore, for Marx, work is an expression of human intellect and human creative capacity. But in capitalist society, workers are alienated; and work is not an expression of human intellect for many reasons:

- a. Workers are concerned with survival; workers work to gain wages (for living), not for satisfaction. Under capitalist system, workers are forced to sell their ability to work to the employer as a market commodity. Therefore human creativity is turned in to a commodity bought in the cheapest of prices.
- b. Work is alienated because of the high degree of division of labor. Workers are forced to do monotonous, meaningless and repetitive tasks; only part of the large process.
- c. Workers are also powerless because they have no control over their occupational duties, the product of their labor and the distribution of profits. The products of labor is owned and sold by the capitalists.

Marx said that alienation reached at its worst form in industrialization process, because workers are tied with machinery. Marx pictures workers under capitalism as alienated from productive activity, the products of their own labor, their co-workers, and their own human potential. Man in capitalist society is not a total man; the capitalists mutilate him off his nature. Man in capitalist countries is a specialized man. And he says specialized activities assume the unused abilities and capabilities in work. Man is alienated, and this has a number of impacts on productivity, employee-employer relations and generally on the industrial relations.

He suggested a polytechnic training in which individuals will be free not to do the same job from morning to night.

Alienation and its Expressions: Marx

In Marx view, factory technology, the increasing rate of division of labor, and capitalist property institutions brought about the estrangement of the industrial worker from his work. Highly mechanized systems replaced craft methods of production in which the artisan had been master of his tools and materials. In the new factories, the intelligence and skill previously expressed by the craftsmen were 'built into' the machines. Workers were left with routine and monotonous jobs. The machine system governed the pace of the work and restricted the employee's free movement. This loss of freedom, this subordination to the machine, turned the worker into a mere instrument and made him feel powerless.

The increasing division of labor within the factory made jobs similar and each employee's area of responsibilities diminished. The highly specialized operation might be very efficient, but it separated the worker from the total process. The fragmented relation of the individual to his work robbed him of a sense of purpose. This meaninglessness is another aspect of alienation.

According to Marx, the property relations of capitalist society alienated the employee. The factory belongs to the entrepreneur who has the power to hire labor, sell the products of the enterprise on the market and take the profit for himself. The worker does not own what he produces. He has nothing to sell but his power. Thus, the property institutions of capitalism produce a third form of alienation, the employee's sense of isolation from the system of organized production and its goals.

Durckheim and Anomie

Marx viewed alienation as the outcome of social forces that emanate in capitalist arrangements, and separate human beings from meaningful, creative and self-realizing work. In contrast, Durckheim depicted alienation as arising from the breakdown of the cohesive ties that bind individuals to a society. For Durckheim, the central question was whether or not people are immersed in a structure of group experiences and memberships that provide a meaningful and valued context for their behavior. Otherwise, people may experience anomie.