

Dear Candidate, as per theme-based approach, please try to link the topics of Paper I with those of Paper II. This will not only facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the given topic but also enhance your analytical and articulation skills.

Paper I. Topic 7. Politics and Society

Paper II. C. (iv). Politics and Society

Paper II. C. (v). Social Movements in Modern India

*The topic on Secularization and Ethnicity and Identity Movements is covered in **Paper I. Topic 8. Religion and Society**

*The topic on Women's Movement is covered in **Paper I. Topic 9. Systems of Kinship**

References:

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- *Contemporary Sociology* by H.K. Rawat

Sociological Theories of Power (including Sociological Theories of State)

People everywhere are political animals. Because valued resources such as jobs and money are scarce rather than boundless, people feel compelled to play politics to determine who gets what, when, and how. Politics is the type of human interaction that involves some people acquiring and exercising power over others. In most societies, the government steps in to regulate conflict and allocate resources among the citizens because it commands a tremendous amount of power and authority.

Many sociologists define political sociology as the study of power in its broadest sense. Thus Dowse and Hughes (1972) state that ‘politics is about “power”, politics occurs when there are differentials in power’. In terms of this definition, any social relationship that involves power differentials is political. Political relationships would extend from parents assigning domestic chores to their children to teachers enforcing discipline in the classroom; from a manager organising a workforce to a general ordering troops into battle.

Sociologists often distinguish between two forms of power, authority and coercion:

1. **Authority** is that form of power that is accepted as legitimate – that is, right and just – and therefore obeyed on that basis. Thus, if members of British society accept that Parliament has the right to make certain decisions and they regard those decisions as lawful, parliamentary power may be defined as legitimate authority. Similarly, pupils or students might accept that their teachers have the right to make decisions about the marks that should be awarded to their work and when their work should be handed in.
2. **Coercion** is that form of power which is not regarded as legitimate by those subject to it. Thus, from the point of view of some Basque nationalists, the activities of the Spanish police and army in the Basque region may be regarded as coercion. After the invasion of Iraq by American and British troops, some Iraqis rejected the legitimacy of the occupation and carried out violent attacks on the occupying troops.

For example, government agents demanding and receiving sales tax from a shopkeeper are using legitimate power (authority); gangsters demanding and receiving protection money from the same shopkeeper by threat of violence are using illegitimate power (coercion).

However, the distinction between authority and coercion is not as clear-cut as the above definitions suggest. It has often been argued that both forms of power are based ultimately on physical force, and that those who enforce the law are able to resort to physical force whether their power is regarded as legitimate or not. Furthermore, some sociologists have suggested that power can have several faces or dimensions. Nevertheless, one of the most influential sociological views of power, that of Max Weber, is largely based on distinguishing different types of authority. Weber's work provides a useful starting point for a consideration of how sociological ideas about power have developed.

Power – a Weberian perspective

Max Weber has defined power as,

“the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.”

In other words, power consists of the ability to get your own way even when others are opposed to your wishes. Power is therefore an aspect of social relationships. An individual or group do not hold power in isolation, they hold it in relation to others. Power is therefore power over others.

Max Weber points out three bases of legitimization of power and classifies three corresponding types of authority viz., the traditional authority, the charismatic authority and the legal-rational authority.

Traditional authority

Traditional authority rests upon a belief in the ‘rightness’ of established customs and traditions. Those in authority command obedience on the basis of their traditional status, which is usually inherited. Their subordinates are controlled by feelings of loyalty and obligation to long-established positions of power. The feudal system of medieval Europe is an example of traditional authority: monarchs and nobles owed their positions to inherited status and the personal loyalty of their subjects.

Charismatic authority

Charismatic authority describes the devotion felt by subordinates towards a leader who is believed to have exceptional qualities, which are seen as supernatural, superhuman, or at least exceptional compared to lesser mortals. Charismatic leaders are able to sway and control their followers by direct emotional appeals that excite devotion and strong loyalties. Historical examples of charismatic authority might include Alexander the Great, Napoleon and Fidel Castro. More ordinary people, such as teachers or managers, may also use charisma to exercise power.

Rational-legal authority

The final type of authority distinguished by Weber was rational-legal authority. In this case, unlike charismatic and traditional authority, legitimacy and control stem neither from a commitment to traditional wisdom nor from the perceived personal qualities of the leader and the devotion they excite. Rational-legal authority is based on the acceptance of a set of impersonal rules. Those who possess authority are able to issue commands and have them obeyed because others accept the legal framework that supports their authority. Thus a judge, a tax inspector or a military commander is obeyed because others accept the legal framework that gives them their power. The rules on which their authority is based are rational in the sense that they are consciously constructed for the attainment of a particular goal and they specify the means by which that goal is to be attained. For example, laws governing the legal system are designed to achieve the goal of 'justice'.

Ideal Types

Weber stressed that, in reality, authority would never conform perfectly to any of his three types. His three categories are ideal types, each of which defines a 'pure' form of authority, in any particular example, authority may stem from two or more sources. It is therefore possible to find examples of authority that approximate to one of these types, but it is unlikely that a perfect example of any could be found. Weber's attempts to define power and authority have been highly influential. The pluralist view of power and the state has adopted Weber's definition as a basis for measuring who has power in modern industrial societies.

Pluralists concentrate on the will (or desires) of individuals or groups to achieve particular ends. The wishes that people have are then compared to actual decisions taken by a government. The group whose wishes appear to be carried out are held to possess greater power than those who oppose them. Therefore, power is

measured by comparing the stated wishes of individuals or groups who seek to influence government policy, with the actions taken by their government.

As stated earlier, **Max Weber** has defined power as, “the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.” Weber’s definition of power implies that those who hold power do so at the expenses of others. It suggests that there is a fixed amount of power and therefore if some hold power, others do not. This view is sometimes known as a ‘**constant-sum**’ concept of power. Since the amount of power is constant, power is held by an individual or group to the extent that it is not held by others. Weber’s definition also implies that the powerholders will tend to use power to further their own interests. This interpretation of the nature and use of power has been adopted by many sociologists. They argue that power is used to further the sectional interests of the powerholders which are in conflict with the interests of those subject to that power. They therefore see power used mainly for the exploitation and oppression of some by others.

Steven Lukes – a radical view of power

Despite the acceptance of Weber’s definition of power by many sociologists, some writers believe it is too narrow. Steven Lukes (2006) has put forward a radical view of power as an alternative. He argues that power has three dimensions or faces, rather than just one.

Decision making

Like pluralists, Lukes sees the first face of power in terms of decision making, where different individuals or groups express different policy preferences and influence the making of decisions over various issues. Lukes would accept that if a government followed the policies advocated by the trade unions, this would represent evidence that the unions had power. However, he believes it is misleading to concentrate entirely on decisions taken, for power can be exercised in less obvious ways.

Non-decision making

The second face of power does not concern decision making, but rather focuses on non-decision making. Power may be used to prevent certain issues from being discussed, or decisions about them from being taken. From this point of view, individuals or groups exercising power do so by preventing those who take a

decision from considering all the possible alternative sources of action, or by limiting the range of decisions they are allowed to take. For example, a teacher might offer students the opportunity to decide whether to do a piece of homework that week or the following week. The class appears to have power, for they have been given the opportunity to reach a decision. In reality, however, most power still rests with the teacher, who has limited the options open to the students. The students are not free to decide whether or not they do this particular piece of work, nor can they choose to reject doing homework altogether.

Shaping desires

The third face of power strays even further from an emphasis on decision making and the preferences expressed by members of society. Lukes claims that power can be exercised by shaping desires – manipulating the wishes and desires of social groups. A social group may be persuaded to accept, or even to desire, a situation that is harmful to them. Some feminists argue that men exercise power over women in contemporary Britain by persuading them that being a mother and a housewife are the most desirable roles for women. In reality, feminists claim, women who occupy these roles are exploited by men.

Lukes's definition of power

Having examined the nature of power, Lukes is able to conclude that power can be defined thus: 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.' In other words, Lukes argues that power is exercised over those who are harmed by its use, whether they are aware they are being harmed or not. Lukes has been responsible for refining the concept of power, and showing that it has more than one dimension. As he himself admits, though, what is in a person's interests, or what is good for them, is ultimately a matter of opinion. A mother and housewife might deny that her role in society is any less desirable than that of her husband. She might also deny that she is being exploited.

Despite this problem, the radical definition of power has become increasingly influential. Marxist sociologists in particular have used this definition to attack the evidence used by sociologists advocating other perspectives.

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The State

Definitions and Development of the State

The definition of the state is probably less controversial than the definition of power. Weber provided a definition with which most sociologists are in broad agreement. He defined the state as ‘a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory’.

Only the central authority is believed by most members of society to have the right to use force to achieve its ends. Other groups and individuals may resort to violence, but the actions of terrorists, football ‘hooligans’ and murderers are not seen as legitimate. The state alone can wage war or use the legal system to imprison people against their will. On the basis of Weber’s definition, the state can be said to consist of the government or legislature which passes laws, the bureaucracy or civil service which implements governmental decisions, the police who are responsible for law enforcement, and the armed forces whose job it is to protect the state from external threats.

Many sociologists see the state as consisting of a wider set of institutions and, in Britain, would include welfare services, and the education and health services. Some go even further and see nationalised industries as part of the state. However, in developing their theories of the state most sociologists have concentrated upon the more central institutions, such as the government and the civil service.

Georgina Blakeley and Michael Saward (2009) point out that the state is not just an abstract concept. Individuals encounter the state with great frequency in everyday life. For example, a teacher with a young child encounters the state through school inspections, tax on their income, visits from health visitors, using roads, conforming (or otherwise) to traffic regulations, and so on. Blakeley and Saward say that **‘The state is, among other things, an institutional order that aims to prevent social chaos and make social order.’** They describe the state as more than institutions – as **‘an idea based on shared expectations about the ordering of social life; a set of organisations; and a set of practices’**. The practices might include approved ways of conducting a lesson in a state school and the rules governing driving. Blakeley and Saward therefore adopt a very broad definition of the state.

The 20th-century world came to be dominated by nation-states that laid claim to territory in every corner of the world. However, although states that conform to Weber’s definition have existed for thousands of years, and include ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt, and the Aztecs of Central America, the state is a

comparatively new feature of many societies. Anthropologists have discovered a number of stateless 'simple' societies. These are sometimes called **acephalous** or headless societies. For example, in the 1930s, E.E. Evans-Pritchard carried out a study of the Nuer society in Africa. The society consisted of some 40 separate tribes, none of which had a head or chief. Important decisions appear to have been reached informally through discussions between members of each tribe. There was no government or other institution that claimed a monopoly of the legitimate use of force, and the society was not based upon a clearly defined territory. As such, Nuer society can be seen as stateless.

A number of commentators believe the modern centralised state is also a relatively new feature of many parts of Europe. They suggest it did not develop until after the feudal period. Under feudalism the legitimate use of force was not concentrated in the hands of a central authority. While, in theory, the monarch ruled at the centre, in practice, military power and the control of territory were in the hands of feudal lords in each region. Furthermore, it was only in the 19th century that transport and communications developed sufficiently to allow the centralised state to exercise close control over the far-flung corners of its territory.

The centralised state developed comparatively recently in many areas of the world. However, its importance in modern, industrialised societies increased dramatically in the 19th and 20th centuries. In Britain, for instance, in this period the state greatly extended its involvement in, and control over, economic affairs and the provision of welfare, health care and education. However, even today, the state does not dominate all areas of the globe, nor is it the only source of authority. In some territories the state is weak. For example, in Somalia, pirates operate with relative impunity because the country has no central state capable of controlling their activities. In 2008 alone these pirates launched 111 attacks on ships passing in international waters near the coast of Somalia, seizing 42 ships and demanding ransom payments.

In international law the principle of **territorial jurisdiction** (that states are sovereign in their own territory) can be trumped by the idea of **universal jurisdiction**. Under universal jurisdiction certain types of crimes (including genocide, slavery, war crimes and piracy) are subject to international laws which can, at least in theory overrule national laws. Thus, it is legitimate for a state such as Britain to intervene (through naval force) in the case of piracy even within the territorial jurisdiction of Somalia. In addition, Bromley points out, there are some who challenge the monopoly of states over the use of force. International terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda are a case in point.

(Dear Candidate, to facilitate better conceptual understanding and conceptual interlinking, the topics ‘state’ and ‘nation’ are discussed below.)

The word state derives from the Latin word ‘stare’ (to stand) and more specifically from ‘status’ (a standing or condition). The state can most simply be defined as ‘*a political association that establishes sovereign jurisdiction within defined territorial borders and exercise authority through a set of permanent institutions*’. The modern state, as a form of political organization, could be said to have evolved in early modern Europe, and was transmitted primarily through colonialism to other parts of the world. Thus, the modern state and the modern system of states have not been permanent and universal features of human history. Further, the trajectory of the development of the state in other parts of the world has been very different from that in Europe. What is distinctive about the modern state in terms of its difference from earlier kingships is the distinction between the rulers, and the office and institutions they occupy. Thus the modern state is characterized by its impersonal standing. The current holders of power in the government do not constitute the state. The state exists before they come to power and continues to be there after they leave. It aims to gain autonomy from the contending parties or groups that come to hold political power. Thus the modern state is a public order distinct from and located above both the ruler and ruled.

One of the most important things to remember is that when we talk about the state, we are referring to a whole gamut of different organized institutions that are connected to one another and enjoy some cohesion. That is, the state is organizationally highly differentiated as well as centralized. Thus, it is not a monolithic structure; it consists of a set of institutions and organizations. The three arms of the modern state are the judiciary, the executive and the legislature – each different, but with a certain level of cohesion with each other. The different arms of the state exercise the authority that they have, not on their own behalf, but on the basis of the authority they are entitled to as part of the state. The government refers to the administrative organ of the state and is constrained by the constitution of the state. The government may change but the state persists.

State and Government

A distinction should be drawn between the state and the government, two terms that are often used interchangeably. The state is more extensive than government. The state is an inclusive association that encompasses all the institutions of the public realm and embraces all the members of the community (in their capacity as citizens), meaning that government is merely part of the state.

In this sense government is the means through which the authority of the state is brought into operation; it is 'the brains' of the state. Nevertheless, the state is a continuing, even permanent, entity, while government is temporary. Within an enduring state system, governments may come and go, and system of government may be reformed and remodeled. Moreover, the state exercises impersonal authority, in the sense that the personnel of state bodies is recruited and trained in a bureaucratic manner and is (usually) expected to be politically neutral, enabling state bodies to resist the ideological enthusiasms of the government of the day. Finally, the state, in theory at least, represents the public interest or the common good. Government on the other hand, represents the partisan sympathies of those who happen to be in power at any particular time.

State and Civil Society

The distinction between state and civil society is based on the recognition that individuals who are subject to the power of the state also have capacities and interests of a non-political nature. Further, while the state represents coercion, civil society is said to be based on voluntary participation.

States vary in the amount of independence that they permit to other social institutions. This determines the nature of the state as totalitarian or liberal. A state that seeks to fuse the distinction between its sphere of activity and that of the society is called totalitarian state, because it seeks to intervene in the totality of human life. A totalitarian state might supervise what books you read, what your political views are and even what careers you opt for.

State and Nation

The distinction between the nation and the state is particularly important in view of the struggle by many nations for statehood. When we talk about international relations, we are actually referring to inter-state relations. A nation could be defined as community feeling among people who recognize that they are distinct from other communities and wish to control their own affairs. This distinction could be based on their possession of a common language, religion, political values and attitudes, a sense of having done things together in the past, and a desire to do things together in the future. The entire population in the same state share this feeling, giving rise to the term 'nation-state'. However, this is not the case with all the states in the world today. So the nation and the state do not coincide. There are people who feel part of the same nation, and are spread across different states. The Kurdish people, for instance, are spread across Iran, Iraq,

Syria and Turkey and consider themselves to be a nation. A similar argument can be made for the Israel-Palestine conflict and the demands of various secessionist groups in north-east India, for example, Bodos.

However, most of the societies in the world today are largely organized into nation-states. A **nation-state** is a nation governed by a state whose authority coincides with the boundaries of the nation. Its system of government lays claim to specific territories, possess formalized codes of law and is backed by the control of military force. Nation- states are modern phenomena and have come into existence generally after 19th century.

According to **Anthony Giddens**, the main characteristics of the modern state (nation-state) are as follows:

1. **Territoriality:** The modern state is territorially based. This means that the state exercises its authority within its territorial borders which are acknowledged by other states. This acknowledgement distinguishes the state from other forms of political organizations, where governance is over people rather than over land, and people allegiances are not territorially determined. So one's rights and duties depend on one's place in the hierarchical social order within a tribe or clan or other forms of ethnic organization. For instance, in the traditional caste system in India, one's location in the hierarchical structure of the caste system used to determine one's right and duties.

The modern state has no authority outside its borders, and no other state possesses authority within another state's borders. Within the boundaries of the state, there is a single system of governance, distinct from others that operate externally. The territorial foundations of the state distinguish it from other types of organizations and associations, which could be religious. The demands of statehood by groups are often for the recognition of the claim to territory. One of the most tragic, poignant, and complex struggles over the claim to territory in the recent past has been the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian struggle for statehood could be a struggle for the recognition of the claim to land.

2. **Sovereignty:** Sovereignty refers to the state being the ultimate source of political authority within the territory under its jurisdiction. There are two aspects of sovereignty – internal and external. Internal sovereignty refers to the fact that within its boundaries, there are no authorities higher than the state. The state is supreme, and a citizen cannot appeal against the state to any other authority. The state has the right to make binding decisions upon its citizens and upon those who enter its territory. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), for this reason, portrayed the state as a ‘leviathan’, a gigantic monster.

External sovereignty of the state refers to the recognition that other states accord to a particular state, and the acceptance that the state can speak for its citizens in international affairs. External sovereignty implies the autonomy and independence of the state in the international sphere. The sovereignty of the state can be challenged in many ways; the state might lose its sovereignty partly after having voluntarily entered into international treaties, or other states might intervene in the affairs of the state on the grounds of a deemed violation of human rights, the possession of weapons of mass destruction, etc.

3. **Public institution:** State institutions are recognizably ‘public’, in contrast to the ‘private’ institutions of civil society. State bodies are responsible for making and enforcing collective decisions in society and are funded at the public’s expense.
4. **Legitimacy:** Legitimacy is derived from the Latin verb ‘legitimare’ which means to legitimate, and signifies rightfulness in a broad sense. It confers a binding or authoritative character on an order, thus transforming power into authority. The state has the authority to ensure that its laws are obeyed and the power to punish those who disobey. Its decisions are usually (although not necessarily) accepted as binding on its citizens because, it is claimed, it reflects the permanent interest of society.
5. **Coercion:** The state is an instrument in domination – it possesses the coercive power to ensure that its laws are obeyed and that transgressors are punished. **Max Weber** has described state as “a social institution that has a monopoly of legitimate violence within a specific territory”.

The state's monopoly over the legitimate use of coercion is reflected in the institutions of the armed forces, the paramilitary forces, and the police. This indicates the immense power that the state has over people's lives. Imprisonment, death penalty, declaration of war – all these involve the use of violence, and only the state is entitled to the legitimate use of these powers. That is why the state is said to have a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. The coercive institutions help to maintain the supremacy or the sovereignty of the state, and to ensure the observance of laws and the maintenance of order when these are considered to be infringed.

6. **Citizenship:** In modern societies most people living within the borders of the political system are citizens, having common rights and duties and knowing themselves to be part of a nation. Almost everyone in the world today is a member of definite political order.
7. **Nationalism:** Each community acquires a distinctive character through its association with nationalism. Nationalism can be defined as 'a set of symbols and beliefs, providing the sense of being part of a single political community'. Thus, individuals feel a sense of pride and belonging in being Indian, British or American. It is the main expression of feelings of identity with a distinct sovereign community.

Nationalistic loyalties do not always fit with the physical borders marking the territories of states in the world today. While the relation between the nation-state and nationalism is a complicated one, the two have come into being as part of the same process. Nationalism has become an increasingly powerful force in the world, serving as a basis not only of collective social identity but also for political mobilization and action, especially through the use of warfare.

The consequences of nationalism (cultural) often breed extremism and feelings of ethnocentrism (a tendency to think and act blindly that our culture is superior to those of others) resulting into political conflicts. Extreme forms of nationalism have engulfed many nations into warfare (Nazism, Fascism, etc.).

Theories of state (on the need of the state and the nature of state power)

The state has always been central to political analysis, to such an extent that politics is often understood as the study of the state. Political sociology, in particular, is interested in understanding and analyzing two important dimensions of state, firstly, need of state and secondly, the nature of state power.

Need of the state

The classic justification for the state is provided by **social contract theory**, which constructs a picture of what life would be like in a stateless society, a so-called 'state of nature'. In the view of thinkers such as Hobbes and Locke (1632 -1704), as the state of nature would be characterized by an unending civil war of each against all, people would be prepared to enter into an agreement – a social contract – through which they would sacrifice a portion of their liberty in order to create a sovereign body without which orderly and stable existence would be impossible. In the final analysis, then, individuals should obey the state because it is the only safeguard they have against disorder and chaos. (Social contract theory: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau, etc.)

Eminent sociologist **Emile Durkheim** looks at state and its relation with the individuals from a functional perspective. Durkheim traced the development of the state to the division of labour in the society, as societies became more complex there occurred the distinction between governing and governed, which in turn results in the formation of the state. Mechanical solidarity is the trademark of less developed or primitive society where division of labour is very little. Whereas societies with highly developed division of labour are held together by organic solidarity.

For Durkheim there was no politics or state existed in primitive societies because there was no or little division of labour and hence no grouping into government and governed. On the other hand, modern industrial societies are marked by high division of labour leading to the emergence of a number of different secondary social groupings. For Durkheim state essentially is a mediator between secondary groups.

Durkheim further argues that state derives its legitimacy from the conscience collective and becomes its directive organ and symbol. Please note that here he differs with **Karl Marx** who argued that state only represents the interest of the ruling class. With regard to the relationship of the state to the individual, Durkheim argues that this is not an issue in societies where mechanical solidarity is dominating and where individuals were absorbed into the social whole. But as

organic solidarity develops, the power of the state develops and so also the rights of the individuals. The growth of the state does not threaten but enables the rights and freedom of individuals. [Durkheim - unbridled individualism - cause of chaos and conflict in society - so need for state - for social control - true freedom lies in being bound or regulated by social facts (state) - thus, subordinating the individual to collectivity (state).]

Nature of state power

The second important dimension that political sociology is interested in is the nature of state power. Before moving on to the various rival theories of the state, let us briefly discuss the various types of states that are classified on the basis of varying degree of power.

- 1. Minimal states** ('nightwatchman' states): Minimal states, as advocated by classical liberals, are merely protective bodies whose sole function is to provide a framework of peace and social order within which citizens can conduct their lives as they think best. Liberals view the state as a neutral arbiter amongst competing interests and groups in society, a vital guarantee of social order. For liberals, the state is at worst a 'necessary evil'.
- 2. Developmental states:** Developmental states operate through a close relationship between the state and major economic interests, and aim to develop strategies for national prosperity in a context of transnational competition. For example, India, Japan, 'tiger economies' of the South-east Asia, etc.
- 3. Social-democratic states:** Social-democratic states are the ideal of both modern liberals and democratic socialists. Such states intervene widely in economic and social life in order to promote growth and maintain full employment, reduce poverty and bring about a more equitable distribution of social rewards. For example, UK, Scandinavian Countries - emphasize a great deal on social welfare.
- 4. Collectivised / Communist states:** Collectivised states, found in orthodox communist countries, abolished private enterprise altogether and set up centrally planned economies administered by a network of economic ministries and planning committees.
- 5. Totalitarian states:** Totalitarian states penetrate every aspect of human existence through a combination of comprehensive surveillance and terroristic policing, and a pervasive system of ideological manipulation and control. For example, Myanmar, North Korea, etc.

Let us now discuss the various theories with regard to the nature of power of the state.

Utilitarianism

Scholars belonging to this school of thought argue that the state is justified because of its utility in bringing about greater happiness to a greater number of people than any alternative political arrangement. Utilitarianism makes two basic claims: first, that human happiness and well-being are important; and second, that we assess an act purely by its consequences. This is why utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism. Early utilitarian philosophers like **Jeremy Bentham** and **James Mill** believed that the consequences one should consider were the happiness and unhappiness that one's actions would cause. If we put the two claims together, we could say that utilitarianism aims at bringing about a state of affairs that results in the greatest happiness of the greatest number. For the utilitarian, the state is justified on the grounds that it brings about greater and more happiness than any alternative political arrangement.

The justification of the state in this case is based on its utility, and not on consent as the social contract argument would assert. Sometimes, the greatest happiness of the greatest number could be that the number matters, and not each individual. There could be instances wherein unqualified utilitarianism would lead to a situation where the greatest happiness of the greatest number is based on the sacrifice of an individual's rights. Liberalism would, however, find the above instance unacceptable. It would base its claim on the state showing equal respect to every individual and respecting each individual's rights.

Liberalism: The Neutral State

The Indian Constitution is characterized as liberal since it recognizes that the individual citizen is entitled to equal rights and to equality before law. Liberals believe that the state is a neutral arbiter between different competing interests and stands to realize what is called the common good in society. The neutrality of the state is linked to the idea of the moral equality of individuals, which could be based on any of the following grounds: their ability to think, feel, or make choices. The emphasis here is on capacity or ability, and not the actual exercise. So, even if we do not actually exercise these capacities right now, we do possess them as individuals. This makes the liberals argue that individuals are entitled to equal respect from the state. Respect for an individual implies respect for his/her ability to make choices, as well as for the choices. Some might argue that individuals

differ in their intellectual prowess, in their possession of wealth and strength of character. Given these differences, should they be entitled to equal respect from the state? Liberals would respond by saying that these are not sufficient grounds for the state to treat an individual as inferior to others. Citizens are entitled to equal respect and concern from the state because the state is committed to respect the moral equality of citizens, which means non-discrimination and impartiality at the very first level. The state should not arbitrarily discriminate in its treatment of one citizen against other.

Liberals believe that the state should seek to ensure that each individual has the freedom to exercise his/her choice. The best state of affairs, according to them, is the set of rules or the framework that would best ensure that the government treats its citizens with equal respect, and not impose any conception of what good life is. Thus, for liberals, the state is concerned with rules that would enable individuals to pursue their own ideas of what they think is good life, so long as the freedom of others is not infringed upon.

What do you think the entitlement to equal respect and consideration implies? According to **Ronald Dworkin**, liberal equality could have two implications: first, equal distribution of certain goods and opportunities. One instance of this could be the principle of one person, one vote. Another example could be the equality of opportunity. The second conception of liberal equality would challenge the identical distribution to all concerned without taking into account what their needs are and what kind of situation they find themselves in. Liberals are divided on the extent of state obligations. Should it be concerned only with the maintenance of law and order or should it also be concerned with redistribution of resources, and with the welfare of its citizens – should the state be a welfare state? Should the state attempt to reserve seats in educational institutions and in employment for individuals who come from deprived groups, groups that have suffered systemic discrimination in the past? Does this violate the liberal state's commitment to treat its citizens as entitled to equal respect and concern, or is in consonance with this principle? On what grounds do liberals justify these provisions? Contemporary liberalism has been most exercised by the notion of social justice and social welfare (**John Rawls** (1921-2002), Ronald Dworkin).

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Marxism: The Class State

The liberal view of the state as a neutral arbiter among conflicting interests is challenged by Marxists. Marxism offers a method of evaluating the idea and practice of the state in its day-to-day affairs. To understand their view of the state, it is important that we begin by explaining the materialist conception of history or historical materialism, which assumes that human history progresses through contradictions or ‘dialectics’ at the level of the production of goods in society.

Karl Marx and his collaborator **Friedrich Engels** borrowed the concept of the dialectical method from the German philosopher, **G.W. Friedrich Hegel**. For the ancient Greeks, the dialectic was a form of argumentation through question and answer, and thus an argumentative technique involving contradiction. Hegel maintained that history was the development and conflict of abstract principles that included cultures, religions, and philosophies. There was always tension between the present state of affairs and what it was becoming; thus, every state of affairs contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction and transformation to a higher stage. Each successive stage was a progress beyond those that had preceded and contained elements from them. This could be represented by the ‘thesis’ which is opposed by the ‘antithesis’, which consequently produced a new ‘synthesis’.

Marx took up the concept of the dialectic, but instead of abstract principles, he focused on the changing economic base of the society – and the social classes to which it gave rise. For Marx, conflicts between these classes were the causes of the changes taking place in human history. Historical materialism maintains that the key to changes in society lies in the way human beings produce goods in common. Production is the real foundation or the ‘base’ of society. History is the record of increasingly sophisticated ways of producing goods. Developments in production lead to a change in the economic structure which, in turn, leads to changes in the ‘superstructure’, that is, political, religious, legal, and philosophical realms, accordingly. Production itself has two aspects: the material and the social. The former refers to the technology and tools used in the process of production and the latter to property relations, and to the division of society into two classes: those who own the means of production – land and the instruments of production – and those who are the direct producers: slaves, peasants, or wage labourers. The exploitation of the direct producers by the owners of the means of production leads to conflicts between the two classes. The economic structure, therefore, determines whether the state exists and if so, what kind of state it is.

Marx’s ideas of the state developed as a critique of Hegel’s political philosophy. According to Hegel, the entire process of human history was the progress of the absolute ‘Spirit’ towards self-realization, that is, towards a

determinant endpoint. In his *Philosophy of Right* (1821), he portrayed the state as an ethical ideal and the highest expression of human freedom, which was realized as human beings acted in accordance with their reason. Human beings were truly free when they realized that instead of allowing the forces of history to control them, they could take control of themselves. If they saw themselves as independent beings with conflicting wills, they would regard other human beings as alienated from them. This, in turn, would hamper their own freedom. Their recognition of the common ability to reason in other human beings would resolve this problem. If a community could be built on the basis of this common ability to reason, it would be acceptable to every human being as an expression of his or her own rational will and not as something outside oneself. The coincidence of duty and self-interest would lead to the realization of their nature as rational beings. According to Hegel, the state is the community that secures freedom and integration for the individual.

Hegel maintained that there are three moments of social existence: the family, civil society, and the state. These three spheres of social existence are different spheres of ethical development in which individual self-determination is realized in larger ethical communities. Within the family, a **‘particular altruism’** prevails, encouraging people to set aside their own interests for the good of their relatives. This, however, does not happen in a civil society. While the family is constituted by sacrifice and unity, civil society is the sphere of **‘universal egoism’**, that is, ethical life in competition. Here, individuals place their own interests before those of others, and behave selfishly and instrumentally towards others, though in this very process they form a system of complete interdependence wherein their livelihood, happiness and legal status are interwoven with one another. However, civil society cannot provide people with a self-determined ethical life because of its inability to produce freedom and integration. Thus, an ethical sphere higher than both the family and civil society must be found for the realization of human freedom.

The state, according to Hegel, is the ethical sphere of universality, freedom and integration. The state is founded on freedom instead of coercion and so it is the final realization of the ‘Spirit’ in history. Its strength rests not on force but on its ability to organize rights, freedom, and welfare into a coherent whole. Hegel challenged the social contract argument, saying that it was based on the arbitrary will of the individuals. It is wrong to say that the foundation of the state is something at the option of all its members. Instead, he maintained that it is not up to the individual to separate himself from the state, because we are all citizens of the state by birth. The state reconciles individual freedom with the values of the community and in the realization of the community each individual

would find his/her own fulfilment while simultaneously contributing to the well-being of the whole.

Marx, on the other hand, maintained that it was illusory to hold that the state had a universal character that could harmonize the discordant elements of civil society. According to him, as long as the society is divided into classes on the basis of the ownership of the means of production, there would be a dominant class and an exploited class, and the state would conduct its business in a manner conducive to the interests of the dominant class. We can find in Marx's writings two kinds of theories of the capitalist state. One that is most often quoted from the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) says, 'the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'. Here, the state is the instrument of the ruling class and is subordinate to the capitalist class. If it is the instrument of a particular class, its neutrality and impartiality is then under question.

Marx put forth a second view of the state in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) where he examined the revolutionary events in France from 1848 to 1851. What emerges from this examination is the 'relative autonomy of the state'. This referred to the capability of the state to impose its will upon society. This was because Bonapartism was an opportunistic and populist alliance between part of the bourgeoisie and part of the proletariat to secure legitimacy for the regime. This represented the autonomy that the state may achieve when class forces in society are precisely balanced. Marx's emphasis here is on the capability of the state to impose its will. What distinguishes this view from the one expressed above is that the state is not referred to only as an instrument of the dominant class. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the autonomy of the state is only relative and not absolute. While appearing to mediate between competing class interests, the state keeps the class structure intact. The state is not a neutral arbiter, but acts to maintain the division of society into classes. We notice that the abstraction and the independence of the state from partisan interests are challenged in the Marxist view of the state.

With the overthrow of capitalism, the capitalist state would also be overthrown, and in its place, the proletariat, that is, the working class, would take over the reins of the state and establish its dictatorship. This would be marked by the working class exercising the kind of hegemony that the bourgeoisie had exercised, leaving the actual task of governance to others. Marx identified a form of government whereby the working class would actually govern and fulfil many of the tasks hitherto performed by the state. The socialist state would try to create the conditions for the eventual transition to a stateless and classless society.

Marx affirmed his view of the state as an instrument by which the economically dominant class could repress and subdue the other classes. All states, then, are examples of class dictatorships. The purpose of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to safeguard the gains of the revolution and prevent a counter-revolution by the bourgeoisie.

Marx challenged the necessity and the endurance of the state. Liberalism does not challenge the endurance of the state. By associating the state with the class system, Marx believed that the abolition of the latter would lead to a withering away of the former. Can you imagine the state ‘withering away’? It is not very clear what Marx exactly meant by the withering away of the state and this has provided other Marxist writers with further scope to elaborate the analysis of state power.

So far, we have seen that Marxism focused on the coercive role of the state – the state is essentially the institution whereby a dominant exploiting class imposes and defends its power and privileges against the class/classes that it dominates and exploits. The Italian Marxist, **Antonio Gramsci**, introduced into Marxist thought the idea that it is not just through open coercion that the domination of the ruling class is secured. This is also elicited through ideological manipulation. According to Gramsci, the state is force plus consent, or hegemony and coercion, in which civil society provides consent and political society organizes force. **Hegemony refers to the ability of the dominant class to secure the consent of those it dominates. It is a process through which the bourgeoisie maintains its dominant position in the society.** The system of education, the mass media – these are part of what could be called the ideological state apparatus. **Louis Althusser**, a French Marxist, further developed the idea of the **ideological state apparatus**. Althusser wrote that the capitalist state has two distinct but related coercive instruments to secure the stability and the continual reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. This includes the **repressive state apparatuses** – law courts, police, army, and other state functionaries. These rely on violence in the sense that if one fails to comply with the directives of the state then some form of sanction is imposed against the person in the form of fines, imprisonment, and so on. On the other hand, **ideological state apparatuses** function not by force but by ideology. These include areas where we acquire and exercise our individual rights and freedom, such as the family, trade unions, the media, and the church, but it is primarily the education system that assumes the role of the dominant ideological state apparatus.

The Marxist evaluation of the state inspired many movements that sought to change the nature of the existing state. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949 were attempts at overthrowing the existing political

structures and creating in their place an alternative and fairer form of political organization.

Feminism: The Patriarchal State

Feminist theory includes within it a wide range of perspectives, and has thus engendered different attitudes towards state power. Liberal feminists generally subscribe to a belief in the state's basic neutrality. The denial of legal and political equality to women would imply that the laws of the state are biased in favour of men. Yet, it is possible to rectify these laws by the intervention of the state. They therefore, see the state as capable of playing a role in promoting equality between men and women. This is evident in many campaigns – for instance, the demand for the reservation of seats in parliament for women, the extension of welfare schemes for women – all these are instances of liberal feminism's belief in the basic neutrality of the state and the possibility of appealing to the state to remove legal and political inequality between the sexes.

Radical feminists believe that the power of the state is a reflection of the patriarchal nature of society. They question the idea of the basic neutrality of the state, for they view the state as a reflection of patriarchal values in society. For radical feminists, the origin and roots of the disparity between men and women lies within the family, in the organization of labour within the family. The state is an instrument of male power. **Catherine MacKinnon** has argued that in a liberal state, it is through law that women's subordination and silence are maintained. In an unequal society, the definition of the 'normal' status of women is determined by the application of male values and practices. Thus, radical feminism criticizes the view of the state as impartial and neutral. Feminist theories have sometimes led to a redefinition of what is political. The term 'the personal is political' contains within it several implications.

Recent Debates: Challenges to the Sovereignty of the State

Globalization

Globalization is the process through which events and decisions in one part of the world have come to affect people in another part of the world. It has led to a greater inter-locking of different parts of the world. It has often been claimed that globalization poses challenges to the sovereignty of the state. Globalization is a multi-dimensional process, and includes the economic, cultural, and political aspects of life. The economic aspect refers to the emergence of an interlocking

global economy and the worldwide spread of capitalism. The indicators of economic globalization are the growing power of multinational corporations, the internationalization of production, and the flow of financial capital between countries. It has become increasingly difficult, and perhaps impossible, for any country to regulate the international flow of capital, thus making it difficult for individual states to manage economic life. States have also found it difficult to regulate multinational companies for they can easily relocate production and investment.

Political globalization is reflected in the growing importance of international bodies like the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The membership of the EU threatens state power, as many decisions on matters like monetary policy and defence are made by European institutions rather than by the member-states themselves. It is for these reasons that it is often said that globalization has challenged the sovereignty of the state.

The above stated case has been challenged by several authors and commentators who point that we should investigate the ways in which the state's role is changing as a result of globalization. According to them, there is the possibility of states adapting themselves to the transformations in international society, in the form of 'pooled sovereignty' – the idea that states that would be weak and ineffective acting independently could acquire greater influence by working together with other states through the vehicle of international or regional institutions. Others believe that globalization is itself driven by the state. States are themselves the authors of globalization by promoting and shaping the nature and pace of globalization. Trade agreements and regionalization are instances of this. Political elites in different countries often use globalization as an ideological device to make the move towards market reforms appear inevitable and irresistible. States are now more concerned about their role as actors in global markets to protect national economic well-being, and are entrepreneurial. They are less concerned with political sovereignty and security than they were earlier. Moreover, as Michael Mann (1997) argues, we need to make distinctions between states to understand the changing role of the state. Globalization will affect a powerful European state differently from a vulnerable country in South America or Africa. Some states might become stronger and more powerful, while others weaker.

Therefore, globalization could have different consequences for different states. As states differ in the degree of international power, they can assume the role of agents of globalization as well as become its passive victims. Thus, the

impact of globalization on state sovereignty is much more complex than what the 'end of the state' thesis allows for.

Globalization and Politics

While the term 'globalization' emerged in 1960s, as a tendency it existed in ancient and medieval times. Empires of great territorial reach have an ancient history in the world. Throughout history, trade, war and conquest have ensured that there has never been an isolated society. In its new or modern form it started in 16th century with the voyages of discovery. What is new is the range, scale and intensity of global links which shrinks space and time through the widespread network of modern speedy communication and transportation systems. Global networks have brought about the supersession of the nation-states resulting in the formation of a 'world society'. The world today is witnessing an intensification of circuits of economic, political, cultural and ecological interdependence.

Generally, the process of globalization is linked with economic transformation. But it cannot be tied with economic phenomenon. It is not only transforming economic life but it has also brought changes in non-economic life – in political sphere, in the family, in lifestyles and consumption patterns and even the very notions of individual identity. Thus, it may be defined as 'a social process in which the constraints of geography on social, political and cultural arrangements recede and slowly and gradually the political boundaries of nation-states become insignificant in a globalized world'.

Today, many of the economic, political, military and ideological powers that shape our lives work across nations – and increasingly they operate on a global scale. Multinational corporations and certain global and inter-governmental institutions developed a global power and presence. This has given rise to what **Daniel Bell** (1987) has observed, '**a crisis of the territorial nation-state**'. He said that the nation-state is 'too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life'. One of the main champions of globalization of politics, **David Held** (1993) has argued that nation-states have ceded some sovereignty to larger entities in order that a range of 'big' problems may be dealt with more effectively. Thus, WTO and IMF deal with trading and financial matters, NATO with military matters and in the case of Western countries, the European Union (EU) deals with a wide range of political, social and cultural issues. It is important to add that the United Nations is also a key global organization with a wide remit. Besides political matters, it is active in humanitarian, health (WHO) and education (UNESCO) fields, ecological issues, problem of terrorism, pollution and peace-keeping activities.

The Imported State and its Consequences

As discussed earlier, the modern state emerged and evolved in Europe. Through colonialism, it was transplanted in Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas. The development of the state in these areas has been along a trajectory different from that in Europe. Independent India inherited a state structure that colonialism had introduced. It did not evolve organically from the people. It could be argued that this structure of the state was imposed on the people from the top. When the state tried to penetrate into a pre-modern, traditional world by bringing different spheres of life under its supervision and control – it could be the abolition of child marriages, the registration of births, the abolition of the practice of untouchability – it was sometimes met with violence by the state and/or by those who tried to resist the growing powers of the state. This has often led to a loss of the meaning of state authority for the people governed by it, thus straining relations between the government and those governed by it.

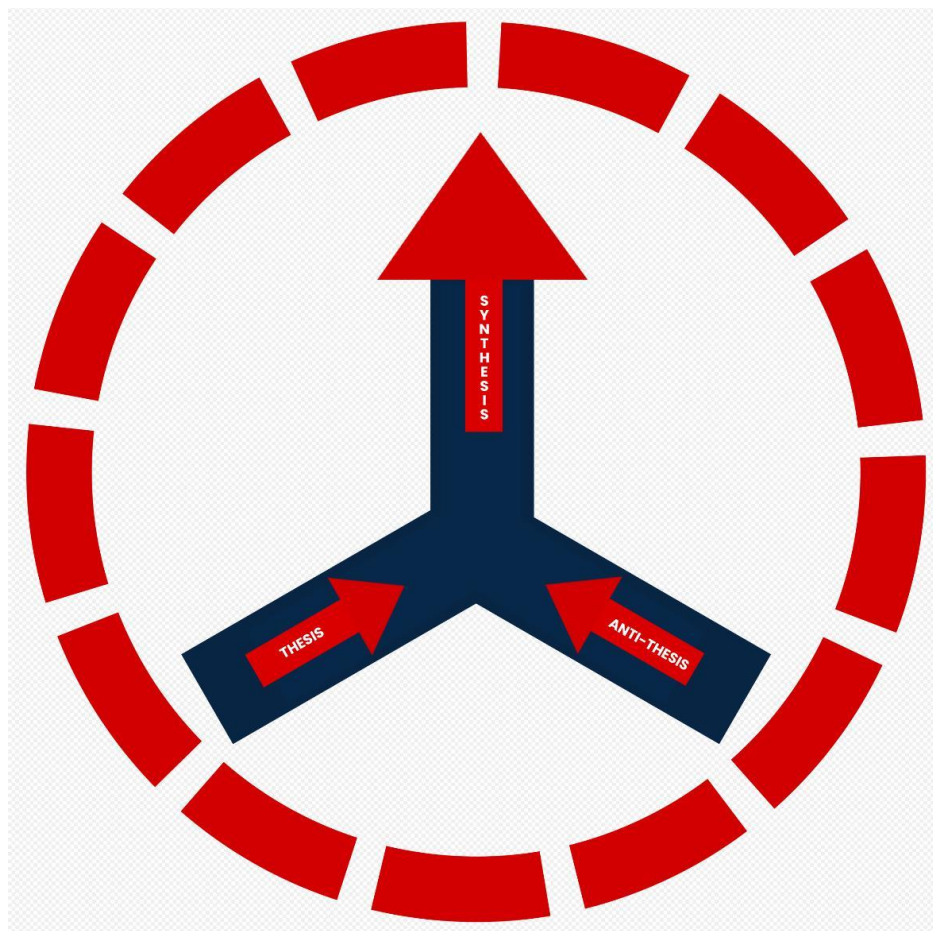
Manoranjan Mohanty (2000) points to the emergence of two streams of critiques of the Indian state in the 1960s and the 1970s. These include, first, the rise of revolutionary politics and the Naxalite movement, and second, mass movements like the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini in Bihar in 1974-75 to which Jayaprakash Narayan provided inspiration and impetus. The Naxalite movement sought to demonstrate the semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature of the Indian state, which was itself seen as an institution of violence. The Jayaprakash Narayan movement offered a critique of state power from the vantage point of civil society.

The monopoly of the state over the legitimate use of violence could be challenged by the establishment of parallel governments, particularly in the context of the emergence of the demand and the struggle for statehood by different groups. For instance, many of these groups might set up what are termed parallel governments (claiming for themselves the power to levy and collect taxes), and create a rival centre of coercion and force, challenging the monopoly of the state over the use of legitimate violence. The transplantation of the state and the consequent Westernization of the political order are held responsible for this state of affairs. The recent attempts at state-building in Iraq and Afghanistan are often considered to be attempts to import the Western model of the state into a terrain socially and politically not suited for this kind of transmigration. It is a matter of great debate how fruitful such exercises at state-building would be.

Thus, the state represents not merely a set of institutions, but rather a set of ideas and attitudes. What is the meaning of the state representing a set of ideas and attitudes? The state is an abstract entity, as are the other concepts like democracy, liberty, equality, etc. The defining feature of the modern state is the standard of

abstraction from the regime that it is expected to uphold. Feminists hold that the state is patriarchal in nature, while according to Marxists it upholds the interests of the dominant section. Various critiques of the liberal view of the state point to the inability or the unwillingness of the state to abstract itself from the dominant sections of the society.

The modern state might share one or more but not all of its defining features with other associations and organizations. Does the state exhaust the possibility of our imagining alternative forms of political organization? Given the role of the state, sometimes benevolent, but always coercive, there have been many images of alternative forms. However, a paradox emerges: while the authority of the state is constantly questioned and challenged, there are also several demands made on the state to confer full-fledged rights and entitlements on citizens, to confer ever more recognition to more institutions, and a growing demand from the international community to address development problems effectively.



Dialectics IAS

Short Note

Nation / Nationalism

The term nation is derived from the Latin word '*nasci*', meaning 'to be born'. Thus nations are the groups originally believed to have been formed on the basis of birth. However, in contemporary plural societies, nations are far more complex, particularly in the light of naturalised citizenship. Nations are complex phenomena that are shaped by a collection of cultural, political and psychological factors. Culturally, a nation is a group of people bound together by a common language, religion, history and tradition. Politically, a nation is a group of people who regard themselves as a natural political community. Although this is classically expressed in the form of a desire to establish or maintain statehood, it also takes the form of civic consciousness. Psychologically, a nation is a group of people distinguished by a shared loyalty or affection in the form of patriotism.

Nationalism can broadly be defined as the belief that the nation is the central principle of political organisation. It refers to '*a set of symbols and beliefs providing the sense of being part of a single political community*'. Nationalism is the main expression of feelings of identity with a distinct sovereign community.

According to **Hans Kohn**, 'nationalism demands the nation-state; the creation of the nation-state strengthens nationalism'. Similarly, **Max Weber** also argues that 'a nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own'. Nationalism, thus, could be described as an ideology or movement that seeks to establish a particular nation state, or to consolidate its power. It is the belief that the nation is/must be the primary focus of loyalty for individuals and groups within a state; that it should be the sole object of people's allegiance.

Nationalism is commonly regarded by historians as having originated in the late 18th & 19th centuries in Europe, more specifically in Western Europe. Modernist scholars like Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson offer a functional account of the emergence of nationalism. They argue that nationalism emerged as a necessary product of modernization.

According to **Ernest Gellner**, nationalism has a structural connection with the needs of modern industrial society. He argued that the social organisation of agrarian society is not at all favourable to the nationalist principle. The move from an agrarian to an industrial society necessitated the creation of a common culture and a standardized language. According to him, the need of modern industrial economies for a mobile and interchangeable workforce requires complex

new skills and social formations beyond the resources of family and kinship ties. Such skills according to Gellner ‘can only be provided by a public education system and integrated by (preferably) a single language and within a centralized political, economic, and educational system’; in other words, within the modern nation-state. The universality of nationalism in the contemporary world stems from the fact that it is the only form of political organization that is appropriate to the social and material conditions of modern society. Further, nationalism can unite sections of the population that would compete fiercely otherwise for valued modern occupations – jobs and political careers. Thus, seen through Gellner’s eyes, nationalism is a *sine qua non* of industrialization, because it provides people with a powerful motivation for making painful changes necessary for creating modern industrial societies. The cultural homogeneity required by nationalism is also useful for industrial society in many ways. Thus, to simplify Gellner’s thesis, nationalism is intrinsic to both modernity and industrialization.

Gellner, in his work *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), further argues that it is not nations that create nationalism but rather, that *nationalism creates nations*, a fact that certainly seems to be true for the history of most recent nation-states. In this process, according to Gellner, the principle of nationalism exerts a homogenizing pressure on pre-modern cultures, exploiting them and transforming them to fulfill its project of creating a homogenous ‘national’ culture. Nationalism also obliterates obscure ‘little traditions’ and reinvents and homogenizes ‘great traditions’ in order to create a basis for the modern nation. Gellner’s analysis can be used by us to understand the rise of Hindu nationalism, or Hindutva in India. Hindutva seeks to promote the development of a (Hindu) Indian nation by the propagation of a homogenized Hindu ‘high’ culture that ignores diverse local, folkloric traditions in favour of a limited set of upper-caste, Sanskritic traditions. This project of Hindutva is expressed in the demand for a common national language (Sanskritized Hindi), a common deity (Lord Ram) and a common place of worship for all Hindus – the site of Lord Ram’s birth in the north Indian city of Ayodhya. This last demand was expressed as the Ramjanmabhoomi movement and culminated in the destruction of a mosque – the Babri Masjid – that allegedly stood at the site of Ram’s birthplace. Interestingly, there is a continuous reference in the Hindutva discourse to a glorious ancient past – the ‘Vedic Age’ – as the origin/root of the Hindu nation. As mentioned above, the idea of common origin or birth is a part of the history of nationalism in Western Europe, too. Therefore, in Gellner’s words, ‘*nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist.*’

Benedict Anderson argues that the creation of printing presses led to the standardization of the written language around which a common culture could coalesce, leading to the creation of an ‘imagined community’. Nation as an

imagined community and *print capitalism* are Benedict Anderson's two concepts which have become justly famous for understanding nationalism. Our typical understanding of a community is that of a closely knit face-to-face group. Though the members of a nation are strangers to each other in real life, in their minds, they imagine and live the life of a community — primarily political and cultural. This was made possible by *print capitalism*, which enabled the vernacular languages to replace sacred languages like Latin. Millions of fellow readers of the printed language was the embryo of the nationally imagined community. Today it is no longer only print but, generally, *media capitalism* which is playing a very important role in creating and sustaining a nation.

Marxism believes that nationalism offers individuals an identity and a means to belong to a community that seems egalitarian and unified, but actually is not so. This is because all nations are characterized by deep economic and social inequalities even today. Thus, Marxists would argue that the unity in nationalist thought can be a mythical one, and does not reflect the real conditions of human beings in the modern, predominantly capitalist world. Benedict Anderson, an influential writer on nationalism expresses this Marxist insight when he calls nations as '*imagined communities*'. According to Anderson (1983), nations are imagined because,

'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion . . . regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived of as a deep, horizontal comradeship.'

Nationalism in third world societies

Since for Gellner, early development of capitalist industries is a pre-condition for the emergence of nationalism, his theory cannot explain the origins of nationalist sentiments in most of the third world countries that saw very sparse industrial development till the mid-twentieth century, for example, India. Many of the nationalist movements seen in the developing world at the time of decolonization were the product of different forces. The nationalist movements which emerged were generally not the product of processes of modernization, and involved multiple communities. Often, the colonized territories were ethnically heterogeneous and the bond unifying the nationalist movement was a shared sense of difference from the colonial power – 'the other'. However this bond against the colonial power did not always exist, as can be seen in the different approaches of the Indian National Congress (perceived to be a Hindu organization) and the Muslim League to Indian independence. And even when a shared interest in

removing the colonial power existed, this often disappeared once the colonial power had departed.

However, Benedict Anderson's suggestion in 'Imagined Communities' have had the deepest influence in the analysis of modern nationalism, particularly in the third world societies. Anderson offers a startling thesis that as a sense of membership towards religious communities decline, and modern social conditions force individuals to exist in abstract relationships outside of face-to-face pre-modern communities, nationalism produces a new kind of 'imagined' community which replicates the intensity of religious emotions of communal belonging. Anderson's thesis views the contribution of what he calls 'print-capitalism' to this process as crucial. It is true that the idea of print-capitalism suits the facts of early modern European history better than the colonial world, but if the attachment of capitalism is taken away, the hypothesis acquires much greater plausibility in colonial conditions. Print was less decisively linked to a form of capitalism in India, but in its artisanal form, it certainly played a decisive role in the growth of nationalist discourse.

Conclusion: The future of an idea

At the start of the 21st century, increasing economic globalization, mass migration, and technological advancements like the Internet and mobile phones seem to have dramatically 'shrunk the planet'. The lifestyles of the elites all over the globe are now strikingly similar; for many classes of people, national identity has become irrelevant at the everyday level – they use the same slang, travel in the same manner and even eat the same food! Migration of human beings has increased manifold, with a huge number of individuals seeking to live and work in countries far away from their own. Writers argue that in the face of an increasingly globalized world, old political formations like the nation will lose their earlier role and relevance. **David Beetham**, for instance, argues that the very forces that strengthened nationalism in the previous era will cause its downfall in the coming one. Some writers believe that rather than national formations, it is *trans*-national economic and political alliances that will set the agenda for the world's people in this, and in the coming centuries. In this context, writers point to the example of the European Union as proof of the decline of the nation state. Europe being widely regarded as the birthplace of nationalism, the formation of the European Union on this very continent has led some writers to believe that nationalism and other such 'primitive' ideologies will be overcome in this new epoch. Many writers and political commentators believe that the coming centuries will move in the direction of cosmopolitan, universal, global values, and the nationalist bloodbaths of the previous century will be distant memories.

However, well into the 21st century, a decline of nationalism seems nowhere in evidence. Nationalism as a *political force* seems alive, and well expressed in myriad forms like cultural revivalist movements in the East, debates on race and immigration all over the world, and most recently, in the controversy over business process outsourcing (BPO) in western states. You may recall that opposition to outsourcing in Western countries was conducted in nationalist language, with implicit elements of xenophobia and racism against workers in Third World states. Further, national ‘self- determination’ movements are active, whether in Kashmir, in Palestine, or as witnessed in the recent liberation of East Timor from Indonesia. Nationalism has been, and will in all likelihood continue to be, at the core of many of the most bitter and important struggles well into the 21st century. The theorist **Michael Billig**, for example, argues that nationalism as a phenomenon is too deeply and thoroughly ingrained in modern life to study it narrowly in terms of particular social movements and make sharp and sweeping distinctions *between* nationalisms. Billig’s central claim is that if all states today are *nation*-states, then nationalism is simply the ideology that maintains *all* nation-states *as* nation-states. In this context Billig (1997) refers to the idea of ‘banal nationalism’ – the everyday, routine forms of nationalism practiced by First World states – from the restrictions on immigration to the widespread use of national symbols such as flags and songs.

To conclude, it may be useful to understand nationalism as a universal contemporary political phenomenon; not simply an occasional, spectacular outpouring of patriotic sentiment, but as a part of the history of the modern state. Nationalism has often joined hands with the democratic state and liberal politics, as the experience of Third World leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, etc. has shown. It can be a powerful transformative force that can achieve miracles in large and impoverished societies, as expressed in the idea of ‘nation-building’. Nationalism has especially been an ally for post-colonial societies seeking to unite large and diverse populations and fulfill difficult developmental goals within an unequal global capitalist system. However, it has also become entwined with more dangerous ideologies like religious extremism of any sort, fundamentalism and even fascism. To understand way nationalism can be healthy or regressive, powerful or limited in its scope, one must remember above all the historical contingencies that accompanied its rise, and in particular its complex historical relationship with the modern state. The blending of the universal and the particular, the banal and the spectacular, the routine and the extraordinary, the reasonable and the irrational is what constitutes the most striking feature of nationalism anywhere in the world, and perhaps gives us a compelling explanation for the continuing power of this ideology well into the 21st century.

Power – a functionalist perspective

Talcott Parsons, arguing from a functionalist perspective, rejects the constant-sum concept of power and the view that power is employed in the furtherance of sectional interests. Rather than seeing power as something which some hold at the expense of others, Parsons regards it as something possessed by society as a whole. As such, **power is ‘a generalized facility or resource in the society’**. In particular, it is ‘the capacity to mobilize the resources of the society for the attainment of goals for which a general ‘public’ commitment has been made’. In this sense, the amount of power in society is measured by the degree to which collective goals are realized. Thus, the greater the efficiency of a social system for achieving the goals defined by its members, the more power exists in society. This view is sometimes known as a ‘**variable-sum**’ concept of power, since power in society is not seen as fixed or constant. Instead it is variable in the sense it can increase or decrease.

Parsons’ view of power is developed from his general theory of the nature of society. He begins from the assumption that **value consensus** is essential for the survival of social systems. From shared values derive collective goals, that is, goals shared by members of society. Since goals are shared by all members of society, power will generally be used in the furtherance of collective goals. Parsons regards power differentials as necessary for the effective pursuit of collective goals. Cooperation on a large scale requires organization and direction which necessitates positions of command. Some are therefore granted the power to direct others. This power takes the form of authority. It is generally regarded as legitimate since it is seen to further collective goals. For example, if materialism is a major value of Western industrial society, collective goals such as economic expansion and higher living standards can be seen to stem from this value. The more Western societies are able to realise these goals, the greater the power that resides in the social system. Steadily rising living standards and economic growth are therefore indications of an increase of power in society.

Many sociologists have argued that Parsons’ views of the nature and application of power in society are naive. They suggest he has done little more than translate into sociological jargon the rationalisations promoted by the power-holders to justify their use of power. In particular, they argue that Parsons has failed to appreciate that power is frequently used to further sectional interests rather than to benefit society as a whole.

Power and the state – a pluralist perspective

Pluralism is a theory that claims to explain the nature and distribution of power in Western democratic societies. **Classical pluralism** was the original form that this perspective took, but it has been heavily criticised. Some supporters of this perspective have modified their position and have adopted an **elite pluralist view** which takes account of some of those criticisms.

We will first describe and evaluate classical pluralism, before considering elite pluralism at the end of this section.

Classical pluralism

This version of pluralism has important similarities with the Parsonian functionalist theory. Pluralists agree with Parsons that power ultimately derives from the population as a whole:

1. They accept that the government and state in a Western democracy act in the interests of that society and according to the wishes of its members.
2. They regard the state's exercise of power to be legitimate rather than coercive, since it is held to be based upon the acceptance and cooperation of the population.
3. They see the institution of 'modern state' (particularly of countries such as the USA, Britain and France) as the most advanced systems of government yet devised, and regard them as the most effective way for a population to exercise power and govern a country.

Pluralists, however, part company from Parsons in three important respects.

The nature of power

First, pluralists follow Weber in accepting a constant-sum concept of power, where there is a fixed amount of power distributed among the population of a society. They do not accept Parsons's variable-sum concept of power, which sees it as a resource held by society as a whole.

Sectional interests

Second, they deny that democratic societies have an all embracing value consensus. They would agree with Parsons that members of such societies share

some interests and wishes in common. For example, most citizens of the USA share a commitment to the constitution of the country and the political institutions such as the presidency, the Congress and the electoral system.

However, pluralists do not accept that members of society share common interests or values in relation to every issue. They believe industrial society is increasingly differentiated into a variety of social groups and sectional interests, and, with the increasingly specialised division of labour, the number and diversity of occupational groups steadily grow. Groups such as doctors, teachers, business people and unskilled manual workers may have different interests. Each group may be represented by its own union or professional association, and these groups may put forward conflicting requests to the government.

Pluralists do not deny the existence of class, or divisions based on age, gender, religion or ethnicity. However, they do deny that any single division dominates any individual's wishes or actions. According to their view, each individual has a large number of different interests. A male manual worker might not just be a member of the working class, he might also be a car owner, a mortgage payer, an avid reader of library books and a father of two children in higher education. While he has certain interests as a manual worker, other interests stem from other aspects of his position. As a car owner he has an interest in road tax and petrol prices being kept low, as a mortgage payer in interest rates being reduced, as a library user in more government expenditure on this service, and as a father in the abolition or reduction of student fees. Another range of interests could be outlined for a female professional.

The state

The third difference compared to the functionalist view follows from the pluralists' denial that a complete value consensus exists. Since individuals have different interests, political leaders and the state cannot reflect the interests of all members of society in taking any single decision. To pluralists, the state is seen as an **honest broker** that takes account of all the conflicting demands made on it by different sections of society. The state mediates between different groups, ensuring that all of them have some influence on government policy, but that none gets its own way all the time. On one particular occasion the government might take a decision that favours car owners, such as deciding to build a new motorway. On another it might decide against such a project in order to take account of the protests of environmentalists. And on another occasion, the government might reach a compromise, concluding that the road is necessary but changing the route in order to protect an area of particular environmental importance.

Pluralists argue that every group over a period of time has its interests reflected in governmental decisions, but because of the divisions within society, it is not possible for the state to satisfy everyone all of the time. In Raymond Aron's (1968) words, 'government becomes a business of compromise'.

Classical pluralism – Political parties and Interest groups

Political parties

From a pluralist perspective, competition between two or more political parties is an essential feature of representative government. Political parties are organisations that attempt to get representatives elected to positions in parliaments or their local equivalents. Pluralists claim that competition for office between political parties provides the electorate with an opportunity to select its leaders and a means of influencing government policy.

This view forms the basis of **Seymour M. Lipset's** definition of democracy. According to Lipset:

Democracy in a complete society may be defined as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office.

For efficient government, Lipset argued that competition between contenders for office must result in the granting of 'effective authority to one group' and the presence of an 'effective opposition' in the legislature as a check on the power of the governing party.

Pluralists claim that political parties in democratic societies are representative for the following reasons:

1. The public directly influences party policy, since, in order to be elected to govern, parties must reflect the wishes and interests of the electorate in their programmes.
2. If existing parties do not sufficiently represent sections of society, a new party will usually emerge, such as the Labour Party at the beginning of the 20th century in Britain.
3. Parties are accountable to the electorate, since they will not regain power if they disregard the opinions and interests of the public.

4. Parties cannot simply represent a sectional interest since, to be elected to power, they require the support of various interests in society.

However, as Robert McKenzie (1969) stated, political parties must not be seen ‘as the sole “transmission belts” on which political ideas and programmes are conveyed from the citizens to the legislature and the executive’. During their time in office and in opposition, parties ‘mould and adapt their principles under innumerable pressures brought to bear by organised groups of citizens whom operate for the most part outside the political system’. Such groups are known as **interest** or **pressure groups**.

Interest groups

Unlike political parties, interest groups do not aim to take power in the sense of forming a government. Rather, they seek to influence political parties and the various departments of state. Nor do interest groups usually claim to represent a wide range of interests. Instead, their specified objective is to represent a particular interest in society.

Interest groups are often classified in terms of their aims as either **protective** or **promotional** groups:

1. **Protective groups** defend the interests of a particular section of society, for example, trade unions (INTUC), professional associations (DUTA), employers’ organisations, etc. Membership of protective groups is usually limited to individuals of a particular status.
2. **Promotional groups** support a particular cause rather than guarding the interests of a particular social group, for example, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Greenpeace, etc. Membership of promotional groups is potentially larger and usually more varied than that of protective groups, since joining requires only a commitment to the cause.

In practice, the distinction between protective and promotional groups is not clear-cut, since the defence of an interest also involves its promotion.

Interest groups can apply pressure in various ways:

1. By making contributions to the funds of political parties, such as trade union contributions to the Labour Party, and the contributions of businesses to the Conservative and other parties. In the USA, corporate contributors are essential to most politicians wishing to mount a campaign to become a senator or president.
2. By appealing to public opinion. An effective campaign by an interest group can mobilise extensive public support, especially if it attracts widespread coverage by the mass media, and its arguments are seen to be valid.
3. By the provision of expertise. It has often been argued that, in modern industrial society, governments cannot operate without the specialised knowledge of interest groups. By providing this expertise, interest groups have an opportunity to directly influence government policy. In Britain, representatives of interest groups now have permanent places on many government advisory committees.
4. By various forms of civil disobedience or direct action. This approach has been used by a wide variety of interest groups. Examples include Fathers4Justice (who campaign for the rights of divorced fathers); and the Animal Liberation Front, which has used a variety of methods including freeing animals bred for laboratory experiments.
5. By illegal payments to elected representatives and state officials – in other words, bribery. Money has sometimes been used to buy access to MPs and government ministers.

Interest groups and democracy

Pluralists see interest groups as necessary elements in a democratic system for a number of reasons.

Voting in elections involves only minimal participation in politics for members of a democracy. Classical pluralists believe that as many people as possible should participate as actively as possible in politics. They do not believe that voting once every five years during elections is an adequate level of participation. **Interest groups allow many individuals who are not members of political parties to participate in politics.** For example, many members of groups

such as Amnesty International (which campaigns for human rights) or environmental organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace are not members of political parties. Some commentators have noted that membership of political parties in Britain has been falling while many pressure groups have seen membership rising

Interest groups are also necessary because even those who have voted for a government may not agree with all its policies. In a party-political system it is necessary to choose between the overall packages offered by the opposing parties. Interest groups make it possible to alter some parts of a governing party's policies while retaining those with which a majority of the population agree. Clearly, it is also vital that those who voted for a losing party have some opportunity to make their voices heard. **To the classical pluralist, the large number and diversity of pressure groups allow all sections of society to have a say in politics.**

Before an election, a party seeking office outlines its proposed policies in a **manifesto**. The electorate can choose whom to vote for on the basis of the manifestos put forward. However, manifestos cannot be completely comprehensive: new issues may arise. In the 2001 election in Britain no reference was made to Iraq in the manifestos of the major parties, since an invasion of Iraq had not been openly suggested at that time. Furthermore, the situation can be complicated where no single party achieves a majority. This may produce a coalition government, ensuring that the preferences of voters for more than one party are represented, but it may lead to compromise policies being adopted that nobody had voted for.

Interest groups allow the public to make their views known to a governing party as circumstances change and new issues arise. Furthermore, interest groups can mobilise public concern over issues that have been neglected or overlooked by the government. For example, the Refugee Council is a British interest group which draws the attention of the public and government alike to the plight of refugees, who are generally seen in an unsympathetic light by the media and many politicians. And a variety of environmental pressure groups did much to push the issue of global warming onto the political agenda before most political parties accepted it as a crucial issue.

According to classical pluralists, then, all sections of society and all shades of political opinion may be represented and reflected in a wide variety of groups in Western democracies. Anyone who feels that they are being neglected by the government can form a new pressure group.

Measuring power

Pluralists have provided empirical evidence to support their claim that Western societies are governed in accordance with democratic principles. They seek to show that a government's policies reflect a compromise between the wishes of the various sectional interests in society. They therefore concentrate upon the first face of power: **decision making**.

Pluralists compare the decisions taken by a government with the wishes of its general public, and the wishes expressed by different groups in the population. By examining evidence from opinion polls and the stated policy preferences of interest groups, pluralists reach the conclusion that countries such as Britain and the USA are genuinely democratic.

One of the most famous studies supporting the pluralist view is *Who Governs?* by **Robert A. Dahl** (1961). Robert A. Dahl (1915-2014), investigated local politics in New Haven, Connecticut, in the USA. **Dahl uses the 'decision making' method arguing that the only way to discover the distribution of power is to examine actual decisions.** He investigated a series of decisions in three main 'issue-areas': urban renewal, political nominations and education. **Dahl found no evidence of a ruling elite in New Haven. He claims that power is dispersed among various interest groups and that this plurality of elites does not form a unified group with common interests.** He found that interest groups only became involved in local politics when the issues were seen as directly relevant to their particular concern. In practice, different groups participated in each issue area and the mayor was the only person involved in all three areas. In addition there was hardly any overlap of personnel between the various elites. **This suggests that pluralism rather than elite theory best describes the distribution of power in New Haven. Dahl claims that the evidence shows that local politics is a business of bargaining and compromise with no one group dominating decision making.**

Further, **Dahl rejects the view that economic interests dominate decision making.** He concludes that, 'Economic notables, far from being a ruling group, are simply one of many groups, out of which individuals sporadically emerge to influence the policies and acts of city officials. Almost anything one might say about the influence of economic notables could be said with equal justice about half a dozen other groups in New Haven'.

Dahl's conclusions about the distribution of power on the local level are echoed in a study of power on the national level by **Arnold M. Rose**. In *The Power Structure*, Rose rejects the view that the USA is ruled by a unified power elite, arguing instead for a 'multi influence hypothesis'. This approach

‘conceives of society as consisting of many elites, each relatively small numerically and operating in different spheres of life. Among the elites are several that have their power through economic controls, several others that have power through political controls, and still others that have power through military, associational, religious and other controls’. **Via this multiplicity of relatively independent elites, the major interests in society are represented.**

A large body of evidence from studies such as those of Dahl and Rose in America, and Wyn Grant and David Marsh (1977) in Britain, appears to support the pluralist position. However, there are a number of serious **criticisms** of pluralism. These criticisms are concerned both with the methods pluralists use to measure power, and with empirical evidence that seems to contradict their claim that power is dispersed in Western democracies.

Non-decisions and safe decisions

Firstly, Marxists and other conflict theorists have suggested that pluralists ignore some aspects of power. In particular, it is argued that they concentrate exclusively on the first face of power, decision making. **John Urry** (1973), for example, believes that pluralists ignore the possibility that some have the power to prevent certain issues from reaching the point of decision. As a result of this **non-decision making**, only safe decisions may be taken – decisions that do not fundamentally alter the basic structures of capitalist societies. From this point of view, it is in the interests of the powerful to allow a variety of interest groups to influence safe decisions. This fosters the illusion of real participation and helps to create the myth that a society is democratic. It disguises the real basis of power and so protects the powerful.

Pluralists can also be criticised for ignoring what **Steven Lukes** has identified as the third face of power. They do not take account of the possibility that the preferences expressed in opinion polls or by pressure groups might themselves have been manipulated by those with real power – for example, those who control institutions such as the media and the education system, which can play a part in shaping individuals’ attitudes and opinions.

The consequences of decisions

Secondly, other writers have identified further ways in which power can be measured. Westergaard and Resler (1976) argue: ‘Power is visible only through its consequences’. Government legislation may fail to have its intended effect. Despite an abundance of legislation aimed at improving the lot of the poor, Westergaard and Resler believe there has ‘been little redistribution of wealth’.

Although studies of actual decisions might give the impression that the interests of the poor are represented in government decisions, in fact studies of the results of those decisions might provide a very different picture.

In more recent writing, Westergaard argues that class inequalities have ‘hardened’ and the power of private business has grown. In the medium term, inequalities of wealth have grown significantly, with the very rich being particularly successful.

In any case, many sociologists deny that governments in Western democracies monopolise power. A government might, for example, seek to reduce the level of unemployment in order to secure victory at the next election. However, it is not within the government’s power to control all the actions of large corporations, who can decide whether to close existing factories, making some of their workforce redundant, or to invest their profits overseas. This may be increasingly true if some theorists of globalisation are to be believed.

Contradictory evidence

The above points pose fundamental questions about the pluralists’ method of measuring power, but pluralism can also be criticised on its own terms. **Some of the evidence suggests that some interest groups have more influence over government decisions than others.** Decision making by governments does not always appear to support the view that power is equally distributed among all groups in society, or that the state acts impartially as an ‘honest broker’.

Many interest groups that have attracted tremendous support or have represented large groups in the population have had little influence. For example, it can be argued that the governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major from 1979 to 1997 consistently ignored the wishes of trade unions. For some 18 years these pressure groups representing many millions of workers had very little influence on government decisions affecting them.

Wyn Grant (2003) argues that economic policy in contemporary Britain is largely shaped by political and financial elites, particularly the treasury, the prime minister and the Bank of England. Unions had little impact on New Labour policies after 1997 except in the case of the introduction of the minimum wage. According to Grant, economic policy is influenced more by international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) than it is by pressure groups.

If anything, promotional groups seem to possess much less influence than protective groups. For example, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has not succeeded in getting rid of British nuclear weapons. The pressure group Stop the War Coalition was formed in 2001 to oppose the 'War on Terror' but gained most support in opposing the British and US invasion of Iraq. On 15 February 2003 it organised a demonstration in London opposing the imminent invasion. According to the BBC, police estimates, which were the lowest estimates, put the number of demonstrators at 7,50,000, making it the biggest demonstration in British history. Despite this, the organisation failed to influence government policy and the invasion of Iraq went ahead on 20 March 2003. Similarly, in March 2011, the BBC reported that a crowd in excess of 2,50,000 demonstrated against the cuts in public spending proposed by the UK Coalition government, without any noticeable effect on government policy (Symonds, 2011).

Some small pressure groups have managed to change government policy in recent years. ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) succeeded in getting a ban on smoking in enclosed public places introduced in England in 2007. However, the government has ignored the wishes of many larger groups with wider public support.

Colin Crouch (2011) argues that the evidence suggests that TNCs (transnational corporations) have far greater influence on government than other groups. From a pluralist point of view they represent just another lobby that the government will take account of in reaching balanced decisions. However, Crouch believes they are much more than this. He says:

The representatives of today's TNCs are not in the lobby, outside the real decision-making space of government, at all. They are right inside the room of political-decision-making. They set the standards, establish private regulatory systems, act as consultants to government, even have staff seconded to ministers' offices.

In this situation the government does not act as an honest broker, but largely represents the interests of business. Crouch argues that the bailing out of the banks by the British and other governments following the financial crisis, which started in 2008, is a case in point.

Unrepresented Interests

Classical pluralists assume not only that interest groups have equal power, but also that all major interests in society are represented by one group or another. This latter assumption is also questionable. The fairly recent emergence in Britain

of consumer associations and the Citizens Advice service can be seen as representing the interests of consumers against big business, and of citizens against government bureaucracies. It cannot be assumed that such interests were absent, unthreatened or adequately represented before the existence of such organisations. For instance, the unemployed are a group who, unlike employers and employees, still lack a protective pressure group to represent them. Another group who have little power or political influence are refugees and asylum seekers.

Fifthly, there is a tendency for pluralists to assume that the electorate is adequately represented if its opinions are reflected by government. However, from a Marxian perspective, public opinions can be seen as false class consciousness. From this viewpoint, governments which reflect public opinion can hardly be acting in the public interest.

Sixthly, pluralists often claim to have disproved the existence of a ruling class by providing evidence of a range of government decisions made in the face of opposition from groups representing the interests of capital. But, as **Nicos Poulantzas** has argued, from a Marxian perspective this is to be expected. The state must have 'relative autonomy' in order to effectively represent ruling class interests. In particular, it must have the freedom to make concessions to the subject class in order to prevent radical opposition to the status quo.

Pluralists admit that the power and influence of interest groups varies, but tend to ignore this in their analysis. The existence of an interest group says nothing about its effectiveness in representing its members.

Reappraisals of classical pluralism

It is not surprising that, given the strength and number of criticisms advanced against classical pluralism, some of its supporters have modified their positions to take account of some of the weaknesses of classical pluralism. **David Marsh** and **Wyn Grant** (1983) described a number of attempts to explain the distribution of power and the operation of the state as **elite pluralist theories**.

These theories share important **similarities** with classical pluralism:

- 1. They see Western societies as basically democratic.**
- 2. They regard government as a process of compromise.**
- 3. They agree that power is widely dispersed.**

On the other hand:

- 1. They do not accept that all members of society have exactly the same amount of power.**
- 2. They do not focus exclusively on the first face of power.**
- 3. They see elites, the leaders of groups, as the main participants in decision making.**

In more recent work, Wyn Grant (1999) has supported what is essentially an elite pluralist position. Grant concludes: 'For all the talk of a "new" Britain and a "new" politics, there is much that looks like "business as usual" in the world of pressure group politics.' Pressure groups still help to ensure that Britain is essentially democratic, but it remains true that some groups have more influence than others.

Evaluation of pluralism

Clearly, elite pluralism does answer some of the criticisms advanced against classical pluralism. It allows for the possibility that, at least temporarily, some interests may not be represented and some groups may have more power than others. It acknowledges that all individuals may not play an active part in politics, and it does not rely exclusively on measuring the first face of power, decision making. However, the analysis by elite pluralists may not be satisfactory in at least three ways:

1. In showing that democracies do not work perfectly, their own evidence raises doubts about the basic pluralist view that power is widely dispersed in Western industrial societies.
2. While they note the existence of elite leaders, they fail to discuss the possibility that these elites monopolise power and use it in their own interests. Furthermore, certain elites (such as those representing business interests – for example, the banks) may have much greater power than other elites.
3. Elite pluralists take account of two faces of power, but ignore the third. They do not discuss the power of some members of society to influence the wishes of others.

Pluralism and elite pluralism both see a healthy democracy as one in which large numbers of people are involved in politics, either through participation in political parties or pressure groups, or through voting. However, there has been a significant decline in at least some forms of participation in recent years. Turnout at general elections has fallen, as has membership of political parties. There is also evidence of more disillusionment with politics. This raises questions about the pluralist view that Western democracies are truly democratic. **Richard Heffernan** (2011) also raises the possibility that pressure group activity might itself reduce political participation in the long term. He suggests that such groups increase pressure on governments to deliver popular policies, but because they represent particular interests or viewpoints, they make no attempt to balance competing demands. When they fail to get everything they want, this can lead to disappointment, which may in turn increase political disengagement.

In addition:

Political participation

Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every political system. All political systems encourage political participation in varying degrees. By involving the people in the matters of the state and governance, political participation fosters stability and order by reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority. There are many forms of participation and democracy is the form of government which encourages maximum participation in governmental process. Participation does not mean the mere exercise of their franchise by the people, rather it means their active involvement which in a real manner influences the decision making of the govt.

Political participation can either be active or passive. People may participate actively in the political process either by exercising their franchise (right to vote) or by joining any political party, or contesting elections independently to an office. However, people may also participate in the political process by other ways such as reading, listening or watching the daily news about the various policies and programmes of the government and other political developments. People may also participate by taking part in political discussions and sharing their views on matters of national interest through newspaper columns. Such passive participation is equally important for a democracy to be a truly representative and participatory democracy as it not only reviews the actions of the government but also indicates a high level of political awareness among the masses.

However, **Seymour M. Lipset** has pointed out that high level participation cannot always be treated as good for democracy. It may indicate the decline of social cohesion and breakdown of democratic process. While some other scholars

are of the opinion that when majority of the people in a society are contented, the political participation is low. This should be taken as a favourable rather than unfavourable sign because it indicates stability and consensus within society and also the absence of broad cleavages.

As stated earlier, individuals can participate in government and politics in numerous ways. They can choose to take an active part in their government by the easiest form of political participation – voting. They can also participate in the political process in their individual capacity by contesting elections to an office. They can also form an interest group or join a political party to articulate their interests and opinions in the given political system.

Interest / Pressure Group

Decision-making is the essence of political dynamics. Decisions involve compromises among conflicting interests of social groups and political parties. Interest groups or pressure groups play an important role in decision-making. Such groups allow an orderly expression of public opinion and increase political participation.

Interest groups are the groups based upon **common attitudes, concerns or interests**. These are **voluntary associations of individuals** and their **primary objective is to promote or protect the shared concerns or interests of the respective members**.

Interest groups, according to **Blondel**, may be classified into two types: promotional and protective. **Promotional groups** tend to defend specific points of view (such as environmentalism, human rights, prevention of cruelty to animals, nuclear disarmament, etc.) and their membership remains open to all citizens. **Protective groups**, on the other hand, defend certain specific interests of some particular social groups (such as trade unions, professional associations, peasants, businessmen, etc.) and their membership is limited.

Some scholars are of the opinion that **if interest groups, in their pursuit of common interests, try to influence the public policy or government's decision-making process, without formally becoming a part of the government (i.e. without sharing any responsibility) then they become pressure groups**.

Definitions:

- Well known political scientists **Harold Lasswell** and **Abraham Kaplan** remarked, '*a group is an organized aggregate and an interest group is an interest aggregate.*'
- According to **Schaefer** and **Lamm**, '*an interest group is a voluntary association of citizens who attempt to influence public policy.*'
- According to **The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology**, '*an interest (or pressure) group is an organization whose purpose is to influence the distribution and use of political power in a society.*'
- According to **Andrew Heywood**, '*an interest group or pressure group (the terms are often but not always used interchangeably) is an organised association which aims to influence the policies or actions of government.*'

Thus, it may be argued that interest groups or pressure groups are voluntary associations of people having mutual concern about a wide array of economic, social, cultural, political, religious or any other issues. These are formally constituted organizations which are designed at least partly to put pressure on government, civil service and other political institutions to achieve ends that they favour.

Broadly speaking, pressure groups may be any group attempting to bring about any change in the working of any formal organization – state, government or any other social or economic organization. They are private associations to influence mass public policy. These groups are vital part of the political process. The political process is seen to result from a large number of competing interest or pressure groups.

Pressure groups, lobby groups and interest groups are distinct from clubs or social groups, in that their explicit purpose is to mobilize public opinion in support of their aims and to put pressure on decision-making bodies to agree to and support their demands – be they are for continuation of the existing state of affairs or for some change or innovation.

Pressure groups are found only in liberal-democratic political systems, in which the rights of political association and freedom of expression are respected. Pressure groups, however, differ from political parties in that they seek to exert influence from outside, rather than to win or exercise government power. Further, pressure groups typically have a narrow issue focus, in that they are usually concerned with a specific cause or the interests of a particular group, and seldom have the border programmatic or ideological features that are generally associated with political parties.

The most positive perspective on group politics is offered by **pluralist theories**. These theories not only see organized groups as the fundamental building blocks of the political process, but also portray them as a vital guarantee of liberty and democracy. Arguments in favour of pressure groups include the idea that they strengthen representation by articulating interests and advancing views ignored by political parties; that they promote debate and discussion and thus create a more informed electorate ; that they broaden the scope of political participation; that they check government power and maintain a vigorous and healthy civil society; and that they promote political stability by providing a channel of communication between government and the people.

However, a more critical view of pressure groups is advanced by the **Marxist scholars**. Marxist scholars argue that group politics systematically advantages business and financial interests that control the crucial employment and investment decisions in a capitalist society, and that the state is biased in favour of such interests through its role in upholding the capitalist system which they dominate. Thus, from the conflict perspective, the limitation of interest groups or pressure groups is that they tend to represent mainly the wealthier or better-educated sections of the public, leaving the poor and minorities largely unrepresented.

Almond and **Powell**, in their work *Comparative Politics*, have classified interest groups into four types:

- **Institutional Interest Groups:** These interest or pressure groups are found within formal institutions such as political parties, legislatures, armies, bureaucracies, etc. Examples of such institutional interest groups are the representatives of weaker sections of society in the legislature (such as MLAs or MPs representing the interests of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, religious and linguistic minorities, women, etc.), civil servants' association of a particular department, conservative business interests within mass political parties, labour leaders in social democratic parties, etc.

- **Associational Interest Groups:** Associational interest groups have both organized structures with full-time professional staff, and well-established procedures for the formulation of demands. The organizational base of these pressure groups places them in an advantageous position vis-à-vis other groups, and they often tend to regulate the development of other interest groups. For example, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), trade unions, organizations of businessmen (Oilseeds Dealers' Association) or of manufacturers (Jute Manufacturers' Association), organizations of religious denominations (the Vishwa Hindu Parishad), various civic groups (such as Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties), etc. The effectiveness of associational interest groups, however, depends on, as Almond and Powell have pointed out, the degree of autonomy they enjoy vis-à-vis political parties. This is particularly true of worker's, peasant's and student's organizations. These associational groups, when subordinated by political parties, instead of articulating the needs perceived by their members, serve only as instruments to mobilize support for the party.
- **Non-associational Interest Groups:** These are groups that lack both an organized structure as well as an organized, well-established procedure of articulation. Articulation of interests may take the form of a petition or an informal delegation from a linguistic group regarding language instruction in schools, appeals by relatives to a cabinet minister for some preferred treatment, etc. Kinship groups, ethnic, regional, and status groups are examples of non-associational interest groups.
- **Anomic Interest Groups:** When individuals or organized groups fail to obtain adequate representation in the political system, the resultant discontent leads to the spontaneous emergence of anomic groups. Riots or demonstrations may be sparked by an incident or by the emergence of an enthusiastic leader. Such spontaneous groups have limited organization.

Interest / Pressure Groups in India

Pressure tactics and methods have become an integral part of the political process in India. The techniques of organized pressure, through mass campaigns, demonstrations, strikes, civil disobedience (*satyagraha*), *gheraos* and *bandhs*, have been frequently used by interest groups. **Myron Weiner** (1962) has rightly observed that the very frequency with which mass action has succeeded in vetoing government action, or in positively modifying public policy, has strengthened the public belief that such measures are both desirable and effective. Violence and anomic activities have become an instrument of interest articulation in the so-called developing nations, including India.

Like many Asian and African countries, India has a good number of interest groups, although they are not large in number and are different from those in western countries. In India, interest groups are organized mainly around traditional loyalties to caste, religion, community and also with regional, linguistic and ethnic loyalties. They are important forces in India. **Weiner** has termed them as '**community associations**'. In his words, 'Indian social system has both hierarchical (caste and class) and horizontal (tribal, religious, linguistic) groups from which political expressions follow suit'. Of course, groups constituted on the basis of occupational and economic interests, such as trade unions, peasant organizations, teacher-student groups, women's associations, dalits (scheduled castes and tribes), organizations, businessmen (commercial) organizations, etc., have become very important in modern India. An interesting feature of interest groups in India is the 'caste lobby'. These lobbies try to influence the interests of particular castes and demand support for their members in the legislatures. Religion also plays an important role in furthering the interests of the followers of particular religion. There exists a bond of relationship between Indian legislators and religious leaders.

Interest groups of business class in India are extremely powerful. Business associations like Chamber of Commerce, All India Manufacturers Organisation and many others developed after independence for the purpose of protecting and promoting their interests. Like these organizations, there have been some organizations, such as Kisan Sabha, to look after the interests of the peasants. Besides, different political parties have also established their own peasant organizations which are being used as political weapons. Similarly, political parties have also their own trade unions, student organizations and youth wings, which act as pressure groups in their respective fields. In India, such community associations are more effective and powerful than the economic and occupational organizations. By means of 'lobbying', behind-the-scenes bargaining, propaganda and information and electoral

support, persuasion and threats of violence, these groups make tremendous pressure on the government political process. The overwhelming political clout of these powerful lobbies discourages participation by the individual citizen and raises serious questions.

In addition:

India is a vast country, not only in terms of geographical space, but also in terms of population. There are, in this country, diversities in all spheres – social, economic, religious, linguistic, and ethnic. Corresponding to these diverse interests, there have emerged over time a good number of organized groups at all levels – local, regional and national. To prepare a comprehensive list of all these pressure groups is beyond the scope of this chapter. What we propose to do instead is to point-out the main features of some of the important pressure groups operating at the all-India level, hoping to deduce from these the role played by pressure groups in India in general.

All major organized groups in India can be divided into two broad categories: autonomous and non-autonomous. The question of autonomy here is to be understood with reference to political parties. While some major groups in India function independently of political parties, most interest groups are appendages of political parties.

Autonomous Pressure Groups

1. **Business groups:** Among the autonomous pressure groups in India, the oldest and most stable are the business groups, which promote business interests. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) was established in 1926 under the leadership of Purushottamdas Thakurdas and G.D. Birla. It is a federal body having as its members the various regional chambers of commerce as well as associate members (like the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Hindustan Motors, etc.). Individual members of FICCI might contribute to the funds of major political parties, but FICCI as an organization retains its autonomy vis-a-vis all political parties. Since FICCI represents the interests of big business and industry, another organization, namely, the All India Manufacturers Organization, was set up in 1941 to promote the cause of medium-sized and smaller industries.
2. **Farmers' lobbies:** The success of the green revolution, first in Punjab in the 1960s, and then in other states had revealed that a peasant could improve his lot even in a small patch of land provided he had irrigation facilities and the

capacity to buy inputs required for high-yielding cultivation. This had given rise to a new class of farmers whom the **Rudolph** and **Rudolph** call the ‘**bullock capitalists**’. Unlike small or marginal landowners, they have the capacity to employ labourers and invest in high-yielding seeds. Again, unlike rich landowners, they often depend on family labour. These ‘bullock capitalists’ have their own lobbies. The Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), with headquarters in western UP, is the best example. The BKU openly shuns and ridicules political parties and yet has successfully created an impact in the rural politics of north India. The Maharashtra-based Kshetkari Sanghatan is another important farmers’ organization, which operates independently of political parties. While the Kshetkari Sanghatan is keen on forming an all-India front of farmers, the BKU is quite content to be localized in the Hindi heartland, particularly in west UP.

3. **Anti-dam lobbies:** Today, it is a well-established fact that large dams everywhere cause both ecological disasters and large-scale eviction of people. Hence agitations against the construction of big dams has become a worldwide phenomenon. In India, the pressure group that has earned for itself international fame for its continuous struggle for the last three decades against the construction of big dams is the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). The NBA demands the abandonment of the Narmada River Valley Project scheme which envisages the construction of 30 major, 135 medium-sized and 3,000 minor dams on the Narmada and its tributaries. The bone of contention here is, therefore, not merely the question of the rehabilitation of the oustees, but also the issue of the violence unleashed upon the river itself by the Indian state. According to NBA, the Narmada Project symbolizes ‘destructive development’, which should be fought against by all legitimate means. While challenging the mainstream development paradigm, the NBA has provoked academicians as well as many politicians to think seriously about alternative paths of development.
4. **Others:** There are a good number of other autonomous pressure groups at the regional as well as at the all-India level. Special mention may especially be made of the National Fishworkers’ Forum, which seeks to protect the livelihood of coastal fishermen/women of India; the Bhopal Gas Peerit Prabhabit Sangh, which is fighting a protracted battle to secure adequate compensation for those severely affected by the leakage of a poisonous gas from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal in December 1984; and the

Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties, which is ever ready to fight against state encroachment upon citizens' rights anywhere in the country. These apart, there are a host of regional and local-level pressure groups engaged in non-party politics.

Non-autonomous Pressure Groups

Most pressure groups in India act within the broad umbrella of political parties. India has a fairly large number of trade unions but almost all of them are affiliated to political parties. The Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) was formed by the Congress Party to educate the workers in such a way as to enlist their support for the party. The Communists also formed their own trade unions. At present, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) is the workers' wing of the Communist Party of India, and the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) is that of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Similarly, the Socialists and the Bharatiya Janata Party have their own trade unions. All the major political parties (national and local) also have their own peasant organizations (*kisan* unions). Some have agricultural labourers' unions (*khet mazdoor* unions). Again, almost all political parties in India have within them separate frontal organizations for women, youth and students.

It is important to note that it was not that the various interest groups affiliated to political parties emerged independently and then sought party affiliation. It was the other way round: the parties themselves formed these interest groups as their own frontal organizations.

Caste, Religious, Linguistic and Ethnic Groups

These groups often emerge independently but, in most cases, are partronized and later appropriated by one or the other political party. In other words, even though they emerge as autonomous groups, they are transformed into non-autonomous groups. Again, some interest groups in this category themselves become political parties. This is especially so in the case of many ethnic groups. The Gorkha National Liberation Front, for example, originated as a pressure group but later became a political party.

Conclusion

Questions are raised from some quarters regarding the legitimacy of interest groups in a democratic polity. It is feared that a polity which allows articulation of particular/sectional interests might do harm to the general interest or collective will.

Pluralists, however, do not share these apprehensions. They argue that the existence and articulation of heterogeneous interests do not undermine the general interest of society. On the contrary, a democratic state, by its very nature, maintains a non-preferential position vis-a-vis various interests in society. Moreover, group activities expand the scope and viability of representative democracy and provide opportunities to various interests to air their demands and grievances. In a representative democracy, therefore, group activity is essential both for the political system and for the various interests scattered and dispersed in the wider horizons of society.

One may still ask: if through inter-group interaction or otherwise, a particular group establishes a hegemonic position in society and if it can prevail upon the government to take its side when there is a clash of interests among various groups, can 'true' democracy (in the sense of upholding the general interest) exist? One may go further and ask: does not the legitimacy of groups in a representative democracy disappear if the government identifies itself with the interests of one or two groups (instead of maintaining an equidistance from all groups)? These are questions regarding the credibility of the democratic system – whether a democracy can turn into an oligarchy or dictatorship. Freedom of group activity and inter-group interaction are integral to a liberal democratic system. So long as the various interest groups are allowed to function freely by legitimate means, and so long as the government of the day is ready to listen to the demands/grievances of the various groups, democracy remains stable and vibrant; but when some groups are allowed to speak and others are silenced, democracy disappears. Hence it can safely be concluded that the stability of democracy depends directly on the freedom of legitimate group activity.

Sociology is Simple
Sociology is Scoring
provided that you
Study Sociology Systematically

Elite theory

Elite theory differs from both pluralism and functionalism in that it sees power in society as being monopolised by a small minority (or elite). Elite theory sees society as divided into two main groups: a **ruling minority** who exercise power through the state, and the **ruled**. There are, however, a number of ways in which elite theorists differ. They do not agree as to whether elite rule is desirable or beneficial for society; they differ in their conclusions about the inevitability of elite rule; and they do not agree about exactly who constitute the elite or elites.

Classical elite theory

Elite theory developed in part as a reaction to Marxism. It rejected the idea of a communist utopia arguing that an egalitarian society was an illusion. It saw Marxism as ideology rather than an objective analysis of society. Elite theory was first developed by two Italian sociologists, **Vilfredo Pareto** (1848-1923) and **Gaetano Mosca** (1858-1941).

Elite theory argues that all societies are divided into two main groups, a ruling minority and the ruled. Both, Pareto and Mosca, saw elite rule as inevitable and dismissed the possibility of a proletarian revolution leading to the establishment of a communist society. As such they were arguing against Marx's view of power and the state. Because of the inevitability of elite rule, neither saw it as desirable that any attempt should be made to end it. Should the proletarian revolution occur, it will merely result in the replacement of one ruling elite by another. The economic infrastructure, be it capitalist or communist, will not alter the inevitability of elite rule.

Pareto and Mosca agreed that the basis of elite rule was the superior personal qualities of those who made up the elites. Pareto believed that elites possessed more cunning or intelligence, while Mosca saw them as having more organisational ability. Since people were unequal, some would always have more ability than others, and would therefore occupy the elite positions in society. According to both theorists, apart from the personal qualities of its members, an elite owes its power to its internal organisation. It forms a united and cohesive minority in the face of an unorganised and fragmented mass. In Mosca's words: 'The power of the minority is irresistible as against each single individual in the majority.'

The elite takes major decisions that affect society. Even in so-called democratic societies these decisions will usually reflect the concerns of the elite rather than the wishes of the people. Elite theorists picture the majority as apathetic and unconcerned with the major issues of the day. The mass of the population is largely controlled and manipulated by the elite, passively accepting the propaganda that justifies elite rule. Although there are broad similarities in the work of these two classical elite theorists, there are also some differences.

Pareto places particular emphasis on psychological characteristics as the basis of elite rule. He argues that there are two main types governing elite, which, following his intellectual ancestor and countryman Machiavelli, he calls 'lions' and 'foxes'. Lions achieve power because of their ability to take direct and incisive action, they tend to rule by force. Military dictatorships provide an example of this type of governing elite. By comparison, foxes rule by cunning and guile, by diplomatic manipulation and wheeling and dealing. Major change in society occurs when one elite replaces another, a process Pareto calls the '**circulation of elites**'. All elites tend to become decadent. They 'decay in quality' and lose their 'vigour'. They may become soft and ineffective with the pleasures of easy living and the privileges of power, or set in their ways and too inflexible to respond to changing circumstances. In addition, each type of elite lacks the qualities of its counterpart, qualities which in the long run are essential to maintain power. An elite of lions lacks the imagination and cunning necessary to maintain its rule and will have to admit foxes from the masses to make up for this deficiency. Gradually foxes infiltrate the entire elite and so transform its character. Foxes however lack the ability to take forceful and decisive action which at various times is essential to retain power. An organized minority of lions committed to the restoration of strong government develops and eventually overthrows the elite of foxes. Whereas history to Marx ultimately leads to and ends with the communist utopia, history to Pareto is a never ending circulation of elites. Nothing ever really changes and history is, and always will be, 'a graveyard of aristocracies'.

Pareto's view of history is both simple and simplistic. He dismisses the differences between political systems such as Western democratic, communist single party states, fascist dictatorships and feudal monarchies as merely variations on a basic theme. All are essentially examples of elite rule and by comparison with this fact, the differences between them are minor. Pareto fails to provide a method of measuring and distinguishing between the supposedly superior qualities of elites. He simply assumes that the qualities of the elite are superior to those of the mass. His criterion for distinguishing lions and foxes is merely his own interpretation of the style of elite rule. Nor does Pareto provide a way of measuring the process of elite decadence. He does suggest however that if an elite is closed to recruitment from below it is likely to rapidly lose its vigour and vitality and have a

short life. As T.B. Bottomore notes, the Brahmins, the elite stratum in the Indian caste system, were a closed group yet survived for many hundreds of years.

Some of the major works of Pareto are: *The Mind and Society* (1935), *The Transformation of Democracy*, and *The Rise and Fall of Elites*.

Like Pareto, **Gaetano Mosca** believed that rule by a minority is an inevitable feature of social life. He bases this belief on the evidence of history claiming that in all societies ‘two classes of people appear - a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first’. Like Pareto, Mosca believed that the ruling minority are superior to the mass of the population. He claims that they are ‘distinguished from the mass of the governed by qualities that give them a certain material, intellectual or even moral superiority’ and he provides a sociological explanation for this superiority seeing it as a product of the social background of the elite. Unlike Pareto, who believed that the qualities required for elite rule were the same for all time, Mosca argued that they varied from society to society. For example, in some societies courage and bravery in battle provide access to the elite, in others the skills and capacities needed to acquire wealth.

Pareto saw modern democracies as merely another form of elite domination. He scornfully dismissed those who saw them as a more progressive and representative system of government. Mosca, however, particularly in his later writings, argued that there were important differences between democracies and other forms of elite rule. By comparison with closed systems such as caste and feudal societies, the ruling elite in democratic societies is open. There is therefore a greater possibility of an elite drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds. As a result, the interests of various social groups may be represented in the decisions taken by the elite. The majority may therefore have some control over the government of society. As he became more favourably disposed towards democracy, Mosca argued that ‘the modern representative state has made it possible for almost all political forces, almost all social values, to participate in the management of society’. But he stopped short of a literal acceptance of Abraham Lincoln’s famous definition of democracy as ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’. To Mosca, democracy was government of the people, it might even be government for the people but it could never be government by the people. Elite rule remained inevitable. Democracy could be no more than representative government with an elite representing the interests of the people. Despite his leanings towards democracy, Mosca retained his dim view of the

masses. They lacked the capacity for self-government and required the leadership and guidance of an elite. Indeed Mosca regretted the extension of the franchise to all members of society believing it should be limited to the middle class. He thus remained 'elitist' to the last. His most popular work is *The Ruling Class* (1939).

Italian sociologist **Robert Michels** (1876-1936) provided support for this view. Marxist hopes for truly democratic organizations are dismissed as mere illusions by Michels. His work *Political Parties*, first published in 1911, is a study of European socialist parties and trade unions with particular emphasis on the German Socialist Party. These organizations were committed to the overthrow of the capitalist state and the creation of a socialist society. They claimed to be organized on democratic principles, directly representing the interests and wishes of their members. Michels claims that these ideals bore little resemblance to what actually happened. He found that all tended to develop a dominant elite at the top of their organisation even though all were advocating a socialist ideology that claimed that power should be widely spread. Michels called this *the iron law of oligarchy*, a tendency for political parties to become bureaucratic and concentrate power in the hands of a few.

Michels, begins his analysis with the observation that, 'Democracy is inconceivable without organization'. In a large complex society, the only way individuals can effectively voice their wishes and press their interests is by joining together and forming an organization. This is particularly true of the relatively powerless working-class masses for whom combination and cooperation are essential. However, organization sounds the death knell of democracy. Direct participation by large numbers of people in the running of an organization is in practice impossible. Apart from the practical difficulties of assembling thousands of people, direct involvement in decision making would be so cumbersome and time consuming that nothing would get done. Since 'direct' democracy is impracticable, it can only be replaced by some form of representative system whereby 'delegates represent the mass and carry out its will'. Yet Michels maintains that even this truncated form of democracy founders in practice.

Once a system of representative democracy is established in trade unions and political parties, it results in the appointment of full-time officials and professional politicians. The administrative tasks involved inevitably lead to the creation of a bureaucracy which by its very nature is undemocratic. The effective operation of the organization requires a specialized division of labour which necessitates control and coordination from the top. The result is a 'rigorously defined and hierarchical bureaucracy'. As the organization grows and administrative duties proliferate, 'it is no longer possible to take them in at a glance'. They become increasingly incomprehensible to those without specialist

knowledge and training. Faced with this complexity, rank and file members of trade unions and political parties tend to leave matters to their leaders. Decisions are increasingly taken by executive committees within the bureaucracy rather than by assemblies of the rank and file. Thus the very organization which was created to represent its members ends up by largely excluding them from participation and decision making. In Michels's words, 'The oligarchical structure of the building suffocates the basic democratic principle'. He maintains that organizations inevitably produce oligarchy, that is rule by a small elite. This is the '**iron law of oligarchy**'.

In other words, according to Michels, there is an "iron law of oligarchy" by which even a democracy inevitably degenerates into an oligarchy – rule by a few. A democracy is an organization, and according to Michels, "whoever says organization says oligarchy."

Michels concludes that organization is essential to democracy. However, as a matter of 'technical and practical necessity', organizations adopt a bureaucratic structure. This inevitably produces oligarchical control which brings an end to democracy.

The failure of democracy on the organizational level means that it cannot hope to succeed on the societal level. Society is ruled by an elite which consists of the leaders of various organizations and parties. The overriding concern of the ruling elite is the maintenance of its own power. This applies both to capitalist and communist societies. Michels predicted that a proletarian revolution and the establishment of a socialist society would result in 'a dictatorship in the hands of those leaders who have been sufficiently astute and sufficiently powerful to grasp the sceptre of dominion in the name of – socialism'. (Michels belongs within the tradition of classical elite theory.)

Evaluation

Pareto's view of elites has been heavily criticised for placing undue emphasis on psychological characteristics. Furthermore, most sociologists today would not accept that elites should necessarily be seen as superior to other groups in society. Michels's arguments have been influential, but as Cudworth and McGovern (2007) point out, some theorists (including Max Weber) have been more optimistic that the electorate can exercise some control over politicians in a democracy. However, the general idea of elite theory – that small groups can become dominant through organisation and through holding positions of power – remains influential. A number of sociologists have developed the principles of classical elite theory in more modern contexts.

Elite theory and the USA – C. Wright Mills

Whereas Pareto and Mosca attempted to provide a general theory to explain the nature and distribution of power in all societies, the American sociologist C. Wright Mills (1916 – 1962) presented a less ambitious and less wide-ranging version of elite theory. He limited his analysis to American society in the 1950s.

Mills further modified and refined the elite theory. Unlike the early elite theorists, Mills did not believe that elite rule was inevitable; in fact he saw it as a fairly recent development in the USA. Unlike Pareto, who accepted the domination of the masses by elites, Mills roundly condemned it. Since he saw elite rule as based on the exploitation of the masses, he adopted a conflict version of elite theory. Because the elites and the masses had different interests, this created the potential for conflict between the two groups.

Mills explains elite rule in institutional rather than psychological terms. He rejects the view that members of the elite have superior qualities or psychological characteristics which distinguish them from the rest of the population. Instead he argues that the structure of institutions is such that those at the top of the institutional hierarchy largely monopolize power. In his book *The Power Elite*, he argues that certain institutions occupy key ‘pivotal positions’ in society and the elite comprise those who hold ‘command posts’ in those institutions. Mills identifies three key institutions: **the major corporations, the military and the federal government**. Those who occupy the command posts in these institutions form three elites. In practice, however, the interest and activities of the elite are sufficiently similar and interconnected to form a single ruling minority which Mills terms ‘**the power elite**’. Thus the power elite involves the ‘coincidence of economic, military and political power’.

Mills argues that the cohesiveness and unity of the power elite is strengthened by the similarity of the social background of its members and the interchange and overlapping of personnel between the three elites. Members are drawn largely from the upper strata of society; they are mainly protestant, native-born American, from urban areas in the eastern USA. They share similar educational backgrounds and mix socially in the same high prestige clubs. As a result they tend to share similar values and sympathies which provide a basis for mutual trust and cooperation. Within the power elite there is frequent interchange of personnel between the three elites. For example, a corporation director may become a politician and vice versa. At any one time, individuals may have footholds in more than one elite. Mills notes that ‘on the boards of directors we find a heavy overlapping among the members of these several elites’. Thus a general may sit on the board of a large corporation. Similarity of social origin and

the interchange and overlapping of personnel strengthens the unity of the power elite.

Mills argues that American society is dominated by a power elite of ‘unprecedented power and unaccountability’. He claims that momentous decisions such as American entry into World War II and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima were made by the power elite with little or no reference to the people. Despite the fact that such decisions affect all members of society, the power elite is not accountable for its actions either directly to the public or to any body which represents the public interest. The rise of the power elite has led to ‘the decline of politics as a genuine and public debate of alternative decisions’.

Mills’s conclusions about the nature and distribution of power on the national level are largely echoed in an investigation of power on the local level by **Floyd Hunter. *Community Power Structure*** is a study of a large southern city in the USA given the pseudonym of ‘Regional City’ but generally believed to be Atlanta, Georgia. Hunter claims that power rests in a small decision making group which is dominated by the businessmen’s class. This primarily economic elite rules by ‘persuasion, intimidation, coercion and if necessary force’.

Many critics of Mills have argued that his evidence is circumstantial and suggestive rather than conclusive. One of his severest critics, Robert A. Dahl, has claimed that Mills has simply shown that the power elite has the ‘potential for control’. By occupying the command posts of major institutions it would certainly appear that its members have this potential. **But, as Dahl argues, the potential for control is not ‘equivalent to actual control’.** Dahl maintains that actual control can only be shown to exist ‘*by examination of a series of concrete cause where key decisions are made*: decisions on taxation and expenditure, subsidies, welfare programs, military policy and so on’. If it can then be shown that a minority has the power to decide such issues and to overrule opposition to its policies, then the existence of a power elite will have been established. Dahl claims that by omitting to investigate a range of key decisions, Mills has failed to establish where ‘actual control’ lies. As a result Dahl argues that the case for a power elite remains unproven. [However, the problem with Dahl’s approach is that it ignores the possibility that those with power can prevent many issues from ever reaching the point of ‘concrete decisions’. For example, it has often been argued that the principle of capitalism has never been seriously questioned in Western societies and as a result the question of alternative to a capitalist economy has never reached the point of actual decision. This can be seen as evidence of the power of the capitalist class. Dahl’s approach, with its emphasis on decision making, would fail to reveal this aspect of power.]

As a general theory of power in society, elite theory has been strongly criticized. However, in a more limited application, it has found greater support. In particular a number of researchers have argued that a version of elite theory best describes and explains the nature and distribution of power in communist societies. Scholars such as T.B. Bottomore and Raymond Aron maintain that power in communist societies can best be represented in terms of an elite model. Aron argues that in the USSR political, economic and military powers are concentrated in the hands of a 'unified elite' which has 'absolute and unbounded power'. The ruling minority directs the economy, making decisions about investment and wage differentials. It commands the military and controls the media, education and public welfare. It makes all important decisions on national and international issues. Aron claims that the unity of the ruling elite stem from the fact that 'Politicians, trade union leaders, public officials, generals and managers all belong to one party and are part of an authoritarian organization'. In a single party state in which political parties other than the Communist Party are illegal and where all important organizations are under state control, Aron argues that the mass of the population is left 'without any means of defence against the elite'. A number of researchers, such as Milovan Djilas, have also argued that the ruling minority in communist societies employs power primarily for self-enrichment rather than for the benefit of society as a whole.

Although Mills was writing more than 60 years ago in the USA, some contemporary writers believe that his ideas apply to Britain in the 21st century. **Hywel Williams** (2006) explicitly pays tribute to the pioneering work of Mills in his book *Britain's Power Elites: The Rebirth of a Ruling Class*.

Like Mills, Williams sees the development of dominant power elites as a historically specific event, in this case happening in Britain since the early 1990s. Williams also follows Mills in identifying three elites, in this case **the political elites, the professional elites, and the financial/ business elites**. These elites have gradually managed to gain power and have used it to consolidate and then further their own interests.

Williams sees elite power as stemming partly from the occupation of key positions, but he also sees control over money and the manipulation of language as important. **Williams puts particular stress on the power of the financial/ business elite**, especially those working in the City of London. According to Williams, political and professional elites usually have to defer to the financial muscle of the city, which has become vital to Britain's economy. Elites also use language to persuade the population that there is no alternative to their rule.

Williams says:

Occupying positions at the very apex of our society, they use the language of national interest, valour and endeavour in order to keep themselves in power. But by their very existence they have proved to be the destroyers of the democratic aspirations and the effective debate which should lie at the heart of an open society. (2006)

Williams concludes that financial and business elites now sit at the apex of a pyramid of power in Britain. They, along with less prominent elites, have taken power in a quiet and unobtrusive ‘very British coup’. They have been able to do so because other centres of power, such as the trade unions and the church, have declined.

The Labour Party, which used to represent the interests of workers rather than capital, has become entangled with the interests of the financial and business elites. It has not been easy for these elites to become dominant, and they have had to work hard to maintain their grip on power. But their position has become more entrenched over time as they have become more organised. Like Mills, therefore, Williams sees elite power as stemming from a lack of well-organised opposition to these elites.

Williams’s account of elite power in Britain is supported by numerous examples, but a lack of systematic evidence. One way of establishing whether a relatively closed elite exists is to examine where its members come from. If they are largely recruited from the ranks of the children of the elite, this process is known as **elite self-recruitment**. A number of researchers have found that the majority of the power elite in Britain are recruited from a minority of the population with highly privileged backgrounds. This appears to apply to a wide range of elites, including politicians, judges, higher civil servants, senior military officers, and the directors of large companies and major banks. There is also evidence that there may be some degree of cohesion within and between the various elites. Individuals may occupy positions within more than one elite: cabinet ministers and other MPs may hold directorships in large companies. Individuals may move between elites: the former businessman Geoffrey Robinson became a minister in Tony Blair’s first cabinet in 1997. Directors may also sit on the boards of a number of different companies. Elites are also likely to have a common educational background: many members of elites attended public schools and went to Oxford or Cambridge University. **John Rex** argues that this type of education serves to socialise future top decision makers into a belief in the legitimacy of the status quo. It creates the possibility that the elites will be able to act together to protect their own interests.

The following studies provide evidence for the existence of such elites in Britain. A **Cabinet Office Report** noted that about 7 per cent of the British population attended fee-paying private secondary schools (Cabinet Office, 2011). However, people from this background made up 24 per cent of vice chancellors of universities, 32 per cent of MPs, 51 per cent of top medics, 54 per cent of top journalists, 54 per cent of chief executive officers of the UK's largest companies, 68 per cent of top barristers and 70 per cent of high court judges.

More detailed studies of particular professions provide additional information about other aspects of the background of elites and/or changes over time. Research by the **Sutton Trust** (2005) examined the background of those at the top of the legal profession. Although only around 7 per cent of the UK population attend private schools, in 2004, 75 per cent of Law Lords and Judges of Appeal, and 69 per cent of barristers at the leading chambers, had been educated privately; 81 per cent of these judges and 82 per cent of the barristers had been to Oxford or Cambridge University. Furthermore, the evidence suggested that there had been little change over time.

Elite theory in the USA and Britain – an evaluation

The evidence provided by C. Wright Mills and researchers in Britain shows that those occupying elite positions often come from privileged backgrounds, and that there are connections between different elites. Williams's work suggests that power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of financial and business elites. However, the significance of these findings and the accuracy of these claims are open to dispute.

Some Marxists claim that the evidence points to the existence of a ruling class based upon economic power, rather than a ruling elite based upon the occupation of 'command posts'. Furthermore, it has been argued that elite theory fails to measure power adequately: it does not show that elites actually have power, nor that they exercise power in their own interests against the interests of the majority of the population. Elite theory largely assumes that the elite have power and use it for their own ends.

For example, Robert A. Dahl (1973) criticised Mills from a pluralist perspective. He claimed that Mills had simply shown that the power elite had the 'potential for control'. Mills conducted no research to show that they used this potential to further their own interests. Dahl's criticism of Mills applies with equal force to British studies of elite self-recruitment.

Furthermore, the British studies make no attempt to measure the second and third faces of power (they make no reference to non-decision making, nor do they discuss how the wishes of the population may be manipulated by elites). As such, studies of elite self-recruitment may reveal something about patterns of social mobility but they provide little direct evidence about who actually has power.

Williams looks beyond patterns of elite self-recruitment but he fails to show that elites always act in their own interests at the expense of the interests of the bulk of the population. Some would claim that professional, political and financial/business elites have raised prosperity and the quality of public services in Britain and have not merely feathered their own nest.

*Refer Class Notes for the Topic: **Social and Political Elite (Paper II)**



Dialectics IAS

Power and the state – Marxist perspectives

A Marxian analysis of power provides a radical alternative to Parsons' functionalist approach. It rejects the view that power is a societal resource held in trust and directed by those in authority for the benefit of all. Instead, power is seen to be held by a particular group in society at the expense of the rest of society. This is a constant-sum concept of power since a net gain in the power of the dominant group represents a net loss in the power of the rest of society. The dominant group uses power to further its own interests. These interests are in direct conflict with the interests of those subject to its power.

Marxist perspectives, like elite theory, see power as concentrated in the hands of a minority in society. Marxist theorists also agree with those elite theorists who see power being used to further the interests of the powerful. Marxist theories stress that the powerful and the powerless have different interests and that these differences may lead to conflict in society. Unlike elite theory, though, Marxist approaches do not assume that power rests with those who occupy key positions in the state. They see the source of power as lying elsewhere in society. In particular, Marxists put primary emphasis upon economic resources as a source of power.

A wide variety of Marxist theories of power have been developed. We start this section by examining the work of Marx himself, and his friend and collaborator Engels, before going on to consider the views of those who have developed less orthodox Marxist views.

Marx and Engels on power and the state

According to Marx, power is concentrated in the hands of those who have economic control within a society. From this perspective, the source of power lies in the economic infrastructure:

1. In all class-divided societies the means of production are owned and controlled by the ruling class. This relationship to the means of production provides the basis of its dominance. It therefore follows that the only way to return power to the people involves communal ownership of the means of production.
2. In a communist society, power would be more equally distributed among the whole of the population, since the means of production would be communally owned rather than owned by individuals.

According to Marx, in capitalist society ruling-class power is used to exploit and oppress the subject class, and much of the wealth produced by the proletariat's labour power is appropriated in the form of profit or surplus value by the bourgeoisie. From a Marxist perspective, the use of power to exploit others is defined as **coercion**. It is seen as an illegitimate use of power since it forces the subject class to submit to a situation that is against its interests. If ruling-class power is accepted as legitimate by the subject class, this is an indication of **false class consciousness**.

Ruling-class power extends beyond economic relationships. In Marxist theory, the relationships of domination and subordination in the infrastructure will largely be reproduced in the superstructure. The state (as part of the superstructure) reflects the distribution of power in society. The decisions and activities of the state will favour the interests of the ruling class rather than those of the population as a whole.

Despite the general thrust of the arguments of Marx and Engels, there are, as we will see, some inconsistencies in their statements about the state.

The origins and evolution of the state

Engels claimed that in primitive communist societies the state did not exist. Kinship (or family relationships) formed the basis of social groupings. These societies were essentially agricultural, and no surplus was produced beyond what was necessary for subsistence. It was therefore impossible for large amounts of wealth to be accumulated and concentrated in the hands of a few. There was little division of labour, and the means of production were communally owned. **Only when societies began to produce a surplus did it become possible for a ruling class to emerge.** Once one group in society became economically dominant, a state developed.

Engels believed the state was necessary to 'hold class antagonisms in check'. In primitive communist societies all individuals shared the same interests; in class societies, a minority benefited from the existing social system at the expense of the majority. According to Engels, the exploited majority had to be held down to prevent them from asserting their interests and threatening the position of the ruling class. Thus, in ancient Athens, the 90,000 Athenian citizens used the state as a method of repressing the 3,65,000 slaves. The simplest way the state could control the subject class was through the use of force or coercion. Engels pointed to the police, the prisons and the army as state-run institutions used to repress the exploited members of society. Engels believed coercion was the main type of power used to control the population in early states. In ancient Athens and

Rome, and the feudal states of the Middle Ages, ruling-class control of the state was clearly apparent. For example, the feudal state consisted exclusively of landowners: serfs possessed neither private property nor political rights.

However, Engels believed that more advanced forms of the state were less obviously a coercive tool of the ruling class. Indeed, Engels described democracies as the ‘highest form of state’, for with such a state all members of society appear to have equal political power. Each individual in societies with universal suffrage can vote, and in theory therefore has as much influence over government policy as every other individual. According to Engels, this would tend to mean that the existing social order would be perceived as fair, just and legitimate, since the state would be seen to reflect the wishes of the population. As such, the state would not need to rely so heavily on the use of force: in most cases the population would accept the authority of the state.

Engels believed, however, that in reality democracy was an illusion. Real power continued to rest with the owners of the means of production, and not with the population as a whole. One way in which the ruling class could ensure that the state continued to act in its interest was through corruption. Troublesome officials who threatened to follow policies harmful to the bourgeoisie could be bribed. A second way to determine government policies was through the use of the financial power of capitalists. The state often relied upon borrowing money from the bourgeoisie in order to meet its debts. Loans could be withheld if the state refused to follow policies beneficial to the bourgeoisie.

The end of the state

Marx and Engels did not believe that the state would be a permanent feature of society. Since they believed its purpose was to protect the position of the ruling class and to control the subject class, they argued it would become redundant once classes disappeared. In the immediate aftermath of the proletarian revolution, the proletariat would seize control of the state. They would use it to consolidate their position, establish communal ownership of the means of production, and destroy the power of the bourgeoisie. Once these objectives had been achieved, class division would no longer exist, and the state would ‘wither away’. The views of Marx and Engels on the state are neatly summed up in the Communist Manifesto, where they say: ‘The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie’.

However, Engels did accept that in certain circumstances the state could play an independent role in society, where its actions would not be completely controlled by a single class. Engels argued that, at particular points in history, two

classes could have roughly equal power. He claimed that in some monarchies of 17th- and 18th-century Europe the landowning aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie were in opposition to each other and both were equally powerful. In this situation the state could take an independent line, since the warring classes effectively cancelled each other out.

Furthermore, in his more empirical studies, Marx recognised that there might be divisions within states in capitalist countries. For example, in *The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850*, Marx acknowledged a difference in interests between finance capitalists on the one hand and the industrial bourgeoisie on the other. Finance capitalists (many of whom were large landowners) had an interest in the government of France retaining the huge debt it had at the time, since financiers could benefit from lending money to the French state. On the other hand, the industrial bourgeoisie were being harmed by the taxes needed to service the debt. Marx and Engels inspired many later Marxists to devote a great deal of attention to the study of power and the state, but their original work is sometimes vague, and it is sometimes inconsistent. It has been interpreted in different ways.

Furthermore, the work of the founders of Marxism has not been entirely free from criticism from more recent Marxists. A number of contrasting Marxist theories of the state have been developed. These differ over the precise way in which they see the bourgeoisie controlling the state, the extent to which they believe the state enjoys independence from ruling-class control, and the importance they attach to this institution for maintaining the predominance of the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies.

Ralph Miliband – the capitalist state

The British sociologist Ralph Miliband (1969) followed Marx and Engels in seeing power as being derived from wealth. Miliband believed the state could sometimes act as the direct tool or instrument of those who possess economic power, the ruling class. They used it to preserve their economic dominance, maintain their political power and stabilise capitalist society by preventing threats to their position. **However, Miliband did accept that in some circumstances direct intervention by the wealthy was not necessary in order for the state to act in their interests.**

To Miliband, the state was run by a number of elites who ran the central institutions. These elites included cabinet ministers, MPs, senior police and military officers, and top judges. Together, they acted largely to defend the ruling class or bourgeoisie: Miliband believed that all the elites shared a basic interest in

the preservation of capitalism and the defence of private property. Miliband attempted to justify his claims by presenting a wide range of empirical evidence:

1. He tried to show that many of those who occupy elite positions are themselves members of the bourgeoisie. For example, he pointed out that in Britain people from business backgrounds made up about 33 per cent of British cabinets between 1886 and 1950.
2. He claimed that the non-business person in the state elite will, in any case, act in the interests of the bourgeoisie. He argued that groups such as politicians, senior civil servants and judges tend to come from a similar background to the bourgeoisie; they have often been to the same schools and may have family ties with them. Consequently, they will tend to share a similar outlook and follow policies which support bourgeois interests. Even those from working-class backgrounds who make it into the elite will have to have adopted bourgeois values to get there.
3. Miliband claimed that the actions of the state elites have, in practice, tended to benefit the ruling class. He pointed out that judges saw one of their primary duties as the protection of private property. He suggested Labour governments had done little to challenge the dominance of the ruling class and redistribute wealth.

Miliband also advanced an explanation as to why the majority of the population should accept a state that acts against their interests. He examined various ways in which the subject class was persuaded to accept the status quo. In effect, he considered the third face of power, claiming that the economic power of the ruling class enabled them partly to shape the beliefs and wishes of the remainder of the population. He believed this took place through the **process of legitimization**, which indoctrinated the public into the acceptance of capitalism. In particular, advertising is used to promote the view that the major concern of big business is public service and the welfare of the community, while persuading people that the way to happiness and fulfilment involves the accumulation of material possessions - in particular, the acquisition of the products of capitalism.

To sum up, Miliband argued that there is direct interference by members of ruling elites in the state. Their dominance is further cemented through the socialisation of state personnel from non-elite backgrounds into the values of the elite, and the manipulation of the beliefs of the mass of the population so that they will lend support to pro-capitalist policies.

Nicos Poulantzas – a structuralist view of the state

Nicos Poulantzas (1936 – 1979) was a Greek-French Marxist political sociologist. Poulantzas criticised Miliband's view of the state and provided an alternative Marxist interpretation which places less stress on the actions of individuals and more on the role of social structure. A structuralist approach emphasises the importance of social structure, and minimizes the importance of the actions of individuals in society. As such, Poulantzas saw much of the evidence advanced by Miliband as irrelevant to a Marxist view of the state.

Poulantzas described the state as 'the factor of cohesion of a social formation': in other words, the state was vital for maintaining the stability of the capitalist system. As part of the superstructure, it would automatically tend to serve the interests of the ruling class. It was not necessary for members of the ruling class to occupy elite positions within the state: the existence of a capitalist system was itself sufficient to ensure that the state functioned to benefit the ruling class.

Similarly, the background of members of the state elite was of little importance: **it was not their class origin but their class position which determined their behaviour**. Since they occupied positions in a state, which inevitably functions to benefit the bourgeoisie, their job would ensure that they acted in the interests of the bourgeoisie, regardless of their background. They would not take actions harmful to capitalist interests.

Relative autonomy

Poulantzas took this argument a stage further. He claimed: **The capitalist state best serves the interests of the capitalist class only when members of this class, do not participate directly in the state apparatus, that is to say when the ruling class is not the politically governing class**. Poulantzas argued that the ruling class did not directly govern, but rather its interests were served through the medium of the state. As such, the state was relatively autonomous. To some degree it was free from the ruling class's direct influence, independent from its direct control. However, since the state was shaped by the infrastructure, it was forced to represent the interests of capital. Poulantzas argued that the relative autonomy of the state was essential if it was to represent capital effectively. The state required a certain amount of freedom and independence in order to serve ruling-class interests. If it were staffed by members of the bourgeoisie, it might lose this freedom of action.

The following reasons have been given for the relative autonomy of the capitalist state:

1. As a group, the bourgeoisie is not free from internal divisions and conflicts of interest. To represent its common interests the state must have the freedom to act on behalf of the class as a whole.
2. If the bourgeoisie ruled directly, internal wrangling and disagreement might weaken its power, and it might fail to present a united front in conflicts with the proletariat. The relative autonomy of the state allows it to rise above sectional interests within the bourgeoisie and to represent that class as a whole.
3. The state must have the freedom to make concessions to the subject class, which might be opposed by the bourgeoisie. Such concessions serve to defuse radical working-class protest and to contain the demands within the framework of a capitalist economy.
4. Finally, the relative autonomy of the state enables it to promote the myth that it represents society as a whole. The state presents itself as a representative of 'the people', of 'public interest' and 'national unity'. Thus, it has an ideological role; the state disguises the fact that essentially it represents ruling-class interests.

Repressive and ideological state apparatus

Poulantzas did not disagree with Miliband about the importance of legitimation. However, he went much further in seeing this process as being directly related to the state. He used a broader definition of the state than Miliband. He divided it into the **repressive apparatus** – the army, government, police, tribunals and administration – which exercises coercive power, and the **ideological apparatus** – the church, political parties, the unions, schools, the mass media and the family – which is concerned with the manipulation of values and beliefs, rather than the use of force.

Most writers do not see institutions such as the family as constituting part of the state. Poulantzas argued that they should be categorised in this way because they were necessary for the survival of capitalism, as they fostered false class consciousness.

Criticisms of Poulantzas

Miliband (1972) tried to defend himself against the criticisms made by Poulantzas, and he accused Poulantzas of **structural super-determinism**. In other words, Miliband did not believe that ultimately all aspects of the behaviour of the state were determined by the infrastructure. Such a theory, he claimed, could not account for the differences between fascist and ‘democratic’ states within capitalist systems. Furthermore, Miliband argued that Poulantzas’s theory was not backed up by empirical evidence. It was not sufficient to simply assert that the state must act in the interests of capitalism. Miliband also questioned the definition of the state proposed by Poulantzas. He expressed great skepticism about the claim that institutions such as the family could be seen as part of the state. He accepted that they might have an ideological role, but in his view they possess so much independence or autonomy that it is ridiculous to see them as part of the state.

It can also be argued that the theory of relative autonomy is impossible to prove or disprove. If the theory is accepted, any action the state takes can be interpreted one way or another as benefiting the bourgeoisie. If it does not appear to benefit them directly, it can be dismissed as a mere concession to the proletariat. Some neo-Marxists argue that concessions can be more than token gestures. To writers such as Gramsci, the working class do have some power and can influence the actions of the state.

Evidence to support Marxism

Marxist writers have adopted more sophisticated methods of measuring power than either pluralists or elite theorists. They have examined all three faces of power identified by Steven Lukes (1974), and have also extended the concept to include the effects of decisions.

The effects of decisions

As we saw earlier, the pluralists’ decision-making approach to measuring power has been heavily criticised. Marxists such as Westergaard and Resler (1976) argued that power can only be measured by its results: if scarce and valued resources are concentrated in the hands of a minority, that group largely monopolises power in society. Put simply, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: whoever reaps the largest rewards holds the largest share of power.

Westergaard and Resler believed that the welfare state does little to redistribute income, for it is largely financed out of the taxes paid by the working

class. More recent research conducted by Westergaard (1995) suggests that, if anything, the 1980s and early 1990s saw increased inequality in Britain

Concessions to the working class

In Britain, as in other advanced capitalist societies, the state has implemented a wide range of reforms that appear to benefit directly either the subject class in particular or society as a whole. These include legislation to improve health and safety in the workplace; social security benefits such as old-age pensions and unemployment and sickness benefit; a national health service; and free education for all. However, these reforms have left the basic structure of inequality unchanged. They have been largely financed from the wages of those they were intended to benefit and have resulted in little redistribution of wealth. They can be seen as concessions, which serve to defuse working-class protest and prevent it from developing in more radical directions that might threaten the basis of ruling-class dominance.

Non-decision making

Marxists have also been concerned to examine the second face of power: non-decision making. John Urry, in criticizing Dahl, argued that he ignores the process by which certain issues, come to be defined as decisions and others do not. The study of decisions is the failure to study who has the power to determine what are decisions. (Urry, 1973)

Many Marxists believe the range of issues and alternatives considered by governments in capitalist societies is strictly limited. Only safe decisions are allowed — those that do not in any fundamental way challenge the dominant position of the bourgeoisie. The sanctity of private property is never questioned; the right of workers to keep the profits produced by their labour is never seriously proposed; and communism is never contemplated as a realistic alternative to capitalism.

Ideology

According to Marxists, the ability of the ruling class to suppress such questions is related to the third face of power. Numerous studies claim that the bourgeoisie are able to produce false class consciousness among the working class.

Westergaard and Resler (1976) argued that ruling class ideology promotes the view that private property, profit, the mechanisms of a market economy and the inequalities which result are reasonable, legitimate, normal and natural. If this view

is accepted, then the dominance of capital is ensured, since ‘no control could be firmer and more extensive than one which embraced the minds and wills of its subjects so successfully that opposition never reared its head’.

If anything, the plausibility of such arguments has been increasing in recent decades. Countries such as Britain and the United States have embraced capitalist free markets wholeheartedly. A number of sociologists have commented on the increased influence of the market economy in different areas of social life, including education, crime and the welfare state.

The regimes of leaders such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher tried to reduce government spending on welfare and state intervention. Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government in Britain (1979-91) privatized numerous state-owned industries and tried to introduce competitive, capitalist-like relationships into parts of the welfare state such as the National Health Service (NHS). When the Labour Party was elected to power in Britain in 1997 it promised not to increase income tax or raise higher-rate tax for the highest earners (although a rise was eventually introduced). The Labour government under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown worked closely with business people, for example by using private capital on state projects through the Private Finance Initiative. When the banking industry got into serious difficulties in 2008, hundreds of billions of state funds were spent on guaranteeing the solvency of banks, some of which had to be partly taken into state ownership to prevent collapse.

Such policies are justified on the grounds that capitalists, as the wealth creators, must be supported and should not be deterred from investment in Britain by policies that might reduce their wealth. The underlying assumption is that the interests of capitalists are the same as the interests of the population as a whole. Despite examples that can be used to support Marxist views, Marxist perspectives have been widely criticised.

Criticisms of Marxism

Marxists provide a considerable amount of evidence to support their views. However, the Marxist theory of the state cannot explain why the state became stronger rather than ‘withering away’ in communist countries. Furthermore, Marxists fail to take account of the possibility that there are sources of power other than wealth. Some conflict theorists deny that wealth is the only source of power, even if economic power is important.

Catharine Mackinnon sees the state as reflecting male power rather than the power of capitalists. For example, she believes that the inadequacy of state policies on rape, domestic violence, abortion and equal opportunities is testament to the dominant influence of men on state policy. If critics are correct, then Marxists certainly exaggerate the degree to which those with economic power dominate state decisions and determine the effects of those decisions.

Even if the interests of capitalists are very influential, that does not necessarily support the Marxist view that the state acts in the interests of a minority. **Anthony H. Birch** (2001) suggests that Marxist evidence shows only that ‘the perceived need to maintain economic growth places serious constraints on government policy’. Opinion poll evidence suggests that most voters see economic growth as important, and it is plausible to claim that most of the population benefit from rising living standards. Therefore the pro-capitalist nature of much government policy could as easily be seen as a product of democratic choice as a product of ruling-class domination. We will now consider the state from a neo-Marxist viewpoint.

Neo-Marxist approaches to power and the state

In considering the state and the distribution of power in society, a number of writers have put forward theories that are heavily influenced by Marxism, but which differ in some significant way from the original writings of Marx and Engels. This section examines the work of one such writer Antonio Gramsci.

Antonio Gramsci – hegemony and the state

Antonio Gramsci (1891— 1937) is among the most influential 20th-century theorists who were themselves influenced by Marx. Gramsci was an Italian sociologist and political activist. A leader of the Italian Communist Party, he is partly remembered for the part he played in the Turin Factory Council Movement, in which industrial workers in Turin unsuccessfully attempted to seize control of their workplaces. From 1926 until his death, Mussolini’s fascist government held Gramsci imprisoned, and his main contributions to sociological theory are contained in his Prison Notebooks written during that time.

Gramsci parted company with conventional Marxists in arguing against economic determinism: he did not believe that the economic infrastructure determined to any great degree what occurred in the superstructure of society. He talked of a ‘reciprocity between structure and superstructure’:

although the infrastructure could affect what took place in the superstructure, the reverse was also possible.

Gramsci did not deny that the economic infrastructure of society was important: it provided the general background against which events took place. An economic crisis might increase political awareness among the proletariat, for instance. However, he believed the actions of groups trying to maintain or change society were at least as important.

Political and civil society

Unlike traditional Marxists, Gramsci divided the superstructure of society into two parts: political society and civil society. **Political society** consisted of what is normally thought of as the state. This was primarily concerned with the use of force by the army, police and legal system to repress troublesome elements within the population. **Civil society** consisted of those institutions normally thought of as private, particularly the church, trade unions, the mass media and political parties.

In a novel way Gramsci claimed ‘the state = political society + civil society’. He used a very broad definition of the state, for he did not think of it in terms of particular institutions but rather in terms of the activities of a dominant class in society.

Hegemony

At one point in his work Gramsci described the **state** as:

the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to maintain the active consent of those over whom it rules.

If the ruling class maintained its control by gaining the approval and consent of members of society, then it had achieved what Gramsci called hegemony. Hegemony was largely achieved, not through the use of force, but by persuading the population to accept the political and moral values of the ruling class. Here Gramsci stressed the importance of ideas in society: the ruling class only maintained control to the extent that they could command the beliefs of the population through civil society.

Gramsci's view on how hegemony could be maintained comes close to Marx's view of false class consciousness. However, unlike Marx, Gramsci did not see the ruling class as ever being able to impose entirely false beliefs and values on the population, nor did he see the state as ever being able to act as a simple instrument or tool of ruling-class dominance. The state could only remain hegemonic if it was prepared to compromise and take account of the demands of exploited classes, and, **for the following three important reasons, ruling-class hegemony could never be complete.**

Historic blocs

In the first place, Gramsci saw both the ruling and subject classes as being divided. The ruling class was divided into groups such as financiers, small and large industrialists, and landowners, while industrial workers and agricultural peasants represented a major division within the subject class. No one group on its own could maintain dominance of society. Hegemony was only possible if there was some sort of alliance between two or more groups. Gramsci called a successful alliance – which achieved a high level of hegemony – a **historic bloc**; but because of the different elements it contained it would always be something of a compromise between the groups involved.

Concessions

The second reason why the hegemony of one group would never be complete was that the state always had to make some concessions to the subject class. Gramsci said, 'hegemony undoubtedly presupposes that the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised are taken into account'. From this point of view, the ruling class had to make concessions in order to be able to rule by consent instead of relying on the use of force. It had to adopt some policies that benefited the subject class.

Dual consciousness

If the ruling class were able to indoctrinate the population completely, then clearly it would not be necessary for them to make concessions. However, Gramsci maintained that this was never possible. He believed that individuals possessed dual consciousness. Some of their ideas derived from the ruling class's control over civil society and its ability to use institutions such as the church and schools to persuade people to accept that capitalism was natural and desirable. However, in part, individuals' beliefs were also the product of their activities and experiences. To a limited extent they would be able to see through the capitalist system, and realise that their interests lay in changing it. For example, their day-to-

day experience of poor working conditions and low wages would encourage them to believe that, at the very least, some reforms of the system were necessary.

The overthrow of capitalism

According to Gramsci, then, power derived only in part from economic control; it could also originate from control over people's ideas. Since the ruling class was unable to control the ideas of the population completely, it could never completely monopolise power. Similarly, the subject class would always have some influence over the activities of the state. The activities of political society would benefit them to the extent that they realised where their interests lay and wrested concessions from the ruling class. Like Marx, Gramsci looked forward to a proletarian revolution, but he saw such a revolution arising in a rather different way. He did not accept that the contradictions of the capitalist economic system made a revolution a foregone conclusion.

The revolutionary seizure of power in tsarist Russia by the Bolsheviks was only possible because of a complete absence of ruling-class hegemony in that country. The rulers lacked the consent of the subject classes and so those classes were able to overthrow them with a direct frontal attack. Gramsci termed such a violent revolutionary seizure of power a 'war of manoeuvre', in which direct action was taken to secure victory.

In most advanced capitalist countries, though, he saw the ruling class as having much more hegemony than they had possessed in Russia. Consequently, countries such as Italy and Britain needed a good deal more preparation before they would have the potential for a proletarian revolution. Gramsci called such preparation a 'war of position' – a kind of political trench warfare in which revolutionary elements in society attempted to win over the hearts and minds of the subject classes.

It was only when individuals had been made to realise the extent to which they were being exploited, and had seen through the ideas and beliefs of the ruling class, that a revolution was possible. For this to happen, 'intellectuals' had to emerge within the subject classes to mould their ideas and form a new historic bloc of the exploited, capable of overcoming ruling-class hegemony.

State-centred theories of power

The approaches we have considered so far have been society-centred: they see the state and its actions as shaped by external forces in society. We will now look at an alternative perspective that has a completely different viewpoint.

Eric A. Nordlinger – the autonomy of democratic states

According to Eric A. Nordlinger (1939 – 1994), an American political scientist, theories of power and the state are either society-centred or state-centred. To Nordlinger, society-centred approaches (such as those examined above) have ‘a pervasive grip upon citizens, journalists and scholars alike’. Pluralism sees the state’s actions as determined by the democratic will of the people; elite theory sees its actions as shaped by the wishes of a small group of powerful people; Marxism sees the state as shaped by the interests of a ruling class. Although some Marxist and neo-Marxist theories concede that the state may have some autonomy, they do not go far enough, because, in the final analysis, the state is portrayed as being unable to go against ruling-class interests.

Nordlinger criticises all these approaches, saying: The possibility that the state’s preferences have at least as much impact on public policy as do society’s is ignored; the state’s having certain distinctive interests and divergent preferences is not considered; the state’s many autonomous actions are not calculated; the state’s numerous autonomy-enhancing capacities and opportunities are not examined.

Nordlinger argues that society-centred approaches have been so dominant that a very distorted and one-sided view of the state and power has been produced. Although society can and does influence the state, the reverse sometimes happens. **This is what Nordlinger describes as the state-centred approach to the theory of power.** The state acts independently or autonomously to change society. This is true of democracies, as well as other types of state, even though they are supposed to be under the control of the electorate. The autonomy of the democratic state takes three forms.

Type 1 state autonomy

Type I state autonomy occurs when the state has different wishes from those of major groups in society, and implements its preferred policies despite pressure for it not to do so. For example, royal commissions often formulate state policy in Sweden. About 80 per cent of those who serve on the commissions are civil servants, and the recommendations are usually followed even when they are unpopular with the electorate or are opposed by elites outside the state.

In Norway, public-private committees which formulate public policy are often chaired by civil servants and, again, their recommendations are normally accepted whatever the opposition to them.

To Nordlinger, there are many ways in which the state can enhance its autonomy from society. These include:

1. Using secretive systems of decision making
2. Using honours, appointments or government contracts to persuade opponents to accept proposals
3. Using the state's resources to counter resources used by opponents (for example, using the funds in the state bank to prop up a currency that is being undermined by speculators)
4. Threatening to change policies in such a way as to harm the interests of opponents of the state's policies
5. Taking actions or issuing statements that cause mistrust among different groups of opponents

Because the state has considerable power of its own, it is sometimes able to utilise it to prevent effective opposition.

Type 2 state autonomy

Type 2 state autonomy occurs when the state is able to persuade opponents of its policies to change their minds and support the government. Nordlinger argues that this is quite common and examples of it can be found in classical pluralist studies such as Dahl's *Who Governs?* Although Dahl claimed that the authorities in New Haven were responsive to public opinion and that interest groups shaped the policies they adopted, Nordlinger believes the authorities played an active role in manipulating public opinion. For example, Dahl himself pointed out there had been little or no interest in a programme of urban renewal until the mayor put the issue on the agenda and persuaded various interest groups to support him. None of the interest groups had agreed with his proposals when they were first put forward. Thus Dahl's own evidence showed that the state could act autonomously in shaping public opinion, rather than having its policies shaped by public opinion.

Type 3 state autonomy

Type 3 state autonomy occurs when the state follows policies that are supported, or at least not opposed, by the public or powerful interest groups in society. Very often, significant groups in society may be unsure of what policies to support and leave it up to the state to decide.

For example, between 1948 and 1971 the USA's grain farmers, industrial workers and exporters made little attempt to influence America's international monetary policy. Although the policy affected them a great deal, they were unable to predict the effects of the state's policies and so were content to accept whatever policies the state adopted.

On many issues concerned with the state itself there is considerable apathy on the part of the public, and the state has considerable freedom of manoeuvre, even though the issues may be of great importance. Nordlinger suggests such issues tend to include 'possible changes in the state unit's formal powers relative to one another, policy implementation responsibilities, budgetary allotments, staffing, organization, and standard operating procedures'.

Nordlinger's views suggest that the state has considerable autonomy over many issues, whether there is opposition from society or not. While he recognises that the autonomy is only partial, his view perhaps goes further in attributing independence to the state than other state-centred approaches. His theory is backed up by a limited number of empirical examples.

Other sociologists have conducted more detailed research in their attempts to show that the state acts as an independent source of power.

Theda Skocpol – Bringing the State Back In

The autonomy of states from society

Theda Skocpol is an American sociologist and political scientist. Skocpol is perhaps the most influential of the state-centred theorists. She has written extensively about the state as a source of power and is a strong supporter of what she calls 'bringing the state back in'. She argues that pluralists, functionalists, Marxists and neo-Marxists have all tended to see the state as shaped by external pressures and have neglected the possibility that the state can shape society. Like Nordlinger, she is critical of such approaches.

To Skocpol, states can have considerable autonomy and, as actors, have the potential capacity to achieve their policy goals. These goals 'are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes or society', for states can have their own goals and pursue their own interests.

Skocpol believes one of the main aims of states and parts of states is to increase their own power. She suggests: 'We can hypothesise that one (hidden or overt) feature of all autonomous state actions will be the reinforcement of the prerogatives of collectivities of state officials.' 'Policies different from those demanded by societal actors will be produced' as states 'attempt to reinforce the authority, political longevity, and social control of the state organisations'. Skocpol gives a number of examples of states acting in pursuit of their own interests.

- In 1968 in Peru there was a coup organised by career military officers who used state power to plan economic growth, weaken opposition groups in society, and try to impose order.
- In Britain and Sweden, according to Skocpol, the civil services often oppose the policies of elected politicians and have some success in ensuring that their policies are not implemented in such a way as to undermine the power of the state.
- In the USA, both the White House and the State Department are fairly insulated from public opinion and democratic control, and they often act autonomously.

Skocpol's own research found that in the USA, after the First World War, the Department of Agriculture was a powerful part of the state that acted independently in the pursuit of its own interests.

State capacities

Although all states have the potential to achieve their own goals, their capacity to do so will be affected by a number of factors:

1. Skocpol says, 'sheer sovereign integrity and the stable administrative control of a given territory are preconditions for any state's ability to implement policies'. Unless a state can largely command the territory for which it is responsible, it will have no power base from which to achieve its aims.

2. States that have a reliable and substantial source of income are more powerful than those that do not. For example, if a state relies heavily upon the export of a single commodity or product (as some 'third world' states do), then it is vulnerable to a decline in demand for the product or a reduction in its value. On the other hand, economies that export a wide variety of products have a more reliable income.
3. States that govern rich societies obviously have more potential for raising taxes than those that govern poor societies. This can strengthen their power base.
4. States that are forced to borrow large amounts of money can end up in a weaker position than those that have sufficient revenue to finance their activities.
5. States also tend to increase their power if they can recruit many of the most able and highly educated members of society into their organisations. Not only does this tend to improve the organisation of the state, it also deprives non-state organisations and groups of the personnel who would be most likely to challenge and undermine the state's power.

Skocpol believes that whether a state becomes powerful or not partly depends upon how well organised groups in society are. She criticises Marxists for claiming that states always reflect the interests of a dominant class, saying: *the political expression of class interests and conflicts is never automatic or economically determined. It depends on the capacities classes have for achieving consciousness, organization, and representation. Directly or indirectly, the structures and activities of states profoundly condition such class capacities.* (Skocpol, 1985)

To Skocpol, Marxist political sociology 'must be turned, if not on its head, then certainly on its side'. The state shapes the activity of classes as much as classes shape the activity of the state.

States' capacities are profoundly affected by their relationships with other states. Large and powerful armed forces permit a state to defend its own territory or seize the territory of other states. Control over territory is the basis of the state's ability to raise revenue and finance its activities. States can be weakened by wars, especially if they incur crippling costs or suffer military defeats. External threats can result in internal weakness and sometimes contribute to the state losing its autonomy from society.

States and social revolutions

In her most substantial empirical study, Skocpol (1979) compared revolutions in France (1789), China (1911) and Russia (1917). She argued that in all these cases the activities of the states and the weak position that the states found themselves in played a vital role in causing the revolutions. The French, Chinese and Russian states acted in ways which undermined their own power and produced a situation where the state was overthrown by particular classes. Although class conflict was important in all of the revolutions, none of them could be understood without considering the role of the state as an autonomous actor. Skocpol argues that, in all three cases, 'The revolutionary crises developed when old-regime states became unable to meet the challenges of evolving international situations.'

According to Skocpol, in each case it was the weakness of the state which ultimately caused the revolution. She comments: 'In all three cases ...the ultimate effect of impediments to state-sponsored reforms was the downfall of monarchical autocracy and the disintegration of the centralized administrative and military organizations of the state.' In each case the state could have acted differently by introducing more effective reforms earlier to prevent the development of a revolutionary situation. Each regime was brought down by a combination of external pressures from other states and the way 'agrarian relations of production and landed dominant classes impinged upon state organisations'.

For example, in France, the state failed to find a way to raise sufficient taxes from the landed classes to pay for wars waged by the state. While class relationships were important, none of the revolutions could be understood without reference to the actions taken by the states involved. In all three countries the revolution led to the collapse of the old regime, but it was replaced sooner or later by a regime with even more centralised power and more autonomy than the old state: the Napoleonic regime in France, and communist regimes in China and Russia. According to Skocpol, these were all clear examples of states which could exercise power and which could sometimes act to pursue their own interests rather than the interests of groups within society.

One of the problems with state-centred theories is that they are often unclear about their precise theoretical position. Most critics are prepared to accept that the actions of the state should be taken into account in studies of power. However, many believe that Skocpol and similar writers exaggerate the importance of the state in an attempt to support their approach. Furthermore, Bob Jessop argues that it is artificial and misleading to see the 'state' and 'society' as being quite separate institutions. He sees state and society as so intimately connected that it is not possible to separate them completely in accounts of power.

Democracy
(Refer Class Notes)

Dear Candidate, to make your answer analytical, you can draw important points from your understanding of sociological thought. For example, you can make a comparative analysis of Functionalist view (Durkheim, Parsons, etc.) and Marxist view on democracy.

Further, to make your answer contemporary, you can draw important points from the topic ‘Modernization of Indian Tradition’ to evaluate the functioning of democracy in India.

Sociologists study political institutions with the particular aim to understand social causes and consequences of given power distributions within or between societies, and with the social and political conflicts that lead to changes in the allocation of power. A major focus of political sociology is the study of: (i) political conflicts and struggles between different nation-states; (ii) the nature and organization of the state within society; (iii) the nature and organization of political movements and parties; and (iv) the participation of individuals in politics, such as voting behaviour.

Approaches to Study Political Institutions

Political institutions are mainly concerned with the exercise and distribution of power and have the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Institutions involving relations with other societies, including war, are also considered to fall in this category. For a sociologist, a society’s political institution, or politics, is, like other institutions, a means of dealing with social problems. In this connection, political sociologists have offered two opposite approaches of how order arises, is maintained and motivates members of any given society. These approaches are **structural functional approach** and **conflict approach**.

Structural-functional approach (Consensus theory)

This approach stresses on co-operation and stability. Theorists of this approach believe that political institutions hold the values of the dominant society and arbitrate conflicts when they arise. One person may act on a value of freedom by marrying more than one spouse, or members of a sub-culture may feel free to use drugs. It is the political system that decides which value must be upheld or limited to maintain social order.

Conflict approach

This approach differs radically from structural-functional approach. It stresses on conflict and change as the centre of political life. It does not assume that societies are based on a set of values, but, rather, that they are drawn together by people's need for resources – food, shelter, and other necessities. Some groups get a larger share of resources to gain power. They use their wealth and power to influence and control political leaders and mass media to support their economic interests. Unlike the structural-functionalists, who believe that the values of the society shape political systems, conflict theorists believe that political systems are run by the elites who shape the values of society.

Political Systems

Each society must have a political system in order to maintain recognized procedures for allocating valued resources. In large complex societies, many decisions must be made about the duties and responsibilities of citizens and also about the rights and privileges. If the society is to be orderly, people must obey the rules that are made. The political institution determines and enforces the laws and punishes those who disobey them. Even in stateless societies which had no developed formal central institutions were seen having some kind of decision-making and rule-making processes which were dominated by some members. As societies become wealthier and more complex, political systems develop and grow more powerful.

According to renowned political scientists, **Gabriel Almond** and **James Coleman** (1960), 'Political system is that system of interactions to be found in all independent societies which performs the functions of integration and adaptations by means of legitimate physical compulsion.' *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (1994) defines it as, 'a political system in any persistent pattern of human relationship that involves (to a significant extent) power, rule and authority.' It is collectivity of political institutions (e.g., government), associations (e.g., political parties) and organizations performing roles based on a set of norms and goals (like maintaining internal order, regulating foreign relations, etc.). **Sociologically, the term 'political system' refers to the social institutions which relies on a recognized set of procedures for implementing and achieving the political goals of a community or society.**

Functions of a Political System

Almond and **Coleman** (1960) have described the following three main functions of a political system:

1. To maintain integration of society by determining norms
2. To adapt and change elements of social, economic, religious systems necessary for achieving collective (political) goals
3. To protect the integrity of the political system from outside threats

They have grouped these functions into two categories: (1) **input functions** – political socialization, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication; and (2) **output functions** – rule making, rule application and rule adjudication.

Types of Political Systems

According to **Edward Shills**, there are three main types of political systems. These are discussed as under:

Totalitarian System

A system in which the state controls and regulates all phases of life considered essential for perpetuating its power and for carrying out programmes arbitrarily. It is the most extreme form of authoritarianism. Unlike democracies, where a variety of groups struggle for a voice in government, the government dictates the society's values, ideology, rules and form of government. Societies having totalitarian system do not permit dissent. The centralized authority always dominates over the autonomy of individual or sub-groups within the society. Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union are often quoted as examples of totalitarian states. Totalitarian states are ruled by one political party that organizes the citizens into a unified group. In practice, the state is represented by a politically powerful ruling class or elite that dominates all other interest groups.

Oligarchic system

Any form of government in which there is a 'rule by a few', for example, by members of a self-regulating elite having domination over a large society is known as an oligarchic political system. It is a system in which a small group (elites) rules and holds supreme power over a larger society.

Democratic system

In its broadest sense, democracy is a way of life in which an individual feels free to act within accepted boundaries of norms and also equal in respects of his/her rights. In the narrower sense, it is a form of government, a power structure in which people govern themselves. People participate in the government through their representatives that they elect. In other words, people represent themselves and take their own decisions. It is an imagination of the replica of an equalitarian society.

Democracy

The word 'democracy' has its roots in the Greek term '*demokratia*', meaning 'rule by the people' (*demos* means 'people' and *kratos* means 'rule'). It is a political system in which people not monarchs (king or queens) or aristocracies (like lords) rule. **Theodore Parker** defines it as 'government of all the people, by all the people and for all the people'. **Seymour Lipset** (1960) gives a working definition of democracy as 'a political system supplying regular constitutional opportunities for changing the government by allowing the population to choose between alternative sets of policy makers'.

Democracy is a type of social system in which everyone has an equal share of power. In large complex societies, however, it is impossible for every citizen to be involved in the political process. Thus, when we refer to 'democratic' power structure, we mean those structures in which people are allowed to vote for elected representatives. Most societies that describe themselves as political democracies are actually representative democracies in which citizens elect politicians who actually hold and exercise political authority. Pure democracy is quite rare. This is because the definition of 'everyone' always excludes some portion of population.

The origins of democracy as an idea and a practice go back to the city-states of Greece in the 5th century B.C. But contemporary democracies are very different from the ancient Greek mode. It is a paradox that though the modern democracy first emerged in the Greece, yet the Greeks were suspicious of democracy. They felt that people often made bad decisions that went against their interests. People could be manipulated by demagogues and vested interests. The pattern that emerged in England in the 17th century and slowly became the model for the entire world was one of representative democracy or parliamentary democracy. Here, citizens elect leaders by ballot who promise to represent the interests of those citizens in debates and decisions, which typically take place in some central national forum such as parliament or Congress. Thus, ideally, the parliament

becomes a miniature *demos*. In India, this type of democratic political system developed after independence. It is said that in ancient India the people led a democratic way of living (Ram Rajya) but the political democracy of the modern form did not exist.

In practice, politicians in a democracy usually belong to parties which propose general policies or programmes, rather than responding to citizens on issue-by-issue basis. Parties thus become independent centres of power. The experience of the 20th century seems to show that citizens' interests are best represented by either two, or at the most three parties – as in Britain or the United States. Although there are many one-party systems in the world which claim to be democratic on the basis that they represent the collective will of the people. Political processes (elections, political socialization) are the lifeblood of all types of democracies. Political organization, political competitiveness, the big political gesture – all these are integral to democracy. It is widely agreed that for the real democracy, following necessary conditions must be fulfilled:

1. Free and fair elections
2. A genuine choice between candidates and policies
3. Real parliamentary power
4. The separation of powers between the executive, judiciary and the politicians
5. Civil rights for all citizens
6. Rule of law and equality before law
7. Inter-party competition
8. Real representation of different interests
9. Free and responsible media
10. Personal freedom
11. Freedom of speech and writing
12. Freedom of religion and public worship
13. Freedom of association and assembly

Although democracy is based on majority rule, the protection of minority rights has always been regarded as an essential aspect of the democratic system. Also important are the equality before law, freedom of speech, press and assembly, and protection from arbitrary arrest in the political democracy. There is a room for unlimited disagreement about the exact meaning of any or all of the above conditions and that's why democracy continues to be the focus of intense public and academic debate. There are many paradoxes of scientists. Political sociologists have explored the nature of the state as a sociological entity, political socialization, voting behavior and political participation, the relationships between democracy and economic systems, and the manipulation of public opinion.

Types of Democracies

Democracies differ from society to society in their form and content. The main forms of democracy are as follows:

Participatory democracy or Direct democracy)

(relate it to the pluralist perspective on power)

It is a form democracy in which decisions are made communally by those affected by them. This was the original type of democracy practiced in ancient Greece and India (Gram Panchayat) from where the idea of democracy originated. Participatory democracy is of limited importance in modern societies, where the mass of the population have political rights, and it would be impossible for everyone to participate actively in the making of decisions. Virtually, only a small minority actually participates in political process and political organizations on a local or national level.

Political pluralism is not something to be taken for granted. The need for a strong centralized government and the pressures of international politics have combined to produce a concentration of power in most of modern states today. A major issue of the coming decades will be how to achieve a balance between widespread political participation, local decision-making, and popular control on the one hand, and the realities and requirements of a highly complex, centralized, and technical political system on the other.

The term ‘participatory democracy’ was used by the political philosopher **Herbert Marcuse** to mean the widespread involvement of a population in political processes and public affairs (in his book *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 1964).

The desire for more participatory democracy can be seen today in many areas of national life such as:

- Emergence of new civil rights movements – demanding greater transparency in affairs of the government (e.g., Anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare)
- Demands by various socially and economically weaker sections of society for effective implementation of policies and programmes envisaged in the constitution for their welfare (e.g., demand of reservation in private sector)
- Increasing assertion by tribals for their rights in land and forest produce
- Demands of reservation by women (e.g., Women Reservation Bill)
- Demands for revitalization and streamlining the rural development programmes

- Demands for empowering the state and local bodies for effective delivery of services to the general public

While the goal of participatory democracy is unassailable in a democratic society, in practice there are dangers as well as benefits in widespread or mass participation in politics. Democratic processes require the learning of such skills and attitudes as the rational evaluation of issues and policies, the art of compromise, and the protection of the rights of minorities. The sudden inclusion into the political system of large number of people who lack these traits could threaten its stability. Participatory democracy also can be inefficient; as the number of competing interests increase, the more difficult it is to make decisions. A modern state would find it virtually impossible to operate entirely on the basis of participatory democracy.

Monarchical democracy

There are some modern states, such as Britain and Sweden, where traditional rulers – the king or the queen acts as constitutional monarchs – continue to head the elected government. Their power is severely restricted by the constitution, which vests authority in the elected representative of the people. In most cases they are just symbols of national identity rather than personages having any direct power in political life. The vast majority of modern states are republican. In such states, there is no king or queen. Almost everyone, including constitutional monarchies, professes adherence to democracy.

Liberal (representative) democracy

Liberal democracy is a framework for the expression of diverse views and interests. It does not specify how we should behave apart from insisting that *we should respect the views of others*. As such, it is compatible with the pluralism of attitudes and ways of life. In practice, a liberal democracy is a representative multi-party democracy (such as in India), where citizens can vote for one of at least two parties. Liberal democracy is, in part, a theory about the relationship between the majority of the people and their leaders (the political elite). Liberal theorists state that democratic political elites are representative of the people and are ultimately accountable to them. In liberal democracies, voters can choose between two or more political parties and the mass adult population has the right to vote.

It is a political system which is different from communism as found in the former Soviet Union (and which still exists in China). Communism was essentially a system of one-party rule. Since 1989, with the fall of the communist regime, the

processes of democratization have started across the world in all the countries which were ruled by the Soviet-style regimes. Liberal democracy involves several political parties and free and fair elections at regular intervals. Those who favour liberal democracy argue that parties and pressure groups should effectively represent people and influence government. They believe that the civil service is the ‘servant’ of government; the judiciary is regarded as independent of government and is not expected to concern itself with political matters.

Most Marxists may not agree with the model of liberal democracy described above as ‘real’ democracy. For them, it is merely ‘bourgeois democracy’, a smokescreen behind which the capitalist class pursues its own interests. Parliament and political government are not considered to be the major source of power. Capitalists make the decisions and control politicians. Marxists believe that in liberal capitalist democracies, the capitalists class rules, not the people. Many contemporary Marxists have different (modified) views about modern liberal democracies.

Problems of Democracy

Democracy has become a global force. While it has become widespread, but all is not going well with this political system. It has got into some difficulties almost everywhere. Democracy is in trouble even in the countries of its origin – Britain, the US and many European countries. Surveys show that increasing proportions of people are dissatisfied with this political system, or indifferent towards it. Political participation is decreasing day by day as is evident from the percentage of voters turnout and the attendance in the parliament and assemblies during debates. Most of the people are unhappy because of the following reasons:

1. The government is unable to address many needs of its citizens.
2. Decisions affecting lives of the people are made by distant ‘power brokers’ – in Delhi or state headquarters – party officials, interest groups, bureaucratic officials, and the like.
3. People believe that government is unable to deal with important local issues as well, such as crimes, cleanliness, road repairs, unemployment, slums and encroachments.
4. Like all bureaucracies it created its own vested interests and tends to be slow moving and at certain times, it becomes oppressive. Civil servants may give partial advice to ministers or take too long in producing it.
5. In India, especially, it has not produced the intended results because of many pitfalls (corruption, casteism, nepotism, communalism, regionalism, etc.).

For its failure, it is not the institution itself which is to be blamed; it is the way it has worked or the way its working has been distorted by those in power. It is because of the vested interests of a few people that the tangible gains could not go to the large masses of people. In spite of many problems and difficulties of liberal democracy, it is not only persisting in the countries, where this system was practised but is spreading to those countries also where other political system was operating. The freedom that exists in liberal societies, we cannot undervalue it. Within broadly defined limits, people can speak their minds and organize themselves for a cause. Private lives are largely left private by the state – in their own homes, at least, people can ‘be themselves’. These freedoms might not seem so substantial or so precious if we did not experience the agony of totalitarianism practised in Germany and Soviet Union in the 1930s or Taliban’s Afghanistan and Sadaam Hussain regime in Iraq. Perhaps the major argument in favour of liberal democracy is that there is every scope to bring improvement in this system. This is why Churchill once described liberal democracy as ‘the least worst system’.

In spite of its many pitfalls and weaknesses, democratization is one of the major political forces in the world today. Like many aspects of contemporary societies, the realm of government and politics is undergoing major changes. In many parts of the world, pro-democracy movements have been successful in toppling authoritarian regimes. In the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, communism was overthrown by such movements. But democracy is still not a reality of China, though a movement in favour of democracy was launched as early as in 1989 and a demonstration was held in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Democratic forms of government have also been established in recent years in much of Latin America and some countries in Africa and Asia such as Afghanistan, Iraq and some Arab countries.

Globalization and Democracy

Like all other social systems, the system of democracy has also not remained untouched by the recent phenomenon of globalization. In its train, it has brought many good as well as bad effects for democracy.

In this connection, **Daniel Bell** (1976) has stated that national government is too small to respond to the big questions, such as the influence of global economic competition or the destruction of the world’s environment Governments have little power, for instance, over the activities of giant business corporations, the main actors within the global economy national governments are unable to control processes bound up with the world economy. Similarly, **Anthony Giddens** (2000) observed, ‘governments have shrunk in relation to global issues; they have also become more remote from the lives of most citizens’.

Globalization is altering many other aspects of national politics too. **David Held** (1993), a foremost writer on the politics of globalization, analysed and promoted the possibilities of a new form of politics and democracy which transcends the nation-state. In his view, globalization is an opportunity as well as threat. He summarized the features of globalization as follows:

- Political, economic and social activity is rapidly becoming global in scope.
- States and societies are linked in ways that are greatly intensified, and this is facilitated by rapid communication.
- People, ideas and cultural products move around, merge and influence each other more rapidly than ever before.
- Military power and intelligence activity can operate on a truly global scale using high technology.
- Economic activity can create globally integrated production and marketing, extending global economic activity far beyond trade.
- Transnational political organizations such as United Nations, International Monetary Fund and World Bank go beyond the nation-state and its sovereignty.
- Globalization can generate forces of both fragmentation (as in the case of former USSR and Yugoslavia) and unification (such as European Union). These trends bring dangers and challenges of fragmented nationalism or regionalism.
- With the end of cold war following the collapse of European communism (USSR), the world is no longer divided into two huge superpower blocs. The political map of Europe has been transformed after 1989. The state-socialist model is discredited in favour of capitalism, market economics and parliamentary democracies.

David Held has suggested that the above developments could provide a basis for a supernational state – a kind of *world government* to deal with the ‘big’ issues – which should have legislative and coercive powers. This *world parliament* would become an authoritative international centre for the consideration and examination of global issues, e.g., health and disease, ecological imbalance, environmental pollution, food supply and distribution. Thus, Held has a vision of a *cosmopolitan global democracy* to which the present world is heading.

Please also refer the following handouts:

Handout: Ch-13 The Nature and Functioning of Democracy (Book: *Contemporary India* by Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi)

Handout: Ch-15 Democracy: Social and Economic Dimensions (Book: *Contemporary India* by Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi)

Political Parties
(Refer Class Notes)

Dear Candidate, to make your answer analytical, you can draw important points from your understanding of sociological thought. For example, Weberian perspective, Pluralist perspective, Marxian perspective, etc.

Further, to make your answer contemporary, you can draw important points from the topic ‘Modernization of Indian Tradition’ to evaluate the functioning of political parties in India.

The political party is the major organizing principle of modern politics. A political party, in a broader sense, is a group of people that is organised for the purpose of winning government power, by electoral or other means.

Joseph A. Schumpeter defines party as ‘a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power.’

Emergence of political parties is an aspect of political modernization. In modern politics, the relationship of an individual with the state has been redefined from that of a subject to a citizen. Democratic theory considers citizens as rational, independent and interested political persons capable of expressing their opinion regarding the persons aspiring for holding offices and also competent in electing some person who deals with the policies of the government in a way conducive to the interest of the masses.

Political sociology is primarily concerned with the study of political parties as social institutions and their transformative character in the ever dynamic social system. It also attempts to understand the relations between party members, party leaders and the masses.

Let us now briefly discuss the views of some important social and political scholars.

Marx and Engels, in the ‘*Manifesto of the Communist Party*’ (1848) furnished the proletariat with the programme which would take humanity to a classless society, i.e. a communist society. This is the programme and path that all must necessarily cross under the leadership of the proletariat materialized in its

party. Marx and Engels realized their thesis on the necessity of building the working class party as an indispensable instrument to fight for its class interests. As they wrote, 'In its struggle against united power of the owning classes, the proletariat cannot act as a class unless it constitutes itself into a political party, distinct and opposed to all the old political parties created by the owning classes', and that 'This constitution of the proletariat into a political party is indispensable to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate goal: the abolition of the classes.'

Lenin reasserted the necessity of party to transform society. His great point was 'Give us an organization of revolutionaries and we'll shake Russia to its foundations.' He reasoned that a party was necessary to change the world. And its programme 'consists of the organization of the proletariat's class struggle and the leadership of this struggle whose final objective is the conquest of political power for the proletariat and the organization of socialist society.' Lenin was much concerned with the principle of party organization. He advocated the construction of a tightly knit revolutionary party, organised on the basis of **democratic centralism**, to serve as the '**vanguard of the working class**'. He argued that without democracy it was impossible for party members to express their opinions, and without centralism, it was impossible to achieve unity of action and to carry out party decisions.

Max Weber defines 'parties' as groups which are specifically concerned with influencing policies and making decisions in the interests of their membership. In Weber's words, parties are concerned with the acquisition of social power. Weber further argues that at times parties may represent class interests or status interests. In most cases, they are partly class parties and partly status parties. Weber's view of parties suggests that the relationship between political groups and class and status groups is far from clear cut. For instance, sometimes parties may cut-across both, class as well as status groups.

Max Weber said, parties 'live in a house of power' and 'are always structures struggling for domination'. However, political parties are not the only political groups that operate within the house of power. In most democratic countries there are many private and voluntary associations which influence political process. These include human rights groups, women's organizations, labour unions, environmental groups, chambers of commerce, manufacturer's

associations, senior citizen's associations and any other organized interest group in society. These are known as 'para-political groups'.

In a nutshell, there are two divergent views with regard to the role of political parties in the political process viz. (i) Liberal view and (ii) Marxist view.

The liberal view is that political parties along with pressure groups and others interest groups, engage in competition for power as the representatives of different socio-economic groups in society. As a result of open competition, power in pluralist political systems is non-cumulative and shared. However, this view of the role of political parties in liberal democracies has been criticized severely. It has been argued that certain groups dominate the political decision-making process, especially those who dominate in the political realm. The view was most famously articulated by **Robert Michels** in the form of the '**iron law of oligarchy**'.

While liberals emphasize the important role of political parties in representative democracies, neo-Marxists (like Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, etc.) play down their significance. In their view, in capitalist societies, since the dominant economic class is also the ruling class, parliamentary politics is illusory, and simply an ideological strategy which diverts attention away from the real sources of socio-economic and political inequalities. Many have argued that both liberal and the Marxist views are unsophisticated. It is true that power may be concentrated, but it is also possible for the ordinary people to influence political outcomes as we have seen in Delhi Assembly elections held in 2013 and also in 2015, in which **Aam Aadmi Party**, which raised common man's issues, delivered a spectacular electoral performance.

Functions of political parties

Political parties are a vital link between the state and civil society. In other words, political parties link the state to political forces in society, giving organized expression to interests and making them effective politically.

A political party performs a wide range of functions. According to **Gabriel Almond**, some of the important functions of political parties are as follows:

1. **Articulation of interests:** As stated earlier, political parties perform the vital role of articulation of interests of different sections of society. Thereby give organized expression to interests and make them effective politically.
2. **Aggregation of interests:** One of the most important functions of political party is 'interest aggregation'. A political party is a multi-interest group that represents diverse interests of the society. It tries to harmonise these interests with each other and thereby seeks to produce consensus among as many groups as possible. Political party thus acts as a very effective mediator in settling disagreements in society in a peaceful and institutionalized manner.
3. **Political communication:** Political party provides a link between rulers and ruled. It ensures a two-way communication process between the government and people. It is a channel of expression, upward and downward. It is mainly through the parties that the government is constantly kept informed about the general demands of the society. The upward flow of communication from the ruled to the rulers is relatively strong in competitive party systems, whereas in a single ruling party, the flow of communication is mainly downward.
4. **Direction to government and society:** Political parties give direction to government and society. When in government, party leaders are centrally involved in implementing collective goals for society. The radical transformations of Russian and Chinese society were brought about by vanguard communist parties. In Asia and Africa, nationalist parties played a crucial role in winning independence. In Western Europe, political parties contributed to the creation of welfare states.
5. **Political recruitment and socialization:** Further, political parties also work as agents of elite recruitment and socialization. In a democracy, political elite are recruited mainly through political parties. Leaders of governments are normally the leaders of political parties. The political party also plays an important role in the political socialization of the masses. The political socialization performed by political parties may however assume two distinct forms. The party may either reinforce the existing political culture or it may try to alter the established political cultural pattern by generating new attitudes and beliefs. However, sometimes, this process of political socialization may also result in the dysfunctional consequences. Thus, when parties represent strong traditional and ethnic subcultures and seek to

reinforce the same, they in effect, tend to produce divisive forces, which may seriously affect the stability of the political system. Such tendencies can be witnessed in the contemporary India with the growth of numerous regional and religious parties, and coalition governments.

Please also refer the following handouts:

Handout: Ch-16 The Changing Nature of the Party System (Book: *Contemporary India* by Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi)

Handout: Ch-17 The Nature of Coalition Politics (Book: *Contemporary India* by Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi)



Citizenship

The term ‘citizenship’ is derived from the Latin word ‘civis’ and its Greek equivalent ‘polites’, which means member of the polis or city. Historically, the idea of citizenship was linked with the rise of democracy and modern nation-states in Europe, particularly in the Western European societies.

The manner in which citizenship is understood today as system of equal rights, as opposed to privileges ascribed by conditions of birth, took roots in the French Revolution (1789). With the development of capitalism and liberalism, the idea of the citizen as an individual bearing rights irrespective of his or her class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc., became further entrenched.

More often than not, citizenship is seen in terms of a legal/formal status – having a specific nationality and deriving from this status, entitlements and claims, right guaranteed by the constitution, as well as specific duties and responsibilities which the constitution may lay down. The idea of citizenship, however, goes beyond the legal-formal framework to denote **substantive membership in the political community**.

The commonly accepted definition of citizenship by **T.H. Marshall** in *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950) as ‘full and equal membership in a political community’ holds the promise of equality and integration within the political community. While citizenship may be defined with an ideal condition of equality, it may actually remain elusive and fettered, as societies are always marked by hierarchies of class, caste, sex, race, and religion rather than equality of status and belonging.

T.H. Marshall: Equal and universal citizenship

T.H. Marshall, in his influential account of the growth of citizenship in England, states that the concept developed in a peculiar relationship of conflict and collusion with capitalism. Marshall’s widely accepted definition of citizens as ‘free and equal members of a political community’ comes primarily from the study of citizenship as a process of expanding equality against the inequality of social class, the latter being an integral element of capitalist society.

In *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950), Marshall distinguishes three strands or bundles of rights constituting citizenship, viz., civil, political and social. **Civil rights**, defined by Marshall as ‘rights necessary for individual freedom’, include freedoms of speech, movement, conscience, the rights to equality before

law, and the right to own property. These were ‘negative’ rights in the sense that they limited or checked the exercise of government power. **Political rights**, viz., the right to vote, the right to contest elections and the right to hold public office, provided the individual with the opportunity to participate in political life. The provision of political rights required the development of universal suffrage, political equality, and democratic government. **Social rights**, argued Marshall, guaranteed the individual a minimum social status and provided the basis for the exercise of both civil and political rights. These were ‘positive’ rights ‘to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society’. These standards of life and the social heritage of society are realized through active intervention by the state in the form of social services (the welfare state) and the educational system. Each of these three stands has, he suggests, a distinct history confined to a particular century—civil to the 18th, political to the 19th, and social to the 20th—and corresponds with the development of specific state structures—the judiciary, parliamentary institutions of governance, and the educational system and the welfare state, respectively.

Marshall was of the view that there was a permanent tension or contradiction between the principles of citizenship and the operation of the capitalist market. Capitalism inevitably involves inequalities between social classes, while citizenship involves some redistribution of resources, because of rights, which are shared equally by all. Eminent sociologist Talcott Parsons argues that the growth of citizenship is a measure of the modernization of society because it is based on the values of egalitarianism and universalism.

Marxist Critique of Bourgeois Citizenship

For Marx, the claims of liberal citizenship to equality and freedom were incompatible with capitalism. The explanation for this incompatibility has been sought in Marx’s interpretation of the modern state as a bourgeois state, as a manifestation and guardian of bourgeois interests, incapable of delivering the promises of equal citizenship. ‘Equal right’ in a capitalist society is a bourgeois right consisting only in the application of an equal/uniform standard. This works out in effect as ‘a right of inequality in its content’, since with the application of an equal standard, people’s (unequal) location in a hierarchized society, their needs, social contexts, relationships, etc., are ignored. In other words, equality before law and universal adult suffrage are aspects of formal equality. Marxist scholars argued that unless there is substantive equality in the form of socio-economic equality, legal equality and political equality would remain illusory (not real).

Feminism and Citizenship

As discussed above, the idea of ‘general’ and ‘uniform’ citizenship has been criticized by Marxists for overlooking the inequalities that exist in real life. Feminists have shown how the idea of citizenship has been especially inimical to women. Feminists of all strands have criticized the dominant conceptions of citizenship on two counts. They argue that citizenship is gender-blind. By focusing on uniform and equal application, it fails to take cognizance of the fact that modern societies are steeped in patriarchal traditions, which make for male domination and privileges. Equality in such conditions remains a facade and the inequality of women is sustained by policies that work within the framework of formal equality.

Feminists have taken different routes to overcome their exclusion from the political community. One strand of feminists has focused on political participation, viewing citizenship as an aspect of public/political activity and as embodying the transformative potential of democracy. They have argued for women’s inclusion in the public sphere as equals, laying emphasis on revitalizing/democratizing the public sphere through communication, speech, and action (which are seen as empowering), and through alliances for a shared common objective. Thus, it is the exercise of rights in the political sphere which is seen as crucial to the full development of women’s citizenship as part of what **Rian Voet** (1998) calls ‘an active and sex-equal citizenship’.

Globalization, World Citizenship and Human Rights

An influential strand of citizenship theorists argues that in an increasingly globalized, interdependent and interconnected world, marked by transnational movement of populations and multicultural national populations, one can no longer talk of citizenship in terms of membership in a territorially limited *nation-state*, the hitherto uncontested unit of membership. They propose the delinking of the relationship between citizenship and the nation-state, replacing it with **global** or **world citizenship** with its basis in human rights. **Yasemin Soysal** (1994), for example, argues that globalization has brought in a ‘new and more universal’ concept of citizenship that has ‘universal personhood’ rather than ‘national belonging’ as its core principle. Universal personhood delinks legal rights from citizenship status and national belonging and is reflected in the status of guest workers in Europe, who have lived in Europe for years without ever acquiring citizenship, primarily because the countries of residence assured their legal and social rights. These assurances, feels Soysal, are further augmented by the global system of human rights law, the United Nations network, regional governance, etc., that have ushered in the idea of a **global civil society**. The assurances guaranteed by membership of this global civil society make the securities of

nation-state membership redundant. Much of this assurance, it is argued, has emanated from the high degree of agreement on the need for human rights, and the recognition that violations of human rights have global ramifications, and their protection must, therefore involve transnational efforts.

Sociology is Simple
Sociology is Scoring
provided that you
Study Sociology Systematically

Civil Society
(Refer Class Notes)

Please also refer the following handouts:

Handout: Ch-12 Civil Society (Book: *Political Theory: An Introduction* by Rajeev Bhargava and Ashok Acharya)

Handout: Ch-3 The State and Civil Society in India (Book: *Civil Society and Democratization in India* by Sarbeswar Sahoo)

Sociology is Simple
Sociology is Scoring
provided that you
Study Sociology Systematically

Ideology (Refer Class Notes)
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Ideology may be defined as a system of ideas that tends to explain and legitimize the existing beliefs and practices of a given social group or society.

The term ‘ideology’ was coined by **Destutt de Tracy** (1754 – 1836), a French philosopher, to describe a new ‘science of ideas’, literally an idea-ology.

Ideology refers to any comprehensive and mutually consistent set of ideas by which a social group makes sense of the world.

According to some scholars, ideology may also be described as referring to a more or less coherent set of ideas that provide the basis for some kind of organized political action. In this sense all ideologies therefore, first, offer an account or critique of the existing order, usually in the form of a ‘world-view’; second, provide the model of a desired future, a vision of the good society and third, outline how political change can and should be brought about.

- **Karl Marx** used ideology to refer to ideas that serve the interests of the ruling class by concealing the contradictions of class society, thereby promoting false consciousness and political passivity amongst subordinate classes (**ruling class ideology**). In this view, a clear distinction can be drawn between ideology and science, representing falsehood and truth respectively.
- **Antonio Gramsci – hegemony**
- Later Marxists adopted a neutral concept of ideology, regarding it as the distinctive ideas of any social class including the working class. So just as the conservative ideology originates in the world view of the ruling class, the revolutionary ideology originates in the material conditions of the revolutionary class.

The advent of the Cold War in the 1950s encouraged liberal theorists to identify similarities between fascism and communism, both being inherently repressive ‘official’ ideologies which suppressed opposition and demanded regimented obedience.

However, the 1950s and 1960s also witnessed growing claims that ideology had become superfluous and redundant, most openly through the ‘**end of ideology**’ thesis advanced by **Daniel Bell** (1960). This view reflected not only the declining importance in the west of ideologies such as communism and fascism, but also the

fact that similarities between liberalism, conservatism and socialism had apparently become more prominent than their differences. (You can support your argument by the **convergence thesis** forwarded by **Clark Kerr**.)

Nevertheless, the proclaimed demise of ideology has simply not materialised. Since the 1960s, ideology has been accorded a more important and secure place in political analysis for a number of reasons. Instead of the so called ‘end of ideology’, a range of new ideological traditions have steadily emerged including feminism, ecologism and religious fundamentalism, etc.

Dear Candidate, please note that the concept of ideology can be analysed on two dimensions: **Orientation** and **Content**.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- status quo (conservative / rightist ideology)- change (leftist ideology) |
| Content | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- religious (e.g. Taliban–conservative, Buddhism – change oriented)- secular (new social movements) |

Dear Candidate, in order to debate on the topic of ‘ideology’ from a sociological perspective, you can draw upon your sociological knowledge on thinkers. For example: Howard Becker (sacred and secular), Herbert Spencer and Talcott Parsons (structural differentiation and value generalization), Emile Durkheim (mechanical and organic solidarity), Karl Marx, etc.

- **Weber** – ideology as a factor of social change (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*)

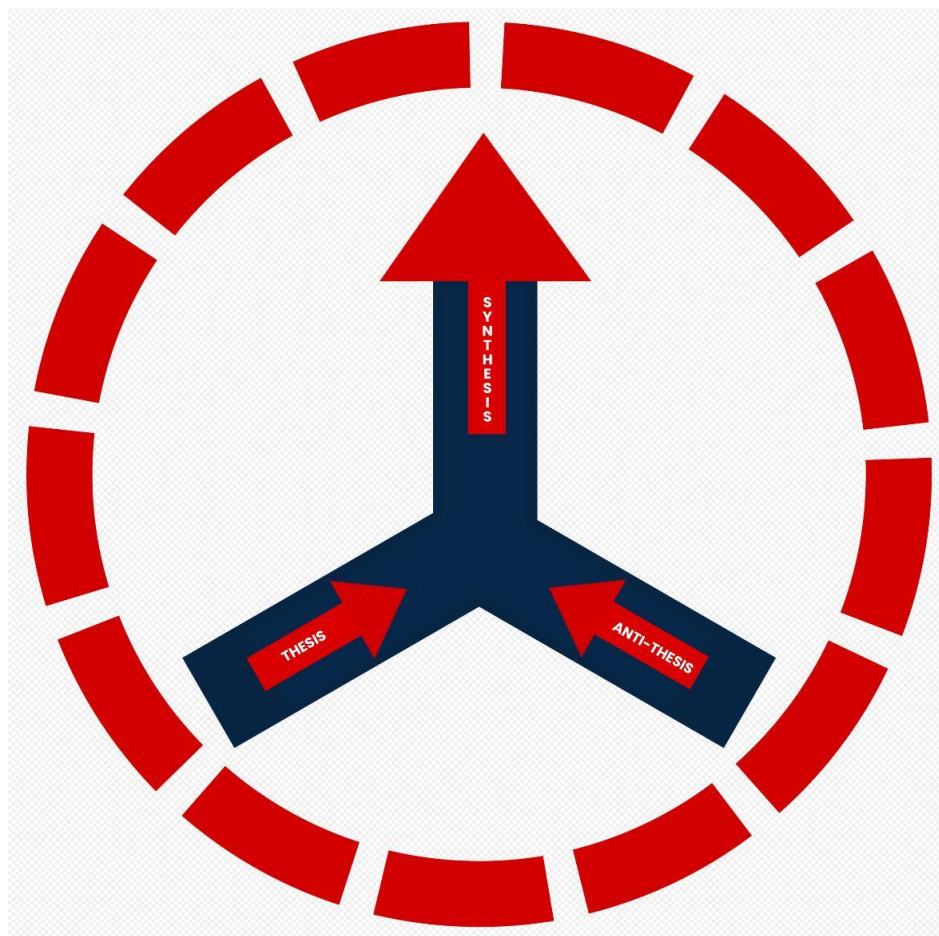
Short Note

Ideology as protest

In the contemporary times, ideology is also being used as a means to protest. In the early phase of capitalism, socialism (communism) emerged as an ideology of protest in the light of extreme economic inequalities. Similarly, during anti-colonial struggle, nationalism emerged as an ideology of protest. However, both ideologies, socialism as well as nationalism, could meet only limited success in bring about an egalitarian society. In other words, these ideologies failed to fulfill the expectations of people. Hence, in the contemporary times, religious ideology is

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

being used as an ideology of protest, both for articulating the grievances arising out of internal contradictions as well as challenging the intervention of external powers in domestic affairs (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, etc.). This is evident in the rise of religious fundamentalism across the globe.



Dialectics IAS

Regionalism and Decentralization of Power
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Please refer the following handouts:

Handout: Regionalism (Book: *Indian Society and Culture* by Vinita Pandey)

Handout: Ch-21 Democratic Decentralization and Panchayati Raj
(Book: *Contemporary India* by Neera Chandhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi)

Handout: IGNOU (MPSE007): Regional Movements

Social Movements

Social movements are collective ways of promoting or resisting change. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, “Social movements are an organized effort by a significant number of people to change (or resist change in) some major aspect or aspects of society.” The term was first used by Saint-Simon in France at the turn of the eighteenth century, to characterize the movements of social protest that emerged there and later elsewhere, and was applied to new political forces opposed to the status quo. Nowadays, it is used most commonly with reference to groups and organizations outside the mainstream of the political system. Sociologists have usually been concerned to study the origins of such movements, their sources of recruitment, organizational dynamics, and their impact upon society. Social movements must be distinguished from collective behaviour.

The social movement is one of the major forms of collective behaviour. Social movements are purposeful and organized; collective behaviour is random and chaotic. Examples of social movements would include those supporting civil rights, gay rights, trade unionism, environmentalism, and feminism. Examples of collective behaviour would include riots, fads and crazes, panics, cultic religions, rumours, and mass delusions. Social movements are one of the basic elements of living democracy, and may be catalysts of democracy and change in authoritarian societies. Social movements have specific goals, formal organization, and a degree of continuity. They operate outside the regular political channels of society, but may penetrate quite deeply into political power circles as interest groups. Their goals may be as narrow as legalizing marijuana, or as broad as destroying the hegemony of the capitalist world system; they may be revolutionary or reformist; but they have in common the active organization of a group of citizens to change the status quo in some way.

A social movement is formally defined as “a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist change in society or group of which it is a part” (Turner and Killian). In other words, social movements refer to the collective action by people, in a coordinated manner, driven by certain ideology, which is sustained over a period of time with its orientation (or resistance) towards change. Stated less formally, a social movement is a collective effort to promote or resist change.

An early typology of social movements, developed by **David F. Aberle** classifies social movements along two dimensions: the locus of change sought (society or individuals) and the amount of change sought (partial or total). The four categories derived from this classification are **transformative**, **reformative**, **redemptive**, and **alternative**. These are (respectively) movements which aim at the complete restructuring of society (for example millenarian movements); those which attempt to reform some limited aspects of the existing order (such as nuclear disarmament group); movements which seek to lead members away from a corrupt way of life (as in the case of many religious sectarian groups); and, finally, those which aim to change only particular traits of the individual member (for example drug or alcohol de-addiction). The first two of these are therefore aimed at changing (all or part of) society, the latter pair at changing the behaviour only of individual members.

[Please note that a **Millenarian movement** is a social movement based on the expectation of a sudden transformation of society through the intervention of the supernatural. For example, in New Guinea and surrounding islands, a religious movement developed which was popularly known as ‘cargo cult’, resulting in a great variety of similar cults. Cargo cults are based on the expectation that a great cargo ship (or in later cults, airplane) will be brought by the spirits of deceased ancestors, loaded with modern machines, tools, and other goods for the native population. With the aid of this cargo and the help of the spirits, the Europeans will be killed or driven out, and the native population will have the products and standards of living currently enjoyed by the Europeans. The cargo cults are classified as millenarian movements because they are directed toward a millennium, a day when a sudden supernatural event will occur that will radically change the members’ lives. The cargo cults began to appear in the late nineteenth century, but became more widespread after World War I, particularly in the 1930’s.]

Various other scholars have also tried to understand the nature of social movements through different typologies. One of the criteria for classifying movements is their objectives or the quality of change they try to attain. **Ghanshyam Shah** classifies movements as **reform**, **rebellion**, **revolt**, and **revolution** to bring about changes in the political system. Reform does not challenge the political system per se. It attempts to bring about certain desired changes within the existing socio-political structure in order to make it more efficient, responsive and workable. That is why the state shows a lenient attitude towards such movements. A rebellion is an attack on existing authority without any intention to seize state power. A revolt is a challenge to political authority, aimed at over-throwing the government. In a revolution, a section or sections of society launch an organised struggle to overthrow not only the established government and

regime but also the socio-economic structure which sustains it, and replace the structure by an alternative social order.

Various scholars have proposed different-different theories of social movements. These include both psychological as well as sociological theories. The psychological theories find the roots of social movements in the personalities of the followers. The two important **psychological theories** are discontent theory and personal maladjustment theory.

Discontent theory holds that movements are rooted in discontent. People who are comfortable and contented have little interest in social movements. Discontent can be of many kinds, ranging from the searing anger of those who feel victimized by outrageous injustice to the mild annoyance of those who do not approve of some social change. It is probably true that, without discontent, there would be no social movements. But discontent is an inadequate explanation. There is no convincing evidence of any close association between the level of grievance and discontent in a society and its level of social movement activity. People may endure great discontent without joining a social movement. Many societies have endured great poverty, inequality, brutality, and corruption for centuries without serious social protest. And all modern societies always have enough discontent to fuel many social movements. Thus, discontent may be a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for social movement. [Muller, 1972; Snyder and Tilly, 1972; Turner and Killian, 1972]

Personal maladjustment theory sees the social movement as a refuge from personal failure. Many scholars believe that movements find their supporters among the unhappy, frustrated persons whose lives lack meaning and fulfillment. A widely read book written by a self-educated manual labourer, *The True Believer* [Eric Hoffer, 1951], describes the kinds of people drawn to social movements: the bored, the misfits, the would-be creative who cannot create, the minorities, the guilty sinners, the downwardly mobile, and others who for any reason are seriously dissatisfied with their lives. They add meaning and purpose to their empty lives through movement activity.

It is plausible that people who feel frustrated and unfulfilled should be more attracted to social movements than those who are complacent and contented. Those who find their present lives absorbing and fulfilling are less in need of something to give them feelings of personal worth and accomplishment, for they already have these. Thus, the movement supporters - and especially the early supporters - are seen as mainly the frustrated misfits of society. While plausible, the misfit theory is not well substantiated. It is difficult to measure a person's sense of nonfulfillment.

It is yet another theory which sounds reasonable but which cannot easily be proved or disproved.

The **sociological theories** study the society, rather than the personality of individuals. The three important sociological theories are relative deprivation theory, strain theory, resource mobilization theory and revitalization theory.

The concept of relative deprivation was introduced by **Samuel A. Stouffer et al.** in their classic social psychological study '*The American soldier*', 1949, but was later formalized by **R. K. Merton** in *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1961, and extended to a theory of reference group behaviour. Individuals see themselves as deprived (or privileged, hence 'relative gratification') by comparing their own situation with that of other groups and categories of persons. The extent to which they will see themselves as deprived will vary according to the category or group selected as the basis of comparison. In other words, the concept of relative deprivation holds that one feels deprived according to the gap between expectations and realizations. The person who wants little and has little feels less deprived than the one who has much but expects still more.

Merton's understanding of relative deprivation is closely tied to his treatment of reference group behaviour. Essentially, Merton speaks of relative deprivation while examining the findings of '*The American Soldier*', a work published in 1949. It was found that the privileged members of army were relatively more unhappy and dissatisfied as compared to the relatively unprivileged members who were found to be happier and with high morale. Thus it was discovered in this study that the state of negative emotions and objective conditions are not symmetrically linked. Hence the sense of deprivation is relative, not absolute.

"Comparing himself with his unmarried associates in the army, the married man could feel that induction demanded greater sacrifice from him than from them; and comparing himself with the married civilian friends, he could feel that he had been called on for sacrifices which they were escaping altogether".

It is important to note that happiness or deprivation are not absolutes, they depend on the scale of measure as well as on the frame of reference. For example, his unmarried associates in the army are relatively free. They don't have wives and children, so they are free from the responsibility from which married soldiers cannot escape. In other words, married soldiers are deprived of the kind of freedom that their unmarried associates are enjoying. Likewise, the married soldier feels deprived when he compares himself with his civilian married friend because the

civilian friends can live with his wife and children and fulfil his responsibility. The married soldier therefore, feels deprived that by virtue of being a soldier he cannot afford to enjoy the normal, day to day family life of a civilian. It is precisely because of the kind of reference group with which the married soldier compares his lot that he feels deprived.

Relative deprivation is increasing throughout most of the underdeveloped world. The recently established independent governments of Third World countries have little hope of keeping up with their peoples' expectations. The clouds of mass movements and revolutions seem to be widespread in these countries. According to Brinton, revolutions seem most likely to occur not when people are most miserable but after things have begun to improve, setting off a round of rising expectations.

Relative deprivation theory is plausible but unproved. Feelings of deprivation are easy to infer but difficult to measure, and still more difficult to plot over a period of time. And relative deprivation, even when unmistakably severe, is only one of many factors in social movements.

The 'strain theory' of social movement has been propounded by **Neil J. Smelser**. This theory considers structural strain as the underlying factor contributing to collective behaviour. Structural strains may develop when the equilibrium of society is disturbed due to uneven changes between its various sub-systems. Strain may occur at different levels such as norms, values, mobility, situational facilities, etc. Because of these structural strains some generalised belief that seeks to provide an explanation for the strain, may emerge. Both strain and generalised belief require precipitating factors to trigger off a movement. Smelser's analysis of the genesis of social movements is very much within the structural-functional framework. Smelser considers strain as something that endangers the relationship among the parts of a system leading to its malfunctioning.

The 'resource mobilization theory' stresses techniques rather than causes of movements. It attributes importance to the effective use of resources in promoting social movements, since a successful movement demands effective organization and tactics. Resource mobilization theorists (**Zald** and **McCarthy**) see leadership, organization, and tactics as major determinants of the success or failure of social movements. Resource mobilization theorists concede that without grievances and discontent, there would be few movements but add that mobilization is needed to direct this discontent into an effective mass movement.

The resources to be mobilized include: supporting beliefs and traditions among the population, laws that can provide leverage, organizations and officials that can be helpful, potential benefits to be promoted, target groups whom these

benefits might attract, any other possible aids. These are weighed against personal costs of movement activity, opposition to be anticipated, other difficulties to be overcome, and tactics of operation to be developed.

Resource mobilization theory does not fit expressive or migratory movements, which can succeed without organization or tactics. Evidence for resource mobilization theory is largely descriptive and is challenged by some scholars. It is likely that societal confusion, personal maladjustment, relative deprivation, discontent, and resource mobilization are all involved in social movements, but in undetermined proportions. As usual, we have several theories, each plausible, each supported by some evidence, but none clearly proved. Social movements are of so many kinds, with so many variables involved, that possibly no one theory will ever be conclusively established.

The ‘revitalization theory’ was initially put forward by **A.F.C. Wallace**. Wallace postulated that social movements develop out of a deliberate, organised and conscious effort on the part of members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture for themselves. This explanation of genesis of social movement substantially departs from the above explanations. Both the relative deprivation and the strain theories are based on negative conditions. They argue that movements emerge because people experience deprivation and discrimination. The revitalization approach, however, suggests that social movements offer a positive programme of action to revitalise the system. Thus, according to this theory, social movements not only express dissatisfaction and dissent against the existing condition but also provide alternatives for resurgence of the system.

Herbert Blumer and other scholars have posed a life cycle which many movements follow. The stages include: (1) the *unrest* stage of growing confusion and discontent; (2) the *excitement* stage, when discontent is focused, causes of discontent are identified, and proposals for action are debated; (3) the *formalization* stage, when leaders emerge, programs are developed, alliances are forged, and organizations and tactics are developed; (4) an *institutionalization* stage, as organizations take over from the early leaders, bureaucracy is entrenched, and ideology and program become crystallized, often ending the active life of the movement; (5) the *dissolution* stage, when the movement either becomes an enduring organization (like the YMCA) or fades away, possibly to be revived at some later date.

Short Note

New Social Movements

Postmodern theories of power and politics stress the fragmentation and widening of political debate, and relate it to a decline in the importance of conventional party politics. These themes can all be linked to the emergence and development of what have come to be known as new social movements, which are seen by some sociologists as a key aspect of changes in the nature of politics in contemporary capitalist societies. The main characteristics of new social movements will be outlined first, followed by a discussion of the significance of these movements and their role in new directions that politics might be taking.

Simon Hallsworth – ‘Understanding new social movements’

Simon Hallsworth provides a useful introduction to the main characteristics of new social movements. According to Hallsworth (1994), the term ‘new social movements’ is generally applied to ‘movements such as feminism, environmentalism, the anti-racist, anti-nuclear and civil rights movements that emerged in liberal democratic societies in the 1960s and 1970s’. They are movements which are ‘held to pose new challenges to the established, cultural, economic and political orders of advanced ... capitalist societies’.

The term is not usually applied to movements supporting traditional values (such as the anti-abortion movement), to long-established social movements (such as trade unions), or to conventional political parties.

New social movements and issues

New social movements tend to have an **issue basis**. They are focused on particular social issues. These broadly divide into two types:

1. The first type are concerned with issues to do with ‘the defence of a natural and social environment perceived to be under threat’. In this category are animal rights groups (such as the Animal Liberation Front), anti-nuclear groups (such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) and environmental groups (such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth). They tend to be opposed to ‘a perceived tendency inherent in the logic of the modern industrial order to plunder and annihilate the natural world’. The more radical ones believe their campaigns can show the way towards a quite different sort of society, in which people live in more harmonious ways with animals, the natural environment and each other.

Others have more modest aims, such as encouraging recycling to limit damage to the environment.

2. The second type have a 'commitment to furthering the provision of rights to historically marginalized constituencies in societies such as women, ethnic minority groups and gay people'. Feminist, anti-racist and gay rights groups come into this category, as do groups campaigning for the rights of the disabled.

The novel features of new social movements

New social movements represent a departure from conventional party and pressure-group politics in a number of ways:

1. Such groups have tried to extend the definition of what is considered political to include areas such as individual prejudice, housework and domestic violence.
2. They have generally rejected the development of bureaucratic organisations in favour of more informal structures. Hallsworth says, 'they are usually characterised by low levels of bureaucracy, decision-making premised upon the idea of full participation, the appointment of few (if any) full-time officials, and a blurring of the social distance between officials and other members'. They are not content to delegate to, or be represented by, elites. Instead, they seek a participatory democracy.
3. New social movements tend to be diverse and fragmented, with many organisations and informal groups concerned with the same issues. There is no central leadership to coordinate the activities of the different groups. Feminism provides a good example of this.
4. Unlike political parties, they do not seek power for themselves. Unlike traditional pressure groups (such as unions and employers' organisations), they do not use threats to withdraw resources (such as labour power or capital) to achieve their objectives. Instead, they use a wide range of tactics, from illegal direct action (sometimes including bombs) to civil disobedience. They also use a variety of means, such as publishing books and appearing on TV, to win people over to their causes.
5. New social movements tend to pursue very different values compared to conventional politicians. Generally, economic issues related to improving

people's material living standards are not given much prominence. They are mainly concerned with what Hallsworth and others call 'post-materialist values'. These are more to do with quality of life than with material comfort. They are the product of societies in which it is assumed that people's basic material needs (such as food and shelter) can be easily met.

6. According to Hallsworth, members of new social movements tend to have certain social characteristics which distinguish them from members of more conventional political organisations. Most members tend to be young (particularly between 16 and 30). They also tend to be from neither traditional working-class nor upper-class backgrounds. Instead, they are mainly from a new middle class, 'who tend either to work principally in the public/service sector of the economy (such as teachers, social workers, nurses etc.) or who are born to parents who work in the public sector'. Those who are outside conventional employment, particularly students and the unemployed, are also over-represented in these movements.

Conclusion

Hallsworth concludes that new social movements may be conceived as the heralds of distinctly new forms of politics in Western liberal democratic societies. Considered in this way their uniqueness is apparent in the novelty of the issues they have sought to contest; in the post-material values they have sought to advocate; in their distinctive organisational form and structure; in the form of political activity with which they are associated; as well as by the distinctive profile of their membership. (Hallsworth, 1994)

New Social Forces and New Social Movements

A social force in general can be defined as any entity that has the capability to enforce, bring about, inhibit, direct or extend any change in society. When social lobbies exert pressure, they create a force that leads to social movements. These social movements then bring about change in the social, economic and political environment and, thereby, become a social force themselves. Ghanshyam Shah argues that the term social movement has no precise definition and that it is seen differently by different social activists, political leaders and scholars. However, there have been a few broad definitions of the term.

M.S.A. Rao defined social movement as a ‘sustained collective mobilization through either informal or formal organization and which is generally oriented towards bringing about change’.

Social movement, involves:

- (a) collective mass mobilization
- (b) collective mass support
- (c) formal or informal organization
- (d) a conscious commitment towards its aims and beliefs
- (e) deliberative collective action towards change

In India, we have witnessed various social uprisings even in the pre-Independence era; early tribal movements like the Santhal uprising and Tebhaga movement of the peasants are cases in point. But what made the movements of Dalits, OBCs, women, *adivasis* of the late 1970s and the early 1980s different from the earlier social movement was a change in the kinds of issues and in the language of assertion. One of the major and largely accepted differences is that the **old social movements** (SMs) followed the Marxist paradigm and stressed on raising its voice against class domination, while the **new social movements** (NSMs) were not just about opposing class domination but also the domination of caste, race, gender, ethnicity and community. It, therefore, brought up the issues of human rights, civil rights and issues of identity and specific interests to the forefront and expanded the realm of democracy. While the (old) SMs were class based (subsuming other issues and groups) and mainly aimed at taking over State power, the NSMs took up various issues (social, economic, political) of distinct groups and plural in character (for example, women’s movement, environment movement, etc.) and they did not seek to take over any state or class.

However, not all are in agreement with this view and do not even identify these movements as 'new'. For example, Shah in his criticism of the concept argues that we can find struggles for identity even in the pre-modern society and that the contemporary environmental movement, women's movement and the Dalit movement have an economic context as well. He asserts that even though there has been a change in the nature of classes and class relationship in the present global capitalism, the classes still carry relevance in the perception of people towards the dominant ideology and power.

However, it can be counter-argued that when we talk of Dalits, OBCs, *adivasis* and women forming a 'new social force' leading to the emergence of 'new social movements', we neither deny the fact that there were earlier movements by these groups nor suggest that class character is removed from contemporary movements. But what makes them stand apart from the earlier movements is the fact that the contemporary movements have highlighted the autonomous issues of each of these specific groups apart from the class character that it may entail. For example, take the case of women's movement in India: during the pre-Independence era, they were connected largely through the national movement and would demand independence by supporting the ideas of liberty and equality as a part of the mass movement. After Independence, for example in the Tebhaga movement, which re-emerged in the 1960s, women were an important force, but their voices largely faded away in the peasant's struggle. This was also true in the case of the Naxalite movement in which, again, women were an active participant. But the major difference that one could encounter in the women's movement during the 1970s and more particularly in the mid-1980s is that we see women's voices were raised not for freedom for all or in relation to questions of land or class issues but specifically for women; women as an autonomous group raised issues specific to them. Thus, the women's movement during this period had participants that cut across class character and had women from elite, poor and middle-class sections. The issue that brought them together was not class but gender relations. Again, it does not mean that the class character vanished but rather it was given a new dimension, that is, women as a class was largely an economically dependent class – and that became an issue of protest.

These social movements, therefore, sought to alter the prevailing structures of power, project values of justice, equality and freedom adding new dimensions to them and marked the rise of a new social force in India. In fact, Gail Omvedt suggests that 'Marxism has been called the historical materialism of the proletariat; what is needed today is a historical materialism of not only industrial factory workers but also of peasants, women, tribals, Dalits, and low castes, and oppressed nationalities.'

NSMs have the following characteristics:

- (a) They are SMs as they entail all its characteristics.
- (b) They are a response from the civil society that largely deals with the issues of human dignity and relations of humans with nature.
- (c) NSMs radically alter the Marxist paradigm of explaining conflicts and contradictions in terms of class, thereby leaving groups with issues like gender, ecology, race, ethnicity, etc. Thus, NSMs take up issues beyond class.
- (d) NSMs not only abandon the industrial workers model of union organization, but also the political model of political parties.

Now, within the paradigm of new social movements (NSMs), **Andre Gunder Frank** and **Marta Fuentes** described new social movements as largely 'grassroot' and apolitical whose main objective is social transformation rather than State power. But **Dhanagare** and **John** argue that the fact that the anti-caste movement in India has political power as core thrust and that women's movement having women from all classes and not just grassroot sections negates the very argument of Frank and Fuentes that NSMs are apolitical and grassroot. New social movements, therefore, are not only social but can have varied dimensions like political and economic and that it may not necessarily be grassroot but can include various other sections too.

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Short Note

Kinds of Social Movements

Migratory Movements: Discontented people may wish to move. When many move to the same place at the same time, they create a migratory social movement. Migration of Irish to the United States following the great potato famine, the back-to-Israel movement of the Jews known as Zionism, the flight of the East Germans to West Germany before the Berlin Wall locked them in, the escape of Cuban refugees to the United States, and the American migratory turnaround (from big cities to small towns and country) are examples.

Expressive Movements: When people cannot easily move and cannot easily change things, they may change themselves. In expressive movements, *people change their reactions to reality* instead of trying to change the reality itself. Expressive movements range from the relatively trivial (forms of dance, art, music, dress) to the serious (religious movement, occultism). Expressive movements may help people to accept a reality they despair of changing. “Gallows humor” is common among oppressed peoples. Yet some change may result. The protest songs of the 1960s and early 1970s may have helped to promote some social reforms. In Jamaica, where poverty and inequality are extreme and economic distress has been growing, a music of social protest called reggae has seized the popular imagination. It has created millionaire superstar performers who live the good life while singing impassioned lyrics of anger and injustice. It is not yet clear whether reggae serves to arouse and mobilize popular discontent or to drain off discontent into a politically “harmless” emotional outlet.

Utopian Movements: These are attempts to create a perfect society in miniature. Then this model can be copied and perhaps transform the entire society. There have been dozens of utopian communities in the United States, few of which lasted more than a very few years. Perhaps the most successful Utopian movement in recent history is the Israeli kibbutz.

Reform Movements: These are attempts to improve the society without greatly changing its basic social structure. They are common in democratic societies and rare in societies where dissent is not tolerated. U.S. history shows dozens of reform movements – abolitionists, prohibitionists, feminists, environmentalists, gay liberationists, and many others. Hundreds more would-be reform movements never get past the one-person-with-mailing-list stage.

Resistance Movements: The Ku Klux Klan appeared in the South to keep the blacks “in their place” after the Civil War. It has reappeared at intervals in various parts of the country as a **nativist movement** to protect the “real Americans” against blacks, Catholics, foreigners, atheists, and liberals. The many social and cultural changes of recent decades have been profoundly disturbing to many Americans who feel that our national virtues are being eroded by sexual permissiveness, secularism, feminism, pacifism, and welfare statism. A great many contemporary resistance movements express their dismay at the directions in which our nation has been moving. These include the prolife movement to restrict legal abortion, the antipornography movement, the effort to legalize school prayers, the “creationist” movement to require teaching of the biblical account of creation in schools wherever the evolutionist account is presented, and the antifeminist movement, among others. The Moral Majority is a group attempting to mobilize fundamentalist Christians in organized opposition to many national developments and in support of balanced budgets and a more powerful and aggressive national defense. Its success, as this is written, remains to be determined. [**Nativistic Movement:** An organized attempt by members of a society to eliminate foreign elements from their culture, and very often to remove foreign persons from their society. For example, Boxer Movement in China around 1900.]

Revolutionary Movements: A social revolution is a sudden, sweeping, and usually violent change in a social system. (The “palace revolt” in which the faces change, with no change in the class system or the distribution of power and income among the groups in the society, is not included as a social revolution.) Revolutionists generally oppose reformers because they believe that significant reform is impossible under the existing social system. They see basic change as possible only after the existing system is overthrown and the elite classes are deposed, often through execution or exile. In most revolutions, several factions unite to overthrow the existing regime, after which there may be a bloody struggle for power among these factions. The course of revolution is illustrated in the recent Iranian revolution: (1) growing discontent and erosion of support for the old regime (Iranians at home and abroad demonstrating against the Shah); (2) increasing disorder, riots, and bombings, with growing inability of the government to maintain order despite harsh repression; (3) overthrow of the government (flight of the Shah) as armed forces join the revolution; (4) temporary rule of moderates (Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh), soon overthrown as revolutionists contend for power among themselves; (5) rule of extremists (Khomeini government of Moslem fundamentalists); (6) reign of terror, with harsh repression of those revolutionists who lost out in bid for power (numerous executions, including Ghotbzadeh); (7) invasion from abroad (either to end revolution, as in American, French, and Russian revolutions, or just to settle old scores, as in Iraq’s

attack on Iran); (8) revolutionary armies fight well and repel invaders; (9) eventual return to stability, perhaps with partial restoration of pre-revolutionary order (which does not always happen). Most successful revolutions follow this pattern more or less closely.

Short Note

Revolution: Revolution may be described as any large-scale change in the basic socio-economic and political structure of a society. However, such changes may either be sudden (French Revolution) or occur over a relatively long period of time (agricultural revolution, commercial revolution, industrial revolution, etc.)

The term revolution, in its earliest usage, meant cyclical change (from the verb ‘to revolve’), as in the restoration of ‘proper’ political order in the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England. The French Revolution (1789), however, established the modern concept of revolution as a process of dramatic and far-reaching change, involving the destruction and replacement of old order. Revolutions, nevertheless, may have a political, social or cultural character. *Political revolutions* are popular uprisings involving extra-legal mass actions; they are often, although not necessarily, violent in character. This distinguishes a revolution from a coup d’etat, a seizure of power by a small band. Revolutions differ from rebellions and revolts in that they bring about fundamental change, a change in the political system itself, as opposed to merely the displacement of a governing elite or a change of policy.

Social revolutions are changes in the system of ownership or the economic system; in Marxist theory they are changes in the ‘mode of production’, as when capitalism replaced feudalism and when communism replaces capitalism. For Marxists, social revolutions are more fundamental than political ones, the latter being the political manifestation of a deeper and more long-term transformation of the class system. *Cultural revolutions* involve the rooting out of values, doctrines and beliefs that supported the old order, and the establishment in their place of a set of new ones. All revolutions have a crucial cultural dimension, reflecting the fact that any stable system of rule must, to some extent, be culturally and ideologically embedded. Many political revolutions are consolidated through a conscious process of re-education to establish a new set of system-sustaining values and aspirations.

The modern world has been formed through a series of crucial revolutions. These commenced with the English Revolution of the 1640s and 1650s, which overthrew monarchical absolutism and established early principles of

constitutionalism and parliamentary government. The American Revolution (1776) led to the creation of a constitutional republic independent from Britain, and gave practical expression to the principle of representation. The French Revolution set out to destroy the old order under the banner of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’, advanced democratic ideals and sparked an ‘age of revolution’ in early nineteenth-century Europe. The Russian Revolution (1917), the first ‘communist’ revolution, provided a model for many of the subsequent twentieth-century revolutions, including the Chinese Revolution (1949), the Cuban Revolution (1959), the Vietnamese Revolution (1972) and the Nicaraguan Revolution (1979).

Debate about revolutions centres upon their causes and their consequences. Amongst the general theories of revolutions are the following. The **Marxist theory** of revolution holds that they are essentially social phenomena that arise out of contradictions which exist in all class societies. **Systems theorists** argue that revolution results from ‘disequilibrium’ in the political system, brought about by economic, social, cultural or international changes to which the system itself is incapable of responding – the ‘outputs’ of government become structurally out of line with the ‘inputs’. The idea of a ‘revolution of rising expectations’ suggests that revolutions occur when a period of economic and social development is abruptly reversed, creating a widening gap between popular expectations and the capabilities of government. The social-structural explanation implies that regimes usually succumb to revolution when, through international weakness and/or domestic ineffectiveness, they lose the ability, or the political will, to maintain control through the exercise of coercive power.

The consequences of revolution also cause deep disagreement. Revolutionaries themselves argue that revolution is by its nature a popular phenomenon, the unleashing of naked democratic pressure. They also tend to portray revolution as a purifying and ennobling struggle, a rooting-out of corruption, injustice and oppression; for this reason revolutionary movements usually subscribed to some form of utopianism. Critics of revolution, however, point out that revolutions in practice invariably fail to live up to the high ideals of their perpetrators. This occurs for a variety of reasons. These include that, despite the image of popular revolt, revolutions are invariably brought about by small cliques which are typically unwilling to relinquish their newly won power; that any regime that is established through the use of force and violence is compelled to continue using them and is thus forced down the road of authoritarianism; and that revolutions dismantle or crucially weaken institutions and governmental structures, leaving revolutionary leaders with potentially unchecked power.

Short Note

Rebellion, Revolution: Relatively rare but historically important events in which an entire social and political order is overturned, usually by violent means, and reconstructed on new principles with new leaders. The revolution has come to be applied loosely to any dramatic social change – as in ‘industrial revolution’, ‘computer revolution’, and so forth. But its central meaning is still political. It is difficult to make a sharp distinction between a political revolution and rebellion, although some have argued that the term ‘revolution’ should be reserved for those instances in which the new governing elite attempts to make fundamental changes in the social structure of the post-revolutionary society, whereas rebellions are more limited political upheavals involving only the replacement of one ruling group by another. On this criterion, rebellions clearly shade into revolutions, depending upon one’s judgement as to the scope and intensity of the social changes that follow the seizure of power.

The prototypes of all modern revolutions were the American and French Revolutions of 1776 and 1789. Both had a clear political agenda, and both resulted in a complete transformation of power relationships. In this century, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1948 had similar dramatic results. Not all revolutions in recent history have been socialistic or egalitarian, or even modernizing; many have been anti-democratic or right-wing. Fundamentalist Islam has swept through the Middle East, most notably in the revolutionary downfall of the Shah of Iran in 1979. The 1990s have witnessed a ‘reverse revolution’ in many former communist states.

Probably the most influential theory of revolution in sociology has been the historical materialism of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. However, it should be recognized that Marxism has come to embody several (by no means compatible) theories of revolution, including for example the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat advanced by Lenin and of peasant revolution proffered within Maoism. Many subsequent sociological studies of revolutionary change are explicit critiques of the Marxist view of history in general and of revolutions in particular.

Most studies of rebellions and revolutions have necessarily been historical, and have focused on causes and processes. Theories that stress social disequilibrium, rising expectations, and relative deprivation are plausible, but have not proved highly explanatory or predictive. In more recent work, **Theda Skocpol** has formulated a theory of revolution which stresses the inability of institutions to cope with normal crises (**States and Social Revolutions**, 1979), and Charles and Louis Tilly have proposed a historical model in which rebellions arise opportunistically out of a shifting balance of power and resources (**The Rebellious**

Century 1830-1930, 1975). Skocpol's theory was particularly controversial. She proposes a macro-level, structural analysis, which makes a sharp distinction between political revolutions (leadership changes) and social revolutions (which transform the whole of society). Arguing against monocausal explanations of social revolutions (for example rising expectations, class conflicts) she proposes a complex, fluid model which emphasizes the differences between states, the role of external factors such as international economic competition, and the availability of grievance channels for different social classes.

Revolutionary change in a society is never complete, and the outcomes are highly variable. Elements of the old order live on, as they did in France after 1789 and Russia after 1917, confounding the idealistic intentions which launched the revolution.

Short Note

Protest

Collective acts of disruption and violence are sometimes viewed as expressions of social protests, and sometimes as crime or rebellion, leading to different community reactions. The verdicts of several politically sensitive commissions in the 1960s and 70s marked a dramatic turning point in American reactions to racial disorder. These verdicts identified mass violence by Blacks primarily as acts of social protest and stated that such disorders must be understood as acts of social protest, and not merely as crime, anti-social violence, or revolutionary threats to law and order.

Ralph H. Turner, in his paper, *The Public Perception of Protest* attempts to investigate several theoretical vantage points from which to predict when a public will and will not view a major disturbance as an act of social protest.

Protest has been defined as “an expression or declaration of objection, disapproval, or dissent, often in opposition to something a person is powerless to prevent or avoid.”

An act of protest includes the following elements: the action expresses a grievance, a conviction of wrong or injustice; the protestors are unable to correct the condition directly by their own efforts; the action is intended to draw attention to the grievances; the action is further meant to provoke ameliorative steps by some target group; and the protestors depend upon some combination of sympathy and fear to move the target group in their behalf. Protest ranges from relatively persuasive to relatively coercive combinations, but always includes both. Many forms of protest may involve no violence or disruption at all.

The term protest is sometimes applied to trivial and chronic challenges that are more indicative of a reaction style than of deep grievance. For instance, we speak of a child who protests every command from parent or teacher in the hope of gaining occasional small concessions. It is in this sense that the protestations by some groups in society are popularly discounted because “they just protest everything.” But the subject of this analysis is **social protest**, by which we mean protest that is serious in the feeling of grievance that moves it and in the intent to provoke ameliorative action.

When violence and disorder are identified as social protest, they constitute a mode of communication more than a form of direct action. Looting is not primarily a means of acquiring property, as it is normally viewed in disaster situations;

breaking store windows and burning buildings is not merely a perverted form of amusement or immoral vengeance like the usual vandalism and arson; threats of violence and injury to persons are not simply criminal actions. All are expressions of outrage against injustice of sufficient magnitude and duration to render the resort to such exceptional means of communication understandable to the observer.

According to Marvin Olsen, the principal indicators of a protest definition are concerned with identifying the grievances as the most adequate way of accounting for the disturbance and the belief that the main treatment indicated is to ameliorate the unjust conditions.

Interlinking Concepts: Social Exclusion, Relative Deprivation, Disharmonic System of Stratification, Social Movements, Theories of Social Change, etc.

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Short Note

Agitation

J.W. Bowers and **D.J. Ochs** in their book *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (1971) argue that

“agitation exists when:

1. people outside the normal decision-making establishment
2. advocate significant (structural) social change and
3. encounter a degree of resistance within the establishment such as to require more than the normal discursive means of persuasion.”

Agitation-Control Model:

The rhetoric of agitation can be viewed as a continuum of behaviours which range from persuasive speaking (normal argumentation) to outright revolution (instrumental action). According to Bowers and Ochs, agitation movements typically progress step by step through the continuum from the persuasive toward the confrontational. Their model is based on and describes protest movements including the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and Vietnam War Protest Movements.

Control, on the other hand, refers to the response of the decision-making establishment to the agitation.

Under this definition, those within the establishment cannot be agitators. For example, if a mother takes a vote from her kids on what they want for dinner and the daughter protests the choice, she is not considered an agitator because she participated in the decision-making process. Another key point of the definition is that agitation only occurs when steps are taken beyond “normal” persuasive rhetoric. For instance, distributing pamphlets that urge student to vote against an increase in fees is considered within ordinary persuasive means. However, if the students have a sit-in (dharna) or take out a march to oppose unfavorable measures taken by the administration, they are participating in a form of agitation.

Steps in the rhetoric of agitation:

1. **Petition:** Although they are not technically considered agitation, normal persuasive measures often precede agitation. This stage is referred to by Bowers and Ochs as petition. This stage is crucial to an agitation movement

because it establishes credibility and gives the establishment an early opportunity to comply with their demands. This strategy includes normal discursive means of persuasion (speeches presenting “the case”, reasoned discussion, petitioning, etc.).

2. **Promulgation:** Once step 1 has met with suppression or avoidance, step 2 is likely to occur. It involves tactics used to win social support for the movement and expand the base (informational picketing, handbills, protest meeting, exploitation of the media, etc.).
3. **Solidification:** The strategy of solidification occurs primarily within the agitation group. Its purpose is to unite the group and increase motivation. Solidification tactics produce or reinforce cohesiveness of members, thereby increasing responsiveness.
4. **Polarization:** If the movement is still being resisted substantially after solidification, tactics which polarize (that is, force people to clearly chose sides- “us or them”) the relevant publics usually are adopted. Tactics include flag issues, derogatory jargon, non-violent resistance.
5. **Non-violent resistance:** The strategy of non-violent resistance is often referred to by the names of famous agitators who were known for this strategy – Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi. Non-violent resistance places agitators in a position in which they are violating laws or customs they consider to be unjust or destructive of human dignity. This includes sit-ins and school boycotts. The agitators participate in activities that would be legal or accepted if the establishment conceded. An example of this is when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. She was non-violently protesting laws and customs that the civil rights movement wanted to see changed. When the protested laws are perceived to be very unjust, this stage often turns violent when the establishment continues to resist. The theory behind non-violent protest, according to Martin Luther King, Jr. is that all of the resister’s energy is directed to the policy he is violating, and not in the destruction of the perpetrators. A second aspect is

that the resistance does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, rather to win its friendship and understanding.

6. **Escalation:** Another strategy used is called escalation/confrontation and it is designed to make the establishment overreact to threats of disruption, and then looks foolish to the public. The agitators then hope this will lead to reforms instituted by the larger society witnessing the disproportionate action taken by the establishment.
7. **Revolution:** This strategy is not rhetorical.

Control responses from the establishment:

Typical responses to agitation from the establishment include (in roughly this order):

- **Avoidance** (counter-persuasion, evasion, secret rationale, denial of means);
- **Suppression** (leader harassment, denial of demands, banishment, murder);
- **Adjustment** (name change, sacrificial lambs, accepting means, co-opting);
- **Capitulation** (not a control response but surrender)

Bowers and Ochs came up with four rhetorical strategies for control – avoidance, suppression, adjustment and capitulation.

One of the most widely used avoidance tactics is counter-persuasion. This occurs when the establishment tries to convince the agitators that they are wrong. If they are successful, the threat is minimized. If they are unsuccessful, the establishment has still gained time without changing their ideology or structure.

The second strategy is **suppression**, which institutions usually do not resort to until all avoidance tactics have failed. This tactic focuses on weakening or removing the agitators' spokespersons. This is often done by harassment, denial of the agitators' demands, or banishment. Banishment can terminate a movement by removing its leaders and spokespersons.

A third control strategy is **adjustment**. Establishments may do this by adapting, modifying, or altering their structures, goals or personnel. One tactic is to accept some of the means of agitation. In essence this tactic serves to take away the attention received when the establishment instead reacts to the agitation. A movement may likely gain momentum if the establishment reacts to its agitation strategies by calling attention to its ideology.

The last strategy in the rhetoric of control is **capitulation**. This can be seen as the last resort of an establishment and has been known to be used when total destruction by the agitators is imminent.

In conclusion, the rhetoric of agitation and control as proposed by Bowers and Ochs analyzes the process of social change, specifically the messages generated by the participants in social change movements, the agitators and the targeted establishment. Many different strategies and tactics may be used on either side, which has proven to make each instance of social change unique. Bowers and Ochs identified agitation strategies to include the categories of petition, promulgation, solidification, non-violent resistance, and escalation/confrontation. The control strategies they identified fall into the categories of avoidance, suppression, adjustment, and capitulation.

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Short Note

Collective Action

Collective action refers to the action taken by a group (either directly or on its behalf through an organization) in pursuit of members' perceived shared interests. It seems logical to expect that people who have an interest in common will act on it – for example that pensioners will act for higher pensions or miners for greater underground safety. Similarly, auto-rickshaw or taxi drivers for increase in fare, and ad-hoc teachers for regularization of their services, etc.

However, experience shows that this is not always the case and that many people who stand to benefit from a given collective action will refuse to join in. This seems to run against the assumption of rationality in human behaviour, and presents a particular problem for students of politics and social movements.

In this book, *The Logic of Collective Action*, **Mancur Olson**, offered an explanation. Olson argued that rational self-interest often leads to inaction, in so far as individuals will benefit from concessions made to the whole group, whether they themselves have been active or not. For example, if pensions are raised after a campaign by senior citizens, all pensioners will gain, including those who did nothing. Olson called this the **free-rider problem**, and it is important because it undermines the ability of interest group and social movements to mobilize large numbers of citizens. If those citizens are poor, the costs of participation are relatively higher for them, and they are even more likely to remain passive. The only answer to the free rider problem is for the movement to offer extra incentives to participate, beyond the goals themselves. These incentives may take the form of recognition, prestige, or the psychological rewards of participation itself.

The term “collection action” is hopeless broad. Taken at face value, it could plausibly refer to all forms of human social action involving two or more people. However, in sociological terms, the term is used in a restricted sense. According to **Doug McAdam**, “collective action refers to emergent and minimally coordinated action by two or more people that is motivated by a desire to change some aspect of social life or to resist changes proposed by others.” By “emergent” is meant innovative lines of action that depart from taken-for-granted normative routines. “Coordinated” simply means that the various parties to the emerging conflict are attuned to one another and acting in awareness of this fact. Finally, the emphasis on change or resistance to change is designed to capture the adversarial or potentially conflictual nature of “collective action.”

All sociologists talk about collective behaviour but few attempt to define it. When they do, the definitions are not very useful. The study of collective behaviour includes the study of crowds, protests, agitations, social movements and revolutions, etc. There are a number of theoretical formulations of collective behaviour, none of them entirely adequate.

Turner and **Killian** note that there are at least three different theoretical approaches. The earliest were the **contagion theories** [**LeBon**, 1896], which described crowd behaviour as an irrational and uncritical response to the psychological temptation of the crowd situation. Social contagion is defined by **Blumer** as “the relatively rapid, unwitting, non rational dissemination of a mood, impulse, or form of conduct.” Contagion theory thus emphasizes, and perhaps over emphasizes, the non rational aspects of collective behaviour. This theory reflects the elitist view of common people as childish, impulsive, and irresponsible.

Later came the **convergence theories**, which focus upon the shared cultural and personality characteristics of the members of a collectivity and note how these similarities encourage a collective response to a situation [**Freud**, 1922; **Allport**, 1924; **Miller and Dollard**, 1941]. The convergence theories view collective as more than foolish impulse and admit that collective behaviour can be rational and goal-directed.

Finally, the **emergent norm theories** claim that in a behaviour situation which invites collective behaviour, a norm arises which governs the behaviour. It seems that, starting with the perceptions and grievances of the members, and fed by the contagion process, a norm eventually emerges which justifies and sets limits to the crowd behaviour. Crowds are never entirely like-minded and contagion theory does not explain why the crowd takes one action rather than another. Emergent norm theorists charge that contagion theory exaggerates the irrational and purposeless components of crowd behaviour.

An integrated synthesis of these theories is attempted by **Smelser**; however, it comes out as mainly an emergent norm theory. His determinants of collective behaviour are:

1. **Structural conduciveness:** The structure of the society may encourage or discourage collective behaviour. Simple, traditional societies are less prone to collective behaviour than are modern societies.
2. **Structural strain:** Deprivation and fears of deprivation lie at the base of much collective behaviour. Feelings of injustice prompt many to extreme

action. Impoverished class, oppressed minorities, groups whose hard-won gain are threatened, even privileged groups who fear the loss of their privileges - all these are candidates for collective behaviour.

3. ***Growth and spread of a generalized belief*** : Before any collective action, there must be a belief among the actors which identifies the source of the threat, the route of escape, or the avenue of fulfillment.
4. ***Precipitating factors***: Some dramatic event or rumor sets the stage for action. A cry of “police brutality” in a racially tense neighborhood may touch off a riot. One person starting to run may precipitate a panic.
5. ***Mobilization for action***: Leadership emerges and begins or proposes action and directs activity.
6. ***Operation of social control***: At any of the above points, the cycle can be interrupted by leadership, police power, propaganda, legislative and government policy changes, and other social controls.

Smelser’s formulation has stimulated a good deal of criticism, and experimentation, yet it remains perhaps the most widely used theoretical approach in the study of collective behaviour today.

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Short Note

Peasants' and Farmers' Movements

British rule had far-reaching impact on rural India. Under the new administrative measures, the old agrarian system collapsed, new land tenures were created, new social classes emerged and the peasantry came under the iron grip of zamindars, moneylenders, tax collectors and parasitical intermediaries. Within a few decades of the British rule, the Indian peasantry came to be oppressed and exploited not only by the foreign rulers and their agents, but also by the native exploiters and urban based capitalists. The protests, revolts and movements launched by the exploited and oppressed peasants were mainly directed against enhancement of rent, evictions, usurious practices of money-lenders and exploitation and oppression of the plantation owners. These were mainly anti-landlord, anti-money-lender and anti-foreign. They did not gain class consciousness and did not become class movements, because they grew out of local grievances, remained localised and had not regular organisation and leadership.

The Champaran and Kheda satyagrahas under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in 1918 opened up possibilities of organising the peasants, and under the aegis of the Indian National Congress, Kisan Sabhas were organised in the 1920s. But the Kisan Sabhas sought relief only against excessive land revenue demand and did hardly anything to rescue the peasantry from the clutches of the zamindars, landlords and money-lenders. Nevertheless, though the peasantry was disorganised and leaderless, there were numerous peasant uprisings during the British rule in India, exhibiting the courage and determination of the illiterate and poor Indian peasants to rise and fight against their exploitation and oppression. Peasant participation in the Revolt of 1857 too indicates their anti-foreign leanings.

During British rule over three-fourths of the population of India was involved in agricultural pursuits or related activities. The nature and content of this occupation underwent far-reaching changes under colonialism which, beginning with the Diwani of Bengal in 1765, radically transformed the agrarian system and impoverished the peasantry. With it came new land revenue and colonial administrative and judicial systems. These effective changes created new social classes, running the handicrafts sector and leading to stagnation. The structural changes brought about by colonialism resulted in severe famines during the second half of the 18th century, leading to great misery among the peasantry. Periodically occurring economic depression also led to great hardship among them. It was against this background that numerous movements were launched against enhancement of rent, forcible cultivation of a particular crop such as indigo,

forcible evictions, usurious practices of money-lenders and exploitation and oppression of plantation owners.

Under colonial India, essentially three types of agrarian zones were created. These were: (a) zamindari areas of Bengal and Taluqdari areas of UP, where the tenants were left without any legal protection at the mercy of the zamindars who, apart from appropriating a large rent, also compelled them to pay illegal dues or *nazrana* and perform *begar* or forced labour: (b) ryotwari areas in the Madras Presidency, where the government itself acted as the landlord, extracting a very high revenue, forcing the peasants into debt and ultimately reducing them to tenants-at-will, share-croppers and landless labourers; and (c) tribal zones.

An earlier generation of scholars held that peasant rebellions in India were infrequent, mostly ineffective, disorganised, localised and spontaneous or pre-political in nature. They attributed this weakness of the peasant movements to the “degraded character” of the peasantry and its peculiar social structure of caste. Recent scholarship has challenged this characterisation. It is pointed out that peasant revolts took place during the past two centuries in every state of present-day India. There is empirical evidence of over 75 of them. Nor were they spontaneous, or lacking in organisation or leadership. They, however, did tend to have limitation of class consciousness or a broader social understanding till at least some of them merged with national movement. The character of the peasant movements differed from region to region and from time to time. They sometimes assumed semi-political or communal complexion, such as the Moplah rebellion, under the developing political situation.

Some of the important peasant uprisings and movements during the 19th century were Indigo riots, Deccan riots, Ramosis revolt, Pabna uprising, Pagal Panthis uprising, Santhal insurrection and Moplah rebellion. Some of the important peasant movements during the national freedom struggle were Champaran Indigo Satyagraha, Kheda peasant struggle, Kisan and Eka movements, Bardoli Satyagraha, etc. Of the peasant movements that took place after independence Telangana movement and Naxalbari movement are worth mentioning.

Handout: Ch-2 Peasant Movements

Book: *Social Movements in India* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: Ch-7 Farmer’s Movements in Contemporary India (Dipankar Gupta)

Book: *Social Movements and the State* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: Ch-6 Naxalbari and the Left Movement (Sumanta Banerjee)

Book: *Social Movements and the State* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: IGNOU (MPSE007): Agrarian Movements

Peasant Movement

In India more than 70% of the population still depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Those who depend on agriculture are differentiated in terms of their relationship with the ownership of land such as absentee landlords, supervisory agriculturists, owner-cultivators, sharecroppers, tenants and landless labourers. The term 'peasant' is ambiguous and used differently by different authors. On one hand, it is used for those agriculturists who are homogenous, with small land holdings operated mainly by family labour. This is a narrow view of the term 'peasant' as it excludes big landlords and rich peasants. On the other hand, it is used to include all those who depend on land including landless labourers, as well as supervisory agriculturists. This is a broader view of the term 'peasant'.

According to Eric Wolf (1970), peasants may be referred to as populations that are existentially involved in cultivation and make autonomous decisions regarding the process of cultivation. (The category is thus made to cover tenants and sharecroppers as well as owner-operators as long as they are in a position to make the relevant decisions on how their crops are grown. It does not, however, include 'fishermen or landless labourers').

Debate 1: Some scholars are of the view that peasant movements are only a modern phenomenon. They argue that in the pre-independence period there were no peasant movements.

According to Barrington Moore Jr., the Indian peasant is traditionally docile and passive. Traditional Indian society was organized through the caste system. In the caste system, an individual's duty to the caste system was emphasized, not his rights within the society. The lower castes were taught to accept their place in the social order so as to obtain a better position in the next life through religious ceremonies and rituals. Similarly, Eric Stokes also finds that peasant rebellions look strangely absent in Indian history. He too attributes this to the peculiar Indian social structure i.e. caste system and village structure.

This view regarding the passive and docile character of Indian peasants however has been challenged by Kathleen Gough, A.R. Desai, D.N. Dhanagare, Ranajit Guha and others.

Kathleen Gough argues that peasant revolts have been common during the last two centuries in every state of present-day India. According to Gough, in the last two centuries, there have been not less than 77 revolts largely on account of agrarian grievances. About 30 such revolts were mass mobilizations, about 12 were

major mass mobilizations spread across a vast geographical area. Included in these revolts is the Indian mutiny of 1857 in which vast bodies of peasant fought or otherwise worked to destroy British rule over an area of more than 5 lakh square miles.

Debate 2: Nature of Peasant Struggle

Different scholars use different classificatory systems, depending upon the period involved and issues. However, there was no unified agrarian structure throughout the country, either under the princely states or British territory during the colonial period. Similarly, though a centralized political authority and capitalist mode of production have become driving forces in post-independence India, the agrarian structure has not yet evolved a unified pattern throughout the country. Gujarat, Maharashtra and Punjab have developed more intensive and widespread capitalist agriculture than Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. The classification also varies according to one's theoretical framework.

A.R. Desai classifies colonial India into three major divisions (A) Ryotwari areas under British territory, (B) Zamindari areas under princely authority, and (C) Tribal zones.

Desai classifies peasant struggles into two broad categories:

- i. Peasant struggles (for struggles during the colonial period or pre-independence)
- ii. Agrarian struggles (for struggles in post-independence era; The phase 'agrarian struggles' is meant to convey that they involve not only peasants but others as well.)

Desai further classifies the post-independence agrarian struggles into two categories. First, the movements launched by the newly emerged proprietary classes comprised of rich farmers, sections of the middle peasant proprietary and the streamlined landlords. Second, the movements launched by the various section of the agrarian poor in which the agrarian proletariat have been acquiring central importance.

Kathleen Gough (1974), for example, classifies peasant revolts on the basis of their goals, ideology and methods of organization. According to Gough, there were five types of peasant revolts:

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- i. **Restorative Rebellions:** to drive out the British and restore earlier rulers and social religions e.g. 1857 mutiny.
- ii. **Religious Movements:** for the liberation of a region or an ethnic group under a new form of government.

Case Study 1: Moplah rebellion of 19th and early 1920s in Malabar

D.N. Dhanagare argues that the uprisings were mainly related to agrarian conflicts between tenants and landlords, though the former happened to be Muslims and latter Hindus.

Case Study 2: Wahabi movement and Faraizi uprising of 1930s in Bengal

Narahari Kaviraj argues though there were religious overtones to these uprising but from the beginning to end it was predominately agrarian in character.

- iii. **Social Banditry** (e.g. Phoolan Devi, Paan Singh Tomar, etc.)
- iv. **Terrorist Vengeance:** with the idea of meting out collective justice (e.g. Khalistan movement in Punjab (peasant related issues)).
- v. **Mass Insurrection:** for the redressal of particular grievances (e.g. Tibagha and Naxalbari Movement)

Gail Omvedt also classifies the struggles into old and new. Omvedt referred to old struggles as peasant movements and new struggles as farmer movements. Peasant movements were largely led by marginal peasants and landless labourers who constituted approximately 80% of the rural population. Their main demands include demand for land rights, increase of share in sharecropping arrangements, protection against arbitrary eviction of tenants and rack-renting (arbitrary increase of rent), increase in minimum wages, etc. These protests were largely oriented against the economically dominant class.

However, since mid-1980s, some scholars have begun to use the category 'farmer' instead of 'peasant'. Farmers are distinguished by their market involvement as community producers and also as purchasers of inputs. Why farmer? Because the agrarian structure (relations of productions) has undergone a change from feudal and semi-feudal structure (subsistence type) to capitalistic one (surplus type).

How has this capitalistic transformation taken place? Firstly, because of the colonial policies of the British which transformed land into private property, introduced contractual relations in agrarian structure and encouraged cash crops (e.g. cotton, tea, etc. which was needed as raw material for industries in England). Secondly, as a result of government policies during post-independence period such as abolition of Zamindari system, introduction of land reforms and green revolution etc. which led to the capitalistic transformation of Indian agriculture. This led to the increasing importance of scientific farming, cultivation of cash crops, and production for market for maximization of profit. The cumulative effect of these developments was the emergence of a new agrarian class ‘farmers’ and their movements were called as farmers’ movements.

The demands of ‘farmers’ are qualitatively different from those of peasants. This new agrarian class was better organized in the form of trade unions and was also politically influential. Their main demands include:

- a) demands for increases in Minimum Support Price (MSP)
- b) checks and balances in the provisions of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) or WTO negotiations by the government
- c) demand for subsidies in power, water, fuel, etc.
- d) their protests were mainly oriented against the government

(Please note that the term ‘agrarian movement’ is a broader term which includes both peasants as well as farmers.)

Since the green revolution accompanied with capitalist agriculture, penetration of market economy and globalization, the peasant struggle has undergone change. Farmers’ organizations such as the Shetkari Sangathana in Maharashtra, Bhartiya Kisan Union in Uttar Pradesh, Khedut Samaj in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Punjab have come into existence with political clout. They demand remunerative prices of their produce, concessions and subsidies in the prices of agricultural inputs, electricity charges, irrigation charges etc. They have raised the slogan “Bharat against India”. Bharat is the indigenous name for India representing the peasant community, and India is the westernised name, representing urban centres with industrial production. They assert for a change in the development paradigm from industrial development to agricultural development.

Rudolph and Rudolph have divided the rural population into four agrarian economic classes:

- i. Agricultural labourers
- ii. Small landholders
- iii. Bullock capitalists
- iv. Large landholders

Unlike Marxists, they do not assume that necessary antagonisms or a principle contradiction exist among these classes. They use the term ‘Bullock Capitalists’ for those who are self-employed and have land holdings large enough to support a pair of bullocks and make use of inputs associated with the green revolution during the 1960s and 1970s.

Daniel Thorner (1956) divides the peasants of post-independence India into three classes on the basis of ‘kinds of rights and kinds of services’ they receive or offer. The classes are:

- i. Malik
- ii. Kisan
- iii. Mazdoor

The *Maliks* derive their income primarily from property rights in the land and their common interest is to keep the level of rents up while keeping the wage level down. They collect rents from tenants, sub-tenants and sharecroppers. The *Maliks* are subdivided into (a) big landlords who are absentee owners or rentiers with absolutely no interest in land management; (b) rich landowners who supervise cultivation and take a personal interest in the management of land. The *Kisans* are working peasants who have a property interest in the land but actual rights, whether legal or customary, are inferior to those of *Maliks*. They are divided into (a) small landowners having holdings sufficient to support a family, who cultivate land with family labour and do not either employ outside labour (except to harvest) or receive rent; (b) substantial tenants, the size of whose holding is usually above the sufficiency level. The *Majdoors* earn their livelihood primarily from working on others’ land. They include poor tenants, sharecroppers and landless labourers.

Contemporary issues:

Agrarian protest and problems are largely emerging out of the imbalanced and unsustainable mode of economic development.

Rural industrialization has not taken place (e.g. slow growth of agriculture-based industries). This has led to decline in profitability in agriculture, rural indebtedness and farmer suicides.

Infrastructure related issues: For example, neglect of agriculture - poor irrigation facilities - largely dependent on monsoon - inadequate credit facilities.

Short Note

Backward Caste / Backward Classes Movements

M.S.A. Rao classified backward-caste movement in India into four types on the basis of structural cleavages and manifest conflicts. The first type is that of the movement led by upper non-Brahmin castes such as the Vellalas, the Reddis and the Kammas of old Madras Presidency, the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats of Mysore, and the Marathas, of Maharashtra. **Ramaswamy Naikar** of Tamil Nadu launched the '**Self-Respect Movement**' in Madras in the late 1920s to perform marriage ceremonies without Brahmin priests. The non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu raised cultural issues. The leaders of non-Brahmin movement attacked caste and condemned it as a tool of Brahmin oppression. These are known as non-Brahmin movements against the Brahmins. Such movements are not found in north India because 'the Brahmins were generally backward with regard to modern education and government employment'. The second type of backward class movements hinge on the cleavages within the non-Brahmin castes, mainly led by intermediate and low castes such as the Ahirs and the Kurmis in Bihar, the Noniyas in Punjab, the Kolis in Gujarat, and the Malis in Maharashtra. The movements by the depressed classes or untouchables against upper and other backward castes, are the third type of backward caste movements. The fourth type is that of the tribal movement.

Jotirao Phule was the ideologue of the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. Phule rejected the Hindu scriptures and the caste system. According to Phule's ideas, education and organisation were the means to create unity and a sense of identity among the non-Brahmin castes by returning to pre-Brahmin religious traditions. Through this the Brahminical ideological chains could be broken and a caste-free and just society be created. Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873 which initiated the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. Shahu Chhatrapati, the Maharaja of Kolhapur, was an important leader of the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. Ramaswami Naikar founded the Dravidian movement to fight Aryan 'domination' which to him was synonymous with Brahmin domination and Brahminism.

The nature of the backward-caste movements appears to be, from available literature, different than that of the dalits and the tribals. There is also a qualitative difference in the backward-caste movements in north India and south India. The movements in north India are within the caste framework and confined to Sanskritisation. This has not been the case in Maharashtra under the leadership of Phule and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam movement in Tamil Nadu. They revolted against the caste system. But in course of time, their opposition against the

caste system fizzled out. The backward-caste movements in post-independence India are mainly confined to electoral politics. They function as pressure groups to seek reservations in jobs and educational facilities.

Please also refer the following handouts:

Handout: Ch-5 Backward Caste/Class Movements

Book: *Social Movements in India* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: IGNOU (MPSE007): Backward Class Movement

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Short Note

Dalit Movement

*The sun of self-respect has burst into flame-
let it burn up these castes!*

*Smash, break, destroy
these walls of hatred.*

*Crush to smithereens this eons-old school of blindness,
Rise, O people!*

(from a Marathi song of the 1970s anti-caste movement)

Turning their backs to the sun, they journeyed through centuries.

Now, now we must refuse to become pilgrims of darkness.

That one, our father, carrying, carrying the darkness is now bent;

Now, now we must lift that burden from his back.

Our blood was spilled for this glorious city

And what we got was the right to eat stones.

Now, now we must explode that building which kisses the sky!

After a thousand years we were blessed with a sunflower-giving fakir;

Now, now we must, like sunflowers, turn our faces to the sun.

(from a poem by Namdev Dhasal)

The term **Dalit** refers to the oppressed and exploited social groups. While the term itself is caste neutral, in writings and in common parlance it has come to be used to refer only to members of the Scheduled Castes. According to the 2001 Census, the SCs constitute 16 per cent of India's population. The Dalit movement in India has a history of over 100 years. Dalits have waged a long, arduous, and often bitter struggle against oppressive caste discrimination, economic, exploitation, marginalized political participation, and an unjust social order. The main issues around which most of the dalit movements have been centred in the colonial and post-colonial periods are confined to the problem of untouchability. They are predominantly anti-untouchability movements.

Since very little attempt has been made to analyse dalit movements at the national level, no efforts have been made to evolve a typology of the movements. **Ghanshyam Shah** however classifies them into (1) **reformative**; and (2) **alternative** movements. The former tries to reform the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability. The alternative movement attempts to create an alternative socio-cultural structure by conversion to some other religion or by acquiring education, economic status and political power. He argues that both types of movements use political means to attain their objectives. The reformative

movements are further divided into: (1) **Bhakti** movements; (2) **neo-Vedantik** movements; and (3) **Sanskritisation** movements. The alternative movements are divided into: (1) the **conversion** movement; and (2) the **religious** or **secular** movement.

Bhakti is a form of worshipping God through devotion and personal communication. All bhaktas (devotees) are considered equal before God. Two traditions were developed within the bhakti movement after the 15th century: *saguna* and *nirguna*. The former believes in the form of God, mostly Vishnu or Shiv, relating to the Vaishnavite or Shaivaite traditions. It preaches equality among all the castes though it subscribes to the *varnashram dharma* and the caste social order. The devotees of the *nirguna* believe in a formless universal God. **Ravidas** and **Kabir** are the major figures of this tradition. This was partly developed to resist the Brahminical hierarchical order.

Neo-Vedantik movements were initiated by Hindu religious and social reformers. These movements attempted to remove untouchability by taking them into the fold of the caste system. According to the pioneers of these movements, untouchability was not an essential part of Hinduism and, for that matter, of the caste system. **Dayanand Saraswati**, the founder of the **Arya Samaj**, believed that the caste system was a political institution created by the rulers 'for the common good of society, and not a natural or religious distinction'. The Arya Samaj started various educational and welfare programmes for the upliftment of the SCs. Satish Kumar Sharma in his book '*Social Movements and Social Change*' observes that the Arya Samaj was against the political movements of the untouchables. It went against any move initiated by the untouchables for their solidarity and integration.

Ghanshyam Shah argues that the neo-Vedantic movements and non-Brahmin movements played an important catalytic role in developing anti-caste or anti-Hinduism dalit movements in some parts of the country. The **Satyashodhak Samaj** and the **Self-Respect movement** in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the **Namashudra** movement in Bengal (influenced by the Brahmo Samaj) and **Adi-Hindu** movement in Uttar Pradesh (influenced by the Arya Samaj), are some of the important anti-untouchability movements which were launched in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century.

Shah further argues that a section of untouchables who could improve their economic condition, either by abandoning or continuing their traditional occupations, launched struggles for higher status in the caste hierarchy. They followed Sanskrit norms and rituals. They tried to justify their claim to a higher social status in the caste hierarchy by inventing suitable mythologies. All untouchable jatis, however, have not succeeded in removing civic disabilities traditionally imposed upon them. Practically, they are still treated as untouchables in

their places of residence. For example, the **Nadars** of Tamil Nadu organised movements in the late nineteenth century against the civic disabilities they suffered. They entered the political system by first supporting the Justice Party in the early 1930s and later the Congress party. They have moved from the lower rungs of the ritual hierarchy to a position of 'status and power'. Similarly, the **Iravas** (also spelled as **Ezhavas**) of Kerala, formed their caste organisation in 1903, known as **SNDP Yogam** (that is, Association for the Maintenance of Dharma founded by **Shri Narayana Guru**). According to it, the low social status of the Iravas is due to their low social and religious practices. The association launched activities for Sanskritising the norms and customs of the Iravas. They launched a satyagraha for temple entry in the 1920s. They bargained with the government for economic opportunities and political positions.

Shah argues that although the protests against the rigid caste system could be traced as early as since the time of Buddhism, however, perhaps the first modern Dalit voice was that of **Jotiba Phule**, a powerful advocate of social and gender equality based in Maharashtra. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was amongst the first social thinkers whose writings were not only revolutionary for his time but continue to inspire dalit movements to this day. Phule was greatly concerned with the miserable conditions of living and poverty of Shudras, ati-Shudras and women. He identified them as resulting from 'brahminical tyranny and conspiracy' which physically and mentally enslaved the Shudras in the ideal of the caste system. With this ideological orientation, he evolved a political strategy focusing on: 1) Annihilating the old order in order to establish a more humane, just, and democratic state of workers and peasants; 2) Implementing policies and programmes of immediate importance to end Brahmin dominance; and 3) Forming a political alliance of various groups, including the Shudras and ati-Shudras or untouchables against the Brahmins, and was against their joining the Indian National Congress dominated by the upper castes.

Gail Omvedt and **Patankar** argue that in the pre-independence period, two important phases of the Dalit movement could be deciphered. During the initial phase, its principal thrust was on temple entry, access to market places, removal of restrictions on admissions to schools, free movement in public places such as roads, post offices, etc. for dalits, banning caste-based discriminatory practices and abolishing untouchability. All this was essentially based on an attempt to find a place for the Dalits within the broad structure of Hindu religion. However, with the emergence of **Dr B. R. Ambedkar** on the political scene, the dalit movement not only became more vibrant and assertive but also political in character. During this phase, which began during the second decade of this century, the Dalit leaders sought to distance themselves from the Hindu religion. They fought for a new identity as '**Depressed classes**', separate from Hindu society. They demanded a

proportionate share in political power along with other minority communities such as the Muslims.

The dalits demanded a separate electorate in the 1930s which led to a conflict between Ambedkar and Gandhi. **Gandhi** did not think that the problem of untouchability was a political issue. For Ambedkar, the root of Untouchability is the caste system and thus to abolish untouchability he advocated annihilation of the caste system. However, Gandhi defended the idealized *Varnashrama Dharma* and argued that the problem of Untouchables is basically socio-religious in nature. But Ambedkar contradicted Gandhi and argued that ‘It is wrong to say that the problem of the Untouchables is a socio-religious problem.....the problem of the Untouchables is fundamentally a political problem’. Consequently, both offered radically different models for the emancipation of Dalits. While Gandhi laid emphasis on the reformist approach through his *harijan* campaign, Ambedkar launched his revolutionary movement for the liberation and advancement of the Dalits with a call ‘**educate, organize and agitate**’.

In the last years of his life Dr Ambedkar gave a beginning to two institutions he saw as necessary for liberation of his people and the welfare of the country: **Buddhism**, and the **Republican Party**, a spiritual force and a political platform. He preferred Buddhism primarily because it was ‘an indigenous Indian religion of equality; a religion which was anti-caste and anti-Brahman’ (Lynch 1972; Kamble 1979). Wilkinson and Thomas (1972), however, find that the conversion has not made any significant change in their social and occupational life. Nevertheless, they did become more militant as a result of their conversion to Buddhism. Some of them have also been converted to Christianity and Islam. However, the movement for conversion to Buddhism has spread ***dalit consciousness*** irrespective of whether dalits became Buddhist or not. However, in the post-Ambedkar phase, the dalit movement was infested with a number of splits which were largely motivated by internal rivalries based on personal rather than political differences. Then came the **Panthers....**

‘We don’t want a little place in brahman galli,
we want the rule of the whole land ...
our revolution will flash like lightning ...’

So proclaimed the 1972 manifesto of the **Dalit Panthers**, born in the slums of Bombay but spreading to cities and villages throughout the country, proclaiming revolt. *The Manifesto*, the Dalit Panther intervention in electoral politics to help the defeat of Congress, their readiness to engage in street fighting against the Shiv Sena, hurled them into fame. It was a defining moment of the post-Ambedkar Dalit movement in India, a moment that was an upsurge giving inspiration to all of

India. Along with the Naxalite movement, the Dalit Panthers emerged as a mass symbol of revolt.

The political betrayal of the Dalit leadership and its inaction in the face of an intensification of atrocities committed by the upper caste elites (aided and abetted by the govt. in a number of instances) against the dalits, caused great anger and frustration amongst the younger generation of Dalits. This was initially reflected in the publication of a veritable cataract of creative literature. It was against this background that the Dalit Panthers emerged as a militant movement with the aim of countering the aggression unleashed by caste Hindus against the dalits. Ambedkar's thoughts constituted the driving force of the movement. The Dalit Panthers rapidly became popular. They mobilized Dalit youth and students. The Dalit Panther eventually became an important political force, especially in the cities. However, the Dalit Panther movement was not to escape the contagion of internal splits.

Amongst the factors underlying the splits were personality clashes between **Raja Dhale** and **Namdeo Dhasal** (founders of the Dalit Panthers); beneath these lay irreconcilable differences over whether the DP movement should include the poor belonging to both caste Hindu and Scheduled Castes communities; over the dispute concerning the primacy of cultural revolution among the Dalits over socio-economic transformation; and over the question of whether Hindu Dalits should be included in the movement along with neo-Buddhist Dalits. Endemic factionalism, narrow sectarianism, unprincipled alliances with the ruling party, and a chronic inability to protect rural Dalits who had to contend with atrocities mounted by the upper caste and caste Hindu rural elite resulted in the Dalit Panther movement losing its thrust and momentum during the '80s. Gail Omvedt argues that it was not simply that the Dalit Panthers died away within a couple of years, split into the 'Ambedkarite' (or 'Buddhist') and 'Marxist' factions. The deeper problem was that in spite of their all-encompassing revolutionary rhetoric, the Panthers failed to move forward to the kind of total transformation that Babasaheb had envisaged. Beyond militancy, the Panthers failed to elaborate a vision for the socio-economic programme of a new society and a strategy for moving forward.

Even as the Republican Party of India and Dalit Panthers remained in their fragmented condition, a new Dalit party made its appearance in north India, particularly in the States of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Rajasthan, Bihar, Delhi, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh (MP). It is **Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)**, founded by **Kanshi Ram** in 1978, which produced the first Dalit woman chief minister in India. In a critical analysis of the achievements of the Republican Party of India (RPI), the Bhartiya Republican Party (BRP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) vis-à-vis the vision of Ambedkar, Gail Omvedt argues that these political parties not only failed to achieve the goals of overall liberation and political leadership, they did not even

attempt Ambedkar's most far-reaching goals. She argues that Ambedkar always had a broader economic, social and cultural programme backing up his political thrust, while this is not so with these political parties, which are content to have a 'one-point-programme' of political power, arguing that everything else would automatically flow from this.

However, despite various such limitations of Dalit movement, the fact remains that with the growth of democratic institutions and the 'politics of numbers', the Dalits have begun to assume some importance in national politics in independent India. The current political initiative by the Dalit leaders only marks the beginning of a new era of democratic politics. In spite of its ups and downs with leadership crisis and demoralisation, Dalit movement in India has become a force to be reckoned with today.

Please also refer the following handouts:

Handout: Ch-11 Ambedkar and After: The Dalit Movement in India (Gail Omvedt) Book: *Social Movements and the State* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: Understanding the Modern Dalit Movement by John C.B. Webster (*Sociological Bulletin*)

Handout: IGNOU (MPSE007): Dalit Movement

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Environmental Movements

Handout: Ch-17 Environment and Ecological Crisis

Book: *Contemporary Sociology* by H.K. Rawat

Handout: Ch-10 Human Rights and Environmental Movements

Book: *Social Movements in India* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: Ch-2 State-led Development-Induced Dispossession and Displacement (Bhaskar Majumder) Book: *Sociology of Displacement* by Sakarama Somayaji and Susmita Dasgupta

Handout: IGNOU (MPSE007): Environmental and Ecological Movements

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Ethnicity and Identity Movements

Handout: Ch- 3 Tribal Movements

Book: *Social Movements in India* by Ghanshyam Shah

Handout: IGNOU (MPSE007) Ethnic Movements with Special Reference to Tribals

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UPSC: Previous Years' Questions

Paper I 7. Politics and Society

Paper II C. (iv) Politics and Society

Q. Discuss the social bases of political mobilization in Independent India. Has some change occurred in these during the last 60-70 years? (2025/10)

Q. What do you mean by nation building? What is the role of religion in nation building? Elaborate your answer. (2025/20)

Q. How do 'Civil Society Organizations' such as 'NGOs' and 'Self-Help Groups' contribute to grassroot level social changes? Discuss. (2025/20)

Q. How can you assess the significance of social movements in the digital era? Explain. (2025/10)

Q. What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues. (2025/20)

Q. Are pressure groups a threat to or a necessary element of democracy? Explain with suitable illustrations. (2025/20)

Q. What are pressure groups? Discuss their role in decision-making in democracy. (2024/10)

Q. Discuss the changing nature of political elites in India. (2024/10)

Q. What do you understand by decentralisation of power? What is its role in strengthening the roots of democracy in India? Elaborate. (2024/20)

Q. Underline the role of social media in contemporary social movements and describe its challenges. (2024/20)

Q. Democracy needs a vibrant culture of civil society in order to strengthen its foundation of citizenship. Comment. (2024/10)

Q. Do you think that the social media has brought significant changes in the forms of protest? Argue your case. (2023/20)

Q. How is civil society useful in deepening the roots of democracy? (2023/10)

Q. What, according to Robert Michels, is the iron law of oligarchy? Do lions and foxes in Vilfredo Pareto's theory, essentially differ from each other? Substantiate. (2023/20)

Q. Discuss the changing nature of structure of political elites. (2022/10)

Q. Discuss the role of pressure groups in strengthening democracy. (2022/10)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. Examine different understandings of secularization in India. (2022/10)
- Q. Illustrate with examples the role of pressure groups in the formulation of social policies. (2022/10)
- Q. Analyse the nature of transition from ideology to identity politics in India. (2022/20)
- Q. Write a note on global trends of secularization. (2022/10)
- Q. Is social democracy a precondition for political democracy? Comment. (2021/10)
- Q. Does regionalism essentially lead to decentralization of power? Substantiate your answer with relevant examples. (2021/10)
- Q. What do you understand by democratic federalism? How does it promote decentralization of power in India? (2020/10)
- Q. Analyze the issues related to the citizenship in contemporary India. Give suitable illustrations. (2020/10)
- Q. What is civil society? Present a note on civil society engagement with science and technology policy in India. (2019/10)
- Q. What are the theoretical models of societal power? Which one of them is most applicable in advanced industrial societies? (2019/20)
- Q. Discuss the concept of circulation of elite. (2019/10)
- Q. Discuss the implications of 'Swachha Bharat Abhiyaan'. Do you think that civil society has a role to play here? Substantiate your answer with example. (2019/20)
- Q. Comment on the changing democratic profile of India. (2019/10)
- Q. What is caste politics? Substantiate your answer with examples of how identities are defined by caste dynamics. (2019/20)
- Q. What, according to Pareto, are the basic characteristics of elites? Discuss. (2018/10)
- Q. Are social movements primordial in means and progressive in agenda? (2018/10)
- Q. Has caste system hindered democracy and adult franchise in India. Discuss. (2018/20)
- Q. Has Green Revolution led to the formation of new power elite in rural India? Elaborate your answer. (2018/20)
- Q. Elaborate the concept of constitutional morality as given by B.R.Ambedkar. (2018/10)
- Q. Media is the fourth pillar of democracy. Discuss. (2018/10)
- Q. To what extent does nation building depend on strengthening of pluralities in Indian society? (2017/20)
- Q. Examine the dynamics of Pressure groups in multi-party political system. (2017/10)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. Explain the concepts of ‘dominant caste’ and ‘vote bank’, giving examples from specific regions. (2017/20)
- Q. Discuss the changing interface between state and civil society in post-independent India. (2017/10)
- Q. Discuss the importance of ‘power elite’ in democracy. (2016/10)
- Q. To what extent revolution replaces the existing order of society? Discuss. (2016/10)
- Q. “Globalization involves deterritorialization.” Examine with reference to the nation-state. (2015/20)
- Q. Caste ideology appears to have strengthened democracy. Comment. (2015/10)
- Q. Define secularization. What are its major dimensions in the modern world? (2015/20)
- Q. Explain the conditions under which a collective action transforms into a social movement. (2015/20)
- Q. “Ideology is crucial for social transformation in a democracy.” Discuss. (2015/10)
- Q. Discuss B. R. Ambedkar as a wise democrat. (2015/20)
- Q. Write a brief note on the Freedom of Press. (2015/10)
- Q. Who are the elites? Discuss their roles in bringing social transformation. (2014/10)
- Q. “Power is not a zero-sum game”. Discuss with reference to Weber’s and Parsons’s views. (2014/20)
- Q. What do you understand by social movement? How has the mobilization by Scheduled Castes helped them in constructing a new identity? (2014/10)
- Q. Discuss T. H. Marshall’s views on citizenship. (2014/10)
- Q. Distinguish between Political Parties and Pressure. (2014/10)
- Q. Examine the role of pressure groups in parliamentary democracy. (2013/10)
- Q. Evaluate how do civil society and democracy mutually reinforce each other (2013/20)
- Q. Critically examine the role of civil society in democracy. (2013/10)
- Q. Define social movement. Elucidate the role of reformist movements in social change. (2013/10)
- Q. Write short note on the following from a sociological perspective:
Citizenship and Civil Society (2012/12)
- Q. Are social movement always influenced by ideologies? Discuss. (2012/20)
- Q. What do you understand by nation? Is the nation same as the state? Discuss. (2012/20)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. Write short note with a sociological perspective on the following:
Regional political elites and the democratic process. (2012/12)
- Q. Critically examine the concepts of nation and citizenship in the context of globalization.
(2012/20)
- Q. “Protective discrimination not only protects but also discriminates.” Comment. (2011/30)
- Q. Distinguish between ‘secularism’ and ‘secularisation’. Analyse the nature and extent of secularisation in contemporary India. (2011/30)
- Q. Write short note on Power Elite from a sociological perspective. (2011/12)
- Q. Highlight prerequisites of social movement. Bring out the difference between social movement and revolution. (2011/20)
- Q. “Collective action in politics can bring integration and disintegration in society.” Comment. (2011/20)
- Q. Explain the concept of Participatory Democracy. What conditions are assumed to be conducive to participation? (2011/20)
- Q. Write short note on Identity Politics. (2010/12)
- Q. List the sources of power and explain the various indicators based on which power can be measured. (2010/30)
- Q. Evaluate how civil society and democracy mutually reinforce each other. (2010/30)
- Q. Write short note on Factors responsible for increasing demands for the formation of separate states. (2010/20)
- Q. Identify the reasons for the resilience of democratic system in India. (2010/30)
- Q. Write short note on New rural elite and leadership (2009/20)
- Q. Write short note on C. W. Mills’ Power Elite. (2009/20)
- Q. Write short note: Social movement as an expression of protest (2008/20)
- Q. Explain the meaning and modes of political participation. What are the factors preventing people’s participation in politics in India? (2007/60)
- Q. Write short note: Regionalism (2007/20)
- Q. Discuss the social base of political parties in India. What has been its impact on Indian democracy? (2005/60)
- Q. Write short note: Pluralism and national unity (2005/20)
- Q. Discuss modes of political participation and voting behavior in India. (2005/60)
- Q. Write short note: Power elite in society and the emergence of new elite in power structure. (2005/20)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. Write short note: Authority and Legitimacy (2004/20)
- Q. Write short note: Bureaucracy in New Capitalist Economy (2004/20)
- Q. “The 73rd and the 74th constitutional amendments have motivated social mobilization in rural India.” – Discuss. (2004/60)
- Q. Differentiate between pressure groups and interest groups. Describe the role of some prominent pressure groups in contemporary Indian politics. (2003/60)
- Q. Write short note: Regionalism (2003/20)
- Q. Write short note: Social Structure and Political Participation (2003/20)
- Q. Write short note: Community Power (2002/20)
- Q. Write short note: Reservation and Panchayat Raj institutions (2002/20)
- Q. Elaborate the concept of political elite. Explain how social structural origins of political elites influence their political orientations. (2001/60)
- Q. What is meant by democratic decentralization? Assess the working of Panchayati Raj in India. (2001/60)
- Q. Write short note: Informal structure of Bureaucracy (2001/20)
- Q. Write short note: Sources of legitimacy of power (2001/20)
- Q. Write short note: Role of pressure groups in democracy (2000/20)
- Q. What have been the functions of democracy in India? Has democracy been successful in elimination some of the traditional social inequalities? (2000/60)
- Q. Discuss 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments with reference to decentralization of power. (1999/60)
- Q. Write short note: National Unity (1999/20)
- Q. Impact of the democratic political system on the traditional social structure (1999/20)
- Q. Explain the concept of power. Distinguish between power and authority. (1998/60)
- Q. Write short note: Implications of emergence of regional political parties (1998/20)
- Q. Describe the socio-cultural background of the political elites of contemporary India. What has been the influence of the background on their political orientations? (1997/60)
- Q. Write short note: Pluralism and national unity (1997/20)
- Q. Discuss the meaning and role of voluntary organizations in the efforts of transformation of society through state-action. (1996/60)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. Describe the traditional power structure in rural India. Discuss the factors that have contributed to its changing pattern in recent years. (1996/60)
- Q. Write short note: Role of pressure groups in Indian politics (1996/20)
- Q. It is often alleged that the social situation in India is not conducive to the efficient functioning of a democratic polity. Comment. (1995/60)
- Q. Write short note: Social disorganization (1995/60)
- Q. Write short note: Changing social origins of political elites in India (1994/20)
- Q. Evaluate the role of state in social and economic reconstruction of Indian Society since independence. (1994/60)
- Q. Write short note: Decentralisation of power and local development (1994/20)
- Q. Evaluate the functioning of political parties in the democracies of the Third World. (1993/60)
- Q. Write short note: Dysfunctions of bureaucracy (1993/20)
- Q. Write short note: Panchayati Raj and rural leadership (1993/20)
- Q. Write short note: Pressure groups on Indian politics. (1993/20)
- Q. Discuss the executive measures and peoples' participation in implementing various development programmes at the village level in India. (1993/60)
- Q. Explain how emerging rural-urban nexuses are reshaping the character of Indian political elite and functioning of political institutions. (1992/60)
- Q. Write short note: Informal structure of bureaucracy (1992/20)
- Q. Write short note: Merits and demerits of secret ballot in democracy (1992/20)
- Q. What role can the power of unorganized masses play in bringing about social change in a democratic society? (1991/60)
- Q. Is legitimacy of key political institutions declining in India? Discuss this issue in the context of the process of nation-building. (1991/60)
- Q. Write short note: Social responsibility of political elites (1991/20)
- Q. Write short note: Bureaucracy and economic development (1990/20)
- Q. Write short note: Community power structure (1990/20)
- Q. Write short note: Formal and Informal Structure of Bureaucracy (1989/20)
- Q. Write short note: Power of the Elite (1989/20)
- Q. Write short note: Electoral Reform in India (1989/20)

- Q. Write short note: Democratic Decentralisation (1988/20)
- Q. Discuss the role of the State in restructuring Indian Society since Independence. Examine the effectiveness of such interventions. (1988/60)
- Q. What do you understand by community power structure? Discuss the major changes in recent times in the pattern of the distribution of power in Indian society. (1988/60)
- Q. Critically examine the statement, "A study of power inevitably involves an investigation of social class". (1987/60)
- Q. Write short note: Authoritarian Personality (1987/20)
- Q. Write short note: Legitimacy (1987/20)
- Q. Write short note: Bureaucracy in developing societies (1986/20)
- Q. Write short note: the emerging pattern of rural leadership (1986/20)
- Q. Write short note: Problems of nation building in developing countries (1986/20)
- Q. Write short note: Protective discrimination: its sociology and politics (1985/20)
- Q. Write short note: Power (1985/20)
- Q. Explain the role of community power structure in the political decision-making processes in the society. Are power and authority getting broad based in India today? (1984/60)
- Q. Write short note: Power of the elite and the masses in democratic societies (1981/20)
- Q. Write short note: Pressure groups and economic development (1982/20)

**UPSC: Previous Years' Questions
Paper II**

A. (ii). (c) Protests and movements during the colonial period

(d) Social reforms

C. (v) Social Movements in Modern India

- (a) Peasants and farmers movements**
- (b) Women's movements**
- (c) Backward classes and Dalit movement**
- (d) Environmental movements**
- (e) Ethnicity and Identity movements**

(vii). (a) Crisis of development: displacement, environmental problems and sustainability

- Q. Critically examine the dialectics between 'development and environment'. (2022/20)
- Q. Bring out the various issues involved in Dalit movements in India. (2022/20)
- Q. Discuss how 'environmentalism' can be explained with new social movements approach. (2022/20)
- Q. The problem of displacement is inherent in the idea of development. Analyze the statement critically. (2021/20)
- Q. What is identity politics? Discuss the main trends in Dalit movement in India. (2021/20)
- Q. Colonial administrators helped to construct the very traditionalism which marked the Indian society as 'backward'. Comment critically. (2020/20)
- Q. Are the contemporary farmers' movements in India changing their course? Discuss. (2020/10)
- Q. Evaluate the nature and scope of anthropogenic influence on climate in India and also analyze the environmental movements arising out of it. (2020/20)
- Q. "Banning practice of 'Sati' is attributed to annihilation of a major social evil in colonial India." Comment. (2020/10)
- Q. Highlight the roles and functions of civil society in a democratic system. (2021/10)
- Q. Explain how political parties and pressure groups are dialectically related to each other in terms of achieving their goals. (2021/20)
- Q. Critically examine the relevance of Vilfredo Pareto's theory of Circulation of Elites in the present scenario. (2021/10)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. Examine how social movements come to an end. Illustrate with examples. (2020/10)
- Q. According to Mills, “Elites rule in institutional terms rather than psychological terms.”
Comment. (2020/20)
- Q. Explain democracy as an order of society. What are the factors preventing people’s participation in politics? (2020/10)
- Q. Do you agree that social movements are caused by opportunity structures that are generated by media? Why? (2019/10)
- Q. Has reduction of green cover affected ecological degradation leading to global warming? Elaborate your answer with illustration. (2019/10)
- Q. Highlight the main features of the ‘Inter-linking of Rivers’ project in India. What could be its probable advantages to Indian agriculture? (2019/20)
- Q. Elucidate the concerns of growing urban displacement dynamics in India. (2019/10)
- Q. Discuss the challenges in implementing the Rural Development Programmes in India. (2019/10)
- Q. Illustrate the contribution of the Tebhaga Movement to the peasants struggle in India. (2019/10)
- Q. Comment on the growing assertion of tribal community for autonomy in India. (2019/10)
- Q. Do you think that the Indian saints have brought about social reform and awareness in Indian society? Explain. (2019/10)
- Q. Elaborate various forms of Dalit assertions in contemporary India. What are its implications on the Indian political system? (2018/20)
- Q. Explain the dynamics of neo-farmers’ movement in contemporary India. (2018/10)
- Q. Elaborate the ‘Me Too’ Movement and its impact in India. (2018/10)
- Q. Examine the sociological dynamics of Champaran Peasant Movement in colonial India. (2018/20)
- Q. Discuss development-induced displacement in the context of tribal uprising in India. Substantiate your answer with any one detailed illustration from India. (2018/20)
- Q. Discuss some of the striking issues of development induced imbalances that need urgent attention. (2017/20)
- Q. The main objectives of socio-religious movements during the colonial rule in India were reforming and synthesizing Hinduism. Write on any two such important movements. (2017/20)
- Q. What is new in ‘new social movements’? Elaborate your answer with special reference to India. (2017/20)

----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. What are the factors accounting for the resurgence of ethnic identity movements in India? (2016/10)
- Q. Discuss the various forms of environmental movements waged in India? (2016/10)
- Q. Different forms of Dalit assertion (2016/10)
- Q. Comment on the increasing significance of caste in politics. (2016/10)
- Q. Anti-Brahmanical movements during the colonial period. (2016/10)
- Q. Examine the role of protest movements in changing the status of dalits in India. (2016/10)
- Q. Effect of displacement through development on the rural landless and marginal farmers. (2015/10)
- Q. Discuss the main features of farmers' movements in Independent India. (2015/20)
- Q. Write some of the important social reforms in India for the removal of untouchability. (2014/10)
- Q. Dynamics of Contemporary Dalit movements (2014/10)
- Q. Rural landless labourers and development induced displacement (2014/10)
- Q. Discuss the 'Chipko movement' as an example of eco-feminism. (2014/20)
- Q. What is Dalit movement? Examine the issues highlighted by it. (2013/20)
- Q. Discuss the sociological aspects of movements for separate States. (2013/15)
- Q. Bring out the main features of farmer's movements in Modern India. (2013/20)
- Q. Other Backward Classes (2013/10)
- Q. Satya Sodhak movement of Mahatama Jyotiba Phule (2013/10)
- Q. Examine the social dimensions of displacement induced by development. (2013/10)
- Q. Write short note on the following from a sociological perspective: Millenarian Movements (2012/12)
- Q. Do you think that some policies and laws relating to environment have retarded the development process? Give examples. How can an ideal balance between environmental protection and development goals be brought about? (2012/30)
- Q. Write short note on Structure of a social movement. (2009/20)
- Q. How do you define development? What are your suggestions to resolve the issues of displacement and environment related to development? (2008/60)
- Q. Write short note: S.N.D.P. Movement (2008/20)

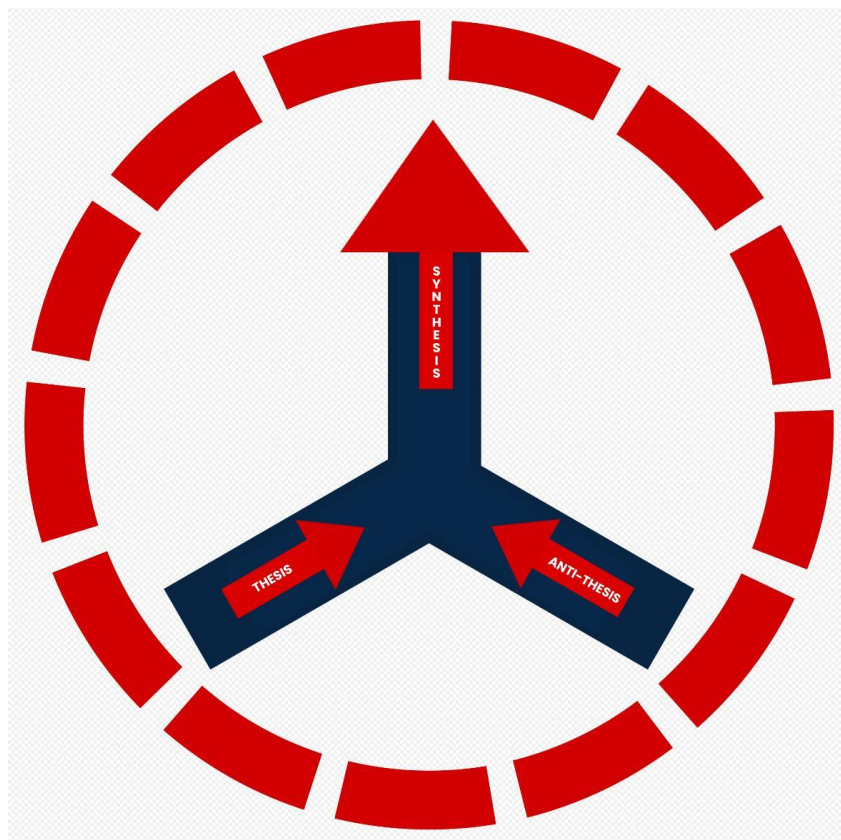
----- **Dialectics IAS (Sociology)** -----

- Q. What are the structural elements of a social movement? State how a social movement comes to its end. Illustrate your answer with example. (2007/60)
- Q. Write short note: Structure of a social movement (2006/20)
- Q. Write short note: Environmental pollution in urban areas (2006/20)
- Q. Discuss the social factors responsible for the emergence of Dalit consciousness in India. What have been the social consequences of this phenomenon? (2006/60)
- Q. Describe the ideological changes that have ushered in modern society due to social movements in India. (2005/60)
- Q. Write short note: Ideology and Strategy of Social Movement (2004/20)
- Q. Write short note: Social change and social movement (2002/20)
- Q. What social conditions cause a social movement? Explain with illustrations, the career of a social movement. (2001/60)
- Q. Is ideology an essential component of a social movement? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples from some contemporary social movements. (2000/60)
- Q. Bring out the commonality between a social movement and a revolution. Would you agree with the view that each revolution is preceded by a social movement? Give reasons. (1999/60)
- Q. What are the structural conditions under which movements emerge? Discuss with reference to any one theory of genesis of social movements. (1998/60)
- Q. Write short note: Concept of social movement (1997/20)
- Q. Write short note: Reformative social movements (1996/20)
- Q. Write short note: Types of social movements (1994/20)
- Q. Write short note: Protest movements (1993/20)
- Q. Trace the Psychological and Sociological roots of social movements in society today. Do social movements facilitate social change? (1990/60)
- Q. Write short note: Types of social movements (1988/20)
- Q. Write short note: Social Movement (1987/20)
- Q. Discuss the social consequences of economic development in India. Do you share the view that it has increased economic inequality and failed to promote social justice? (1984/60)

Online Module I: 15 August 2026

Test Series Batches (Online): June, October and January

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