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UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL THEORY

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Understanding Political Theory

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Unit 1

WHAT IS POLITICS: THEORIZING THE 'POLITICAL'

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STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Theorizing the 'Political'
 - 1.3.1 The Political is not Social
 - 1.3.2 The Conception of Moral
 - 1.3.3 The Political is Moral
 - 1.3.4 The Political is the State
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Self-Assessment Questions
- 1.6 Bibliography

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able:

- To comprehend the concept of Political
- To distinguish between social, political, and moral
- To understand the role of the state in relation to politics

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Politics is used as the science and art of Government. It deals with the issue of public affairs and governance. Two words that are used in correlation with the word and are also instrumental in shaping the meaning of the world are government and public affairs. The two



in turn are themselves related, where the government has to deal with the public affairs. This understanding is a very broad notion and does not give a concrete and compartmentalized understanding of the word politics. Politics as a term has been widely discussed and debated upon. A common understanding of 'What is Politics' has not been agreed upon. However, it is a realm that has been understood in some way or the other, by every individual. One cannot be devoid of an opinion on the essence of what is actually politics? There can be diverse opinions and often opinions that are at loggerheads, but by the essence of being a human, one is bound to think about the realm of politics. The expanse of politics is wide and can range from one's existence, to its nature of being a human, a social being, and a political creature. The expanse goes beyond the virtue of existence to one's social and political identity.

1.3 THEORIZING THE 'POLITICAL'

Politics has been defined by various scholars. Harold J Laswell defines Politics as the idea of Who gets what, when and how? His idea advocates the rights of citizens and institutional procedure of the state in granting the rights of the people. David Easton describes Politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values for a society'. His conception of values talks about a set of values that is broadly agreed upon by the state to adhere to. The idea of core values that guide the state is inherent in the idea of politics. The idea of value, Easton talks about can be anything that is valued by the society, ideology, goal, social ranking or any core essence that is deemed as the benchmark for carrying out governance. The term value is a dependent variable and can be allocated a character as per the requirements, demand or preferences. Bernard Crick defines politics as a distinctive form of rule where people come together through institutional mechanism to deliberate and resolve differences to articulate public policy for the common good. The proposition of Bernard Crick, lays emphasis on the idea of reconciliation, bargaining and shared understanding. The culmination of the aforesaid understanding is manifested in the policies formulated by the State. Seemingly, Politics comes across as an idea that falls within the juxtaposition of state and society. The state often resonates with the government and the society with the group of individuals. The two are linked by the idea of governance, which in turn is linked by the aspects of politics. However, the idea of politics disintegrates the basic concept of State and Society. The cardinal distinction between the two is usually overlooked and draws one's attention to the relationship between the two that in turn underlines the realm of political. As per the distinction, the intra state affairs fall under the ambit of politics, but the intra-societal affairs that are concerned with the sanction of reallocation and legitimation of power are extraneous to the idea of Politics. What is Politics is often defined by a null hypothesis. It is the absence of a variable that validates the presence of the politics.



1.3.1 The Political is not Social

The variable whose absence validates the presence of politics is 'social'. Before examining the interdependency of the two variables, let us look at what is political? Is it different from Politics? The word politics comes from Aristotle's classic work 'Politika', which means 'affairs of the cities.' Political is the nature that politics imparts. It is the characterization that comes from the virtue of politics. Politics can be defined as a static term, but political is dynamic and reinventing because it imparts attributes and characteristics to an individual and institution. The notion of how the society has been perceived and understood over years, has often tried to envelope the social into political. The origin of the word social comes from the Latin word 'socius' meaning friend. The perception of the word social lies in being amicable, empathetic and enduring. It has the virtue of coexistence and thus is about the idea of people coming together. The idea of Aristotle of man being a social being, has delved on the understanding of the social nature of individual as a cooperative entity who has shared purposes and meanings of existence. The identity of a human does not arise from the state but from the virtue of being a social entity. The political institutions, its attributes and functions are inherently social in its tendency. However, the claim is that the political is not social. But can the political have certain attributes of social? If it has characteristic features of social, then does it become social? These questions lie at the helm of understanding what is essentially political?

Does citizenship confer the identity to the members of state? Does the idea of membership and citizenship differ in its orientation? The basic rights of an individual by the virtue of a citizen are enshrined in the constitution, whereas the interpersonal approach of an individual emanate from the consciousness of being a social being. The attributes of social membership are distinct from the rights an individual imbibes as a citizen of the state. A citizen is a member of a community but a citizen of the state. Membership is acquired whereas citizenship is granted. There is an external authority granting the sanctity of citizenship. It is the state that regulates citizenship but community that one is a member of. Community is a collective conscience but state an authoritative position.

Contributing in the well-being of the society through benevolent act of charity, donations, or any other form of physical help. Nurturing a peaceful, habitable and tolerant society by assimilating people from various caste, colour and culture. Maintaining amicable relations in the society by respecting one's neighbour and pursuing social justice. Spreading a sense of responsibility by spreading environmental awareness and nurturing an eco-friendly and sustainable way of life. These attributes come by the virtue of being a good human and not by the identity of being a law-abiding citizen. A citizen can adhere to the duties enshrined by the



state and avail his rights. However, citizenship is not a precondition for being contributing to the social enrichment of a group of people. Not every section of the society was citizen of Aristotle's State, but everyone did imbibe a sense of belonging to the land they inhabited.

The discourse on nationalism has blurred the boundaries between social and political. The discourse of Nation and State in itself a question of social and political. Nation is the feeling of belongingness. It has the element of race, religion, ethnicity, caste. It is submerging of identities in a unanimous umbrella of Nation, whereas State is the territorial boundary bound by an authority of Government. Nationalism as an idea takes the orientation of a state towards that of a community where the individuals are united by a bond of togetherness and knit by a sense of belongingness to a common set of beliefs and ideas. The more the state expands its realm of functions and takes over the attributes of a voluntary association like a community or a family, the weaker the society will become (Etzioni, 2003). The difference between citizenship and membership can be demarcated and realized if an analogy is drawn between the relationship of a state-society and state-individual.

The difference between the social and political, if built upon leads to a larger dialogue in the society culminating into social welfare policies. Public policies that go beyond the administrative concerns, and provide a safety-net to the people by being a benefactor of the marginalized, downtrodden and weaker sections of the society. This idea of reaggregation and convergence of interest of individuals has been brought forth by Bernard Crick, in his famous work 'In Defense of Politics'. The idea of policy making actualizes the politics of the state. Assimilating of the social context in the political underpinning, resulting in the formulation of a public policy is the premise on which Crick has built up his idea of politics. However, the demarcation between the social and political also indicates a line where the distinction between the two is transgressed. The Political and social are distinct in its orientation and approach but are reinstating condition for each other.

1.3.2 The Conception of Moral

Moral rests on the idea of conception of 'good'. The idea of good is subjective but in the moral paradigm, there is only universal good that forms the base of morality. The acceptance that comes with the good is the idea of morality the state and society practice. If there is no subjective good in morality, can the state and society be good at the same time or do they differ in their orientation of good. Social Conservatives consider it as the prerogative of the state to go beyond the idea of citizenship to inculcate social virtues to make a good society. The state harbors the potential to regulate the human behavior, and bring out a moderation in the attributes of an individual. The people are self-indulgent by nature and have a tendency to exploit their liberty and become insensitive towards the needs of others. A belief that has



been endorsed by social conservatives is the need of a 'strong national government' that will mould the attributes of an individual and counterbalance the weaker aspect of the citizens. (Brooks/Kristal 1997). The idea of virtuous behavior has come to be shaped by the state in the conservative discourse.

A dilemma that comes across in the conception of good is also prevalent in the idea of a good law-abiding citizen and a good person in general. Social Conservatives view the state as an institution, that imparts the orientation of being good to its subjects. The idea of 'good state' does not focus on containing the state to undermine individual liberty. Communitarians perceive society as an agency of promoting moral behavior. The conduct morally good behavior goes beyond the stipulated permissibility of an agency, into the personal realm. The moral attribute of behavior transcends beyond the apparatus of state. It moves beyond the fiduciary relationship of state and its citizens, to a relationship of trust, harmony and camaraderie between the members of the state. Societal orientation of a just and equitable society, where not the state but the citizens extend their hand to the weak, vulnerable and deprived sections of the society. The good society, reaches the private realm but with only a limited set of core values. It is not as expansive and holistic as in a liberal state or a government centered society. The scope of good is limited and particular in the societal perception of good. The formulations of good may differ in the outlook of political and society respectively. However, what shapes the dynamics is that if there is a contestation between the formulation, how is the gap counterbalanced in maintaining an unequivocal idea of good.

1.3.3 The Political is Moral

Every political action has a moral underpinning. There are no political deliberations devoid of moral pretext. The usage of 'moral' is related to a broad range of moral social values that are imbibed in the normative considerations of justice and equality. The idea is not restricted to a limited and personal understanding of morality. According to the Liberals understanding of political theory, the ambit of morality should not pervade the realm of public and political. The moral deliberations are more confined to the private realm. Liberals fear that the intrusion of morality in the public domain can trigger a cultural war. The public arena falls in the ambit of the State, where the orientation of state and the idea of politics should essentially remain neutral. The endorsement of morality in the public forum is likely to be perceived as coercion and propagation of shared values.

The conception of the extent of 'neutrality' and the essence of 'autonomy' of the state differs among liberals. A section of liberals believes that individual virtues like critical thinking upholds the merit of the state (Gutman, 1987). A counterpart of liberals also upholds the



premise of what Isaiah Berlin followed, a limited set of values that are deliberated, discussed and agreed upon in the public forum form an underlying idea of morality that the state professes and propagates. For instance, Stealing, Rape and Murder being reprimanded in any society. The nature of punishment however, can have a discrepancy in the acceptance by a particular society. State can either believe in capital punishment, or it can be neutral about it. Euthanasia or mercy killing is another issue that has been a point of contention and differs in how the different states have perceived it. The most contemporary example of acceptance is evident in the LGBT Rights, where different states have a different take in the various aspects of the community. However, endorsing different values is not divided into watertight compartments. Subscribing to divergent and irreconcilable values does not lead to a political deadlock. Public Policy is formulated in accordance, to reconcile the difference of opinion and adopt a middle path for optimum suitability.

Communitarians come from a vantage point that politics should rearticulate shared values and understanding of morality. Contemporary politics of free and democracy societies rests on the pillar of demand aggregation and articulation. The absence of broad consensus and common ground of values, beliefs and demands leads to turmoil and discontent, as visible between Jewish and Arabic citizen of Israel. The consensus between the communities in a state plays a vital role in maintaining the peace and sanctity of a democracy. The reasons for conflict arise from difference in opinion and the lack of consensus in the governing the different group of citizens defined by their caste, class, caste, region and language. The law acts as a neutral arbiter and acts as a conscience of the state apparatus by upholding the essence of morality. The law can never be morally neutral but it has to be unbiased and wise in adjudicating the matters of state. The law has to be neutral in terms of its preferences and affiliations. It does not have to impose the will of majority on the populous but uphold the prerogative for a just and equitable society.

1.3.4 The Political is the State

The question that arises is that are there two conceptions of morality, one for the society and one for the state. If they are different, do they ever converge? What are the repercussions of the differences? Which notion does the citizen abide by? Are there major differences between the conception of a 'good society' and a 'good state'? A good society harbours a moral voice, where individuals have a sense of morality and behave in pro-social manner. The pro-social sense can emanate from either an innate or an acquired sense of morality. An innate sense of morality that arises from the virtue of being human. The role of parenting and education thus play a pivotal role in shaping the moral attributes of an individual. Communitarians emphasize on the fact that the idea of morality needs to reinforced, which comes from the



environment in which an individual thrives. The validation and approval of humans, one holds in great regard and is significantly attached to is of great reverence, thus community acts as an agency that does not only harbour but also instils a value system. The significant role is not only played by how the values are enforced but how the values are fostered.

As put forth by John Locke, man is a rational being, who can logically apply a deductive reasoning and determine the sense of morality, that has been granted by God. Locke's moral rationalism is based on the empirical understanding of idea. He believes that human mind is a tabula-rasa, it is the sensory understanding that builds up the idea of morality. We, as humans construct complex moral proposition from the simplistic perception of what we imbibe and perceive from our sensory and reflexive experiences. Locke has knit an interrelation between reason and morality. According to Locke, the state of nature was pre-political but not pre-moral. There was already a sense of morality that existed; thus, a political state needs to have a basic conception of morality.

The point of intervention in understanding morality is to assess if there is a difference in what the society considers as morality, what the state considers as morality and what an individual considers as morality. There are contentions between compliance with moral voice and what an individual truly wants by the virtue of his freedom and entitlement. If an individual deserves to be free from state control, does he not deserve to be free from the social pressure that emanates from the conceptualization of societal morality. This dilemma has been discussed by Jon Stuart Mill, in his work *On Liberty*. The dealings of the society with the individual can be understood by the way of compulsion and control, either in the form of physical punishment or moral coercion that the state asserts. The morality that the state endorses can differ for various sections. It can be manifested as the popular will, or the dominant public opinion.

The multitude of numbers in a democracy has the power to coerce by the will of majority. Public disapprobation leads to alienation and despair of the people whose demands have not been assimilated (Tocqueville, 1991). However, the distinction lies in the force of coercion, a state can be morally coercive but a community endorses internal moral voice that is not to be feared but inculcated. The moral choice resonates with individual liberty and the free choice of man. The internal moral choice is not different from the self. It is a part of one's existence and is borne from the roots of one's being. It defines and shapes one's moral character. The external moral choice is community driven and is imbibe from the societal orientation and construct of 'good' and 'bad'. The external moral choice lays the onus on an individual to select or reject the moral construct being advocated. The final call is with the individual acting. Society has the tendency to cajole, persuade and censure but it is up to the individual



to adhere to the conception being emphasised upon.

However, in case of a state undertaking the responsibility of morality, it has the force of coercion because of the sanction of legality. The sanction of the state might not be binding in nature. The state may use the tools to persuade and educate the masses through other institutional mechanisms that are not coercive by nature and do not require allegiance from the people. However, the actor does not have a choice but to comply to the state by the virtue of being a law-abiding citizen. The last recourse of state could be driven by force to command allegiance. A follow up question that arises out of the proposition is that if the moral voice coercive or the agency enforcing the voice? The moral voice by the virtue is not coercive but enforcement of the voice can be coercive if has to command allegiance. The command can have a force of authority which makes the state vociferous because of the legal and economic sanctions attached to it. It is not the morality but the agency endorsing the same that comes around as coercive.

The contemporary liberal democratic set up offers the liberty and freedom to manoeuvre the space an individual holds. An individual has the liberty to choose and reside in a state he aspires to. He has the reasoning and moral voice to succumb to a state authority he feels entrusted to.

Adhering to the societal pressure also emanates from a vantage point of moral understanding an individual has. His actions are socially, culturally and morally placed under an ambit because he is a part of the society, a state and owes allegiance to at least a limited set of people. In case of parents taking care of their children, the decision is not led by moral coercion that the state enforces but by a moral voice that the community propagates. The elderly parents being abandoned by their children is a question of moral voice and personal choice.

The voluntaristic nature of moral voice paves the way for reconciliation of a good society with idea of liberty. This idea should form the core essence of liberal state and society. Social Institutions play a pivotal role in characterizing the difference between a good society and good being promoted by the state. The institutions are not value-neutral, they are embodiment of a particular set of people. Every social institution has a set of attributes imbibed in it. For instance, a family being a primary social institution is an evident example of a value-laden entity. A prominent understanding correlates the freedom of the institution with the quotient of morality that it imbibes and prophesies. Institutions that are politicised are instruments for serving the state promoted notion of good.

The outcome of deliberations is manifested in public policy. The policies voice the concerns of society and the outlook of the state in promoting the general well-being of the people. The



policies are deemed to be rational choice of the policy makers to voice the concerns of the citizens in the public forum. It is perceived as a reasoned outcome for resolving the political conflict (Johnson, 1994). Deliberations and democracy walk hand in hand and are vital for upholding the moral conscience of the state. Moral dialogues engage the values of the participant and deduce a rational and logical discourse for shaping a due course of action. The entire process is substantive and not merely procedural. The values are not stagnant, they are reorienting and adapting to the advent of time. A shared consensus is reached for adjudicating the law and order of the state. The consensus is transformed into policies that form a part of governance. The moral dialogues can pertain to deliberations about human rights, gender rights, sexual harassment and other important discourses in democracy. The dialogues occur at a preliminary level in the family, and then it follows at the level of community. How a society comes together to renegotiate a renewed and reinvigorating set of values at various levels determines the openness of the society. The deliberations occur in a chain reaction and have the potential to lead a change in the perception of values. It starts in small groups across millions of populations. The groups can be of a family, caste, religion, common ethnicity or common language. The process is carried forward by interlinking of various such groups, that transforms into shared public forums and think tanks. The chain of deliberations converts to a wide-net by networking in the form of meetings at the regional and national levels. The contemporary scenario has aided to the interconnectivity because of the world being knit by digital infrastructure. The world is not only digital connected but the agendas of discussions are digitally curated. Media has been instrumentally not only in voicing the opinion but also discovering voices across sections of society.

The dialogues need not be orderly and precise focussing on a particular change, core value or social intervention. It need not have a clear pattern or beginning, it only needs a dialogue to trigger a discourse. An example of changing orientation of values is evident in the environmental awareness across the continents in the contemporary world. The environmental concern was not a part of the mainstream discourse. It had underlying issues and concerns being raised by various individuals, groups and communities but was not considered a shared core value in Western Societies. A nationwide megalogue was triggered by the famous work on environment by Rachel Carson, named *The Silent Spring*. It was further talked about at various forums and upheld by citizens as a prime cause of concern and was included in the normative agenda. From the proclamation of Earth Day, observation of Earth Overshoot Day to the various protocols and conventions on environment like the Kyoto Protocol and Montreal Convention, the environmental degradation and control of Greenhouse Gas Emissions has become an utmost concern across countries of the nation. The countries often do not come to standard conclusion and have a difference of opinion in adhering to



shared consensus on the measures to be taken. However, the differences do not differ from the view that environmental concerns have become a shared core values that needs to be included in the policy making. It is not just the legislative bodies that form a part of the dialogue in case of established core values, but is undertaken as a distinct social process that are nurtured in the social realm. The realm can fall under the political realm, but it certainly has a deep and profound implication on the political discourse of the State.

The law is catalyst in achieving societal change. It is a core outcome of political processes. Moral dialogues take place in the political realm but do not mature and harbour in the same. It is the society that nurtures the dialogue and the law that helps in achieving the outcome. The law of the land leads the social change. However, the nature of morality defines a good society. The law is required to be in accordance with the moral culture. The law if not in accordance can also the nature of state to an authoritarian state, or in the worst form a totalitarian state. The law is the first step for ensuring social change and preserving the order of the state. Law also needs the will and force of moral voice to be enforced. It is not coercion alone that can prohibit an immoral act. It is the inner moral conscience that acts a guiding star in directing an individual's action. Prohibition can regulate moral behaviour but not imbibe moral etiquettes in individuals. For instance, corruption in the bureaucratic order can be prohibited, and thus it can be regulated but it is the inner conscience or the moral voice that will guide an individual's actions in making the society free of corruption. Fear can command and not demand morality. It is the force of moral voice that is to be reckoned with even in adhering to the law of land.

1.4 SUMMARY

The political and moral though cardinally different are interlinked in myriad ways. The two cannot be confused to be the same but cannot be compartmentalised too for understanding the two individually. A free democratic liberal order governs by the sanctity of law. The law is reinforced by the State apparatus. The political governs by a shared understanding of morality. The state is a part of the political. The actions of the State have a moral dimension because they also operate on a shared understanding and a broad consensus of values. The contemporary political understanding is a reinstatement of morality writ large in the form of social consensus. The idea of state vs community is now visualised as a political community instead because of the interdependence of the nations, which has enlarged the ambit of shared understanding to a more holistic, comprehensive and cohesive understanding of governance. The idea of governance also has a paradigm of social governance. The various actions of the State are to be understood in nexus with each other rather than in isolation. The outcome of



the moral dialogues have matured and the idea of shared values has also reinvented itself to be more conclusive in its approach. The sanctity of state emanates from the people because it is the people that authorise the state to govern. The people are themselves guided by a moral voice and thus the power of moral deliberations reflects at the level of Government as well. What is political will never have a compartmentalised understanding because politics in itself is a sum total of attributes of social, economic and moral virtues that guides the governance of the State.

1.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is Politics? Why do we study it?
2. What is Politics? Summarize various connotation of political theory?
3. What is political theory and what is its relevance?

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Unit 2

**APPROACHES TO POLITICAL THEORY: NORMATIVE,
HISTORICAL AND EMPIRICAL**

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STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Understanding the concepts: Political Science, Political Theory, Political Philosophy
- 2.4 Approaches to Political Theory
 - 2.4.1 Normative Approach
 - 2.4.1.1 The Key Methods and Questions in Normative Political Theory
 - 2.4.1.2 The major positions in normative political theory
 - 2.4.1.3 Normative Theory Critiques
 - 2.4.2 Historical Approach
 - 2.4.3 Empirical Approach
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.7 Bibliography

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able:

- To understand the meaning of political theory



- To distinguish between the traditional and modern approaches
- To comprehend the usefulness of all the approaches

2.2 INTRODUCTION

One of the oldest disciplines of the world is Political science. Its roots can be traced back to ancient Greece where it emerged and grew as a branch of philosophy. Aristotle is considered as the father of political science. He inferred political science as a ‘master science’. It indicates the inter-disciplinary nature of the discipline and it is a science to be learned by the masters. For him masters were those who were involved in rational decision making in the state. If a thorough understand of the evolution of the discipline is made, it could be seen that it was dominated by philosophy in ancient times. It was dwarfed by orthodoxy, religion/scriptures and superstitions in medieval times. It was Machiavelli who framed his statecraft whereby he gave the autonomy of politics and detached it from ethics and religion, and thereby the autonomous status of the discipline was recognized.

Political Theory, Political Philosophy and Political Science are often used interchangeably. However, all the three terms denote absolutely three different things- political theory is a scientific discipline within the ambit of political sciences. It has a focus on how political and social orders observes, develops and decays. Political philosophy understands every concept through the lens of ethics.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTS: POLITICAL SCIENCE, POLITICAL THEORY, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Political Science is founded upon empiricism. Political Science claims to describe, analyse and explain political establishments, institutions and the government in an impartial, value-free manner. In the end of World War II, philosophy, ideas and value judgements dominated, it was only in the 1950s and 60s, most strongly in the USA, a newer form of political analysis emerged which largely drew upon behaviourism.

Political theory and political philosophy may show similarity, but a differences can easily be identified. It is one of the core desciplines of political science. Lately, it has gained independent recognition as an academic subject. Previously, those who carried out investigations in this domain referred to themselves as philosophers or scientists. Political theory is the most accurate term, to use when referring to the intellectual tradition that recognises the capacity of seeing beyond immediate practical concerns and ‘watching’ man’s



societal life critically. Political theory was full fledged political science, because science could not exist without the theory. As a result political theory can be utilised interchangeably with political science in a valid and accurate manner.

Political Science has attempted to give credible generalizations and rules of politics and political behaviour. Political theory deals with the political phenomenon, processes, institutions and on tangible political behaviour by subjecting it to philosophical or ethical benchmark. It deals with the query of the best political order, which is only a miniscule part of a greater question; namely, the ‘ideal form of life that a human being ought to lead within a larger community’.

Political philosophy can be understood as the philosophical reflection on means and ways we can arrange our political institutions and social practices. Political Philosophy are the proposed concept by Philosophers around which the individuals frame the basic principles of their life.

To lead a good life is what is the aim of philosophy. It not only teaches us What is a good life but also How to attain such a state. Plato is the father of political philosophy. In contemporary times Gandhi, Aurbindo ,Tagore, Ambedkar and John Rawls can be called as political philosophers. Political philosophy deals with ‘what it should be’, i.e it seeks to achieve the ideal. Political theory tries to define and explain. For example, political philosophy asks “how is the best state?” In contrast, political theory tries to answer the question “what is the state”. It tries to reveal this answer from a concrete situation. It was not till the nineteenth century that a distinction between political theory and political philosophy was made. According to the traditionalists– political philosophy and political theory were synonymous. At that time, the theory was wedded in political philosophy. No political theory could be understood without a philosophical foundation. For example, if one wanted to understand Plato’s idea of ‘What constitutes a state’, it was important to first understand what constitute ‘ideal state’, or simply put his idealistic perspectives. The emergence of positivism in the nineteenth century was the main reason for a need to develop a distinction between political theory and political philosophy. Modern political scientists do not acknowledge that theory has a place in political philosophy. According to political scientists guided by empiricism, the difference between political philosophy and political theory consist of–

- Political theory is a determinant, self-contained power. In the state philosophy, the theory has no independent existence.
- even though if, theories arise in political philosophy, they are not guided by science or information. The political theory relies entirely on the information which is proved through experimentations.



- The biggest difference between the two is that, political philosophy relies upon the customs, traditions, and values. Hence assertions are guided by partisanship, in the absence of objectivity. Political theory is value-neutral, rational and objective in nature.
- While political theory as embedded in philosophy plays a beneficial role, this theory is confined to the established beliefs in political philosophy. Mystery and delusion have no place in political theory.
- The fundamental focus of political philosophy is ‘philosophy’, politics is endowed with its unique position in political theory.
- The above detailed analysis helps us differentiate between political philosophy and political theory on three grounds.
- The Objective Difference
- The difference in terms of Subject Matter
- Differences in Validity

2.4 APPROACHES TO POLITICAL THEORY

In the sphere of Social Sciences, the term ‘method’ and ‘approach’ are rather used vaguely, and sometimes even unchangeably. However, there is a thin line of difference between the two. Method is a general term which connotes a particular or a certain way of doing something. Technically, method may be defined as the system of investigation by which reliable knowledge could be achieved and reliable conclusions could be made. Some of the widely used methods are scientific method, inductive method, deductive method, comparative method, etc. On the other hand, approach is a wider term which connotes both the ‘method’ as well as our domain of study for developing an understanding for a given phenomenon. Vernon Van Dyke in his writing, *Political Science: A Philosophical Analysis* (1960) stated: “An approach consists of criteria of selection—criteria employed in selecting the problems or questions to consider and in selecting the data to bring to bear; it consists of standards governing the inclusion and exclusion of questions and data.” Distinguishing between the two terms, Dyke has additionally sighted: “In brief, approaches consist of criteria for selecting problems and relevant data, whereas methods are procedures for getting and utilizing data.” In a nutshell all approaches are wedded to some method, while all methods may or may not be wedded to an approach. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of approaches- traditional and contemporary. Those that remained relevant till World War II came to be known as traditional and those which developed thereafter are known to be



contemporary approaches. In this chapter we will be dealing with three approaches- Normative, Historical and Empirical.

2.4.1 Normative Approach

The normative approach to political theory forms the basis of moral philosophy in political science. It comes from the idea that political life must be guided by the principle of what “ought to be” not “what is”. Theory-making in the normative approach is thus guided by the principles based on abstract moral reasoning and how they impact policies and institutions. Isaiah Berlin understands Normative political theory as “the discovery, or application, of moral notions in the sphere of political relations”. Normative political belief is based on the belief that human agents exercise meaningful moral choices. The roots of normative political theory can be traced to Ancient Greece in the west and the east from the Confucian and Hindu philosophy.

2.4.1.1 The Key Methods and Question in Normative Political Theory

Normative political theory illustrates the relationship between individuals and institutions, particularly those social institutions which exercise public power. It acts as a litmus test for the legitimacy of existing political institutions and justifies the alternative arrangements if required. The methods of normative political theory are as follows: (Glaser, D., 1995)

Internal consistency

There is a consistency in bringing moral arguments which are drawn from formal logic and analytic philosophy.

Concepts borrowed from Social anthropology and history

Normative political theory borrows from social anthropology and history to test the empirical basis of any argument or to understand any issues which cannot be dealt with abstract moral reasoning.

Moral intuitions

Any conclusion to an argument is measured by normative political theorists against their moral intuitions. Any argument must be in sync with substantive moral reasoning. Normative political theorists differ in how much relative importance is given to each of these methods in comparison with each other.

There are two sets of substantive questions that are addressed by normative political theory about the state and the question of distributive justice. In terms of state normative political theory questions the justification of political institution, why it exists, its nature, and when



disobedience to the state is justified. In terms of the question of distributive justice, normative political theory raises the question of freedom and equality, The question on the relative importance of freedom and equality, what are the moral grounds for enforced substantive equality, does the autonomy of individual needs to be compatible with the requirements of pluralism in the society? (ibid)

2.4.1.2 The Major Positions in Normative Political Theory

There are largely three major political traditions of the normative traditions: (Glaser,D.,1995)

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is the brainchild of 19th-century British social reformer Jeremy Bentham. Bentham claimed that human beings seek to maximize pleasure and minimize their pain. The correct moral choice is therefore which results in the greatest happiness of the greatest number in the society. It is a quantified approach based on the principle of utility. Any public policy must strive for a utility which is the maximum possible happiness with minimum possible pain. This form of utilitarianism however might give rise to majoritarian tendency since pleasure and pain are defined in numeric terms and not the quality of action. This was improved upon by John Stuart Mill who believed in qualitative utilitarianism i.e that not every action can bring an equal amount of pain and pleasure. Certain kinds of intellectual and aesthetic options are superior to other options which might be equally desired.

Deontological Liberalism

In the 1970s a debate was raised against teleological ethics, teleological ethics are basically “moralities that judge the worth of human conduct according to whether it fulfills a particular purpose or realizes a particular end or telos”. This was problematic since a. Teleological approach such as utilitarianism did not account for individual pluralism in defining happiness and pain b. It prioritizes ends over means.

The critics of teleological ethics came to be known as deontological or Kantian liberals. Deontology means the ethics of right or duty favorably which for these critics is superior to teleology which is the ethics of end. The principal figure of deontology is Immanuel Kant. Kant believed that the sacrifice of an individual for a higher goal is never justified. Individuals for Kant end in themselves. Kantian liberals envision an autonomous individual who is free to pursue their ends (ibid).

Communitarianism

The starting point of communitarianism is the critique of the individual self. Michael Sandel believes that the liberal ideals for an individual do not account for claims and obligations



which arose from the personal and social ties of an individual. Human beings for communitarianism are not atomistic elements rather their destiny is tied up with the social order that they are a part of. They will never seek out an individualist existence unless they are alienated or shunned from society. Whatever rights and obligation an individual have is derived from the community or society he or she is part of. In a community, there is no concept of an individual end. The entire community works towards a morally worthy common good. (Ibid)

2.4.1.3 Normative Theory Critiques

There are three broad areas of criticism against the normative theory as highlighted: (Glaser, D., 1995)

Logical positivism

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his text *Tractatus Logico-Philosophical* formed the basis of logical positivism. For Wittgenstein what makes the language meaning or the capacity to communicate is their names. They have external objects as their meaning. Similarly, the proposition with external meanings is true. True propositions can only be derived from material objects or direct sense experience. If that is the case then all the assumptions of normative theory get into serious trouble. Wittgenstein himself believed that political philosophy should limit itself to just the “factual and descriptive language of natural science”. (Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 1889-1951. (1933). How do normative theorists respond? Normative theorists state that the nature of reality or “what it is” is not immaterial to normative school. What normative school offers is the principles that forms the foundation of any social reality.

The more ambitious response to the criticism comes from normative theorists such as Alan Gewirth that rights such as freedom and well-being can be derived from basic requirements of human action. Similarly, John Rawls states that his veil of ignorance which is required to set a foundation of social order is not necessarily based on any factual values but has principles suitable to cover any prospective members of the society. (Rawls, John, 1971)

Relativism

Moral relativists do not believe in the notion of absolute morality, they argue that all morality is relative hence there cannot be an inherently good value. The values are always about each other and if that is the case then there can not be truly any normative value. Communitarians might argue that in a community there might be values that are inherently good or desirable while some values or notions must be avoided at all costs. What makes this possible is the common language which communicates such values in any particular social order. But this argument has a loophole: the world is not one common culture that shares one common



language, therefore for moral relativists, it might be too optimistic to assume that there might be a universal common value that is considered desirable by everyone. Normative reply to this by stating that there are certain goods or values which are deemed desirable at least by a certain section of the population across the globe. For example, feminism as a movement that is based on the equality of all sexes has found recognition in almost all the countries across the globe.

Determinism

There is a school of thought which believes that individuals are incapable of being autonomous agents which is a precondition of moral choosing. They are always constrained, forced, or even coerced into making decisions or claims in society. There are multiple forms of determinism, some argue that individuals are constrained by hidden structures or historical processes, economic life. Some determinists believe individuals to be constrained by national traditions or even supernatural. Some determinists believe that we are determined by our subconscious or genetic inheritance. There are two things to be considered: are all the above-stated determinants free from moral choices or to be precise “value-free”? The second is that determinism may constraint choices or reduce the scope of option in any particular choice. But does it mean that the alternatives which are left cannot have inherent right or wrong in them? Two things can be offered by normative theory here: first that human agency is always possible in situations where it might not seem plausible: a person who is at gunpoint may still have options however limiting. The second is that even deterministic factors are a result of some moral context.

2.4.2 Historical Approach

The historical approach comes from the idea that political phenomenon must always be better understood in a historical context such as an event place or date, for example, would World War I still happen if Archduke Franz Ferdinand would not have been assassinated?

Political theorists such as Niccollo Machiavelli, George Sabine, William Archibald Dunning believe that politics is always linked to the historical context of the order. Sir John Seeley went so far as to state that “History is past politics, politics is present history”.

The historical approach in politics can have two engagements: that the present laws which dictate politics arrive from an analysis of historical events for example the historical materialism process theorized by Marx and Hegel. Second is an attempt to understand political thought through history, an example for this would be George Sabine’s “A history of political thought”. (Sabine G.H et al 1973) The historical political theory stands for taking historical events into account. The historical approach also helps in setting up a chronological



of political events. These past events must be political relevance or implications for the present, for example, one cannot understand the structure of present modern states without understanding the treaty of Westphalia of 1848. These events provide the matter on which political theory regarding a phenomenon could be understood. Researchers may discover how governments, political parties, and a variety of other institutions functioned in the past and their successes and failures, from which they can draw lessons that will aid them in their future decisions. There however needs to be a critical attitude towards evaluating historical events, the proverb “history is written by victors” must be taken in the literal sense. Who documents events and for what purpose? Are there certain sections of society whose voices are not taken into account? Certain events which might be left out or missed? Alan Ball takes up these issues and states “past evidence does leave-alarming gaps, and political history is often simply a record of great men and great events, rather than a comprehensive account of total political activity.” (Ball, A.R et al, 2000)

Hence, one needs to be discerning in the evaluation of history. However, to rectify this a school of thought “subaltern studies” have been developed to document the history of the marginalized section of people to take into account their voices in history which are normally excluded.

The best illustration of the historical approach is the work of George H. Sabine who gave a very practical definition of political science. (Sabine et. al,1973) He proposed that political science needs to be included in every subject which is discussed by prominent political philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, or Plato. In their writings, we could find solutions to the problems these philosophers have posed about the reality or validity of political beliefs. Throughout history, political philosophers have pondered issues such as the meaning of freedom, why men obey the government, the extent of government activities, and the meaning of equality. In addition, if these political philosophers have not effectively addressed concerns regarding the state, the relationship between the state and society, and the relationship between the individual and the state, we may create a list of topics and explore them in-depth.(ibid) These are the roots of political thinking, according to conservative theorists. Sabine and other traditional authors have placed a strong emphasis on the historical approach. For Sabine Political theory advances in a “reference to a pretty specific situation” and, therefore, reconstruction of “the time, place and the circumstances in which it was produced” becomes imperative. A political theory always exists in a context but that does not mean that it is not relevant in a different context or time frame. As a consequence, a strong political theory has everlasting significance, even if it is the outcome of a one-of-a-kind set of historical circumstances. It is exactly because political philosophy is universal that it has legitimacy. According to Sabine, a typical political theory combines “factual declarations



regarding the condition of events that gave birth to it,” “statements of what may be roughly dubbed a causal kind,” and “statements that something ought to happen or is the right and desirable thing to have happened.” According to Sabine, political theories are made up of three elements: factual, causal, and valuation. Political views that have a lot of sways have usually emerged during times of hardship and pressure. There have been two periods of about fifty years each in two places of quite restricted areas where political philosophy has thrived the most in the known history of more than two thousand years – (1) in Athens, between the second and third quarters of the fourth century B.C., when Plato and Aristotle wrote their great works, and (2) in England, between 1640 and 1690, when Hobbes, Locke, and others developed their political theories. (ibid)

Significant changes occurred throughout each of these periods in Europe's social and intellectual history. As Sabine would put it, great political ideas are “hidden” in the “interstices of political and social crises.” They are generated not by crises in and of themselves, but by the reaction intellectuals have to them. To fully appreciate political theory, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the period, region, and circumstances in which it arose. (ibid)

The political philosopher may not actively engage in his day's politics, but he is influenced by it, and he attempts fiercely to influence it in his own time. According to Sabine, political theories “have a dual purpose” in that they influence ideas that become causes and serve as causal events in historical settings while also belonging to the abstract domain of thought. It's also crucial to understand if a political ideology is accurate or incorrect, sound or ludicrous, trustworthy or untrustworthy. This brings up the question of values. As a result, we must make every effort to include factual, causal, and valuational elements into our understanding of political theory.

Historical Approach: An Analysis

From several perspectives, the historical technique of understanding politics has been criticized. One of the fundamental fulcrums of the concerns is that history has two faces: factual documentation, which is relatively crude, and factual and phenomenon interpretation, which is more nuanced. The accumulating evidence must once again be examined in its proper context. The conclusion is that when analyzing data and facts, sufficient caution should be applied, and it is not surprising that this caution is not always practiced, resulting in historical facts that do not meet the intended objective of people who use them. This is the most serious critique leveled against the historical approach to political research. In this regard, we might recollect the point of view of a critic.

“History in the light of the best modern practice is to be sharply distinguished from the



antiquarianism or the collection of facts for their own sake and should be defined rather as the study of problems or causes, the interpretation of phenomena”. The historian's level of attention, of course, cannot be foreseen ahead of time. It is determined by the individual as much as the facts. However, it is necessary to use caution. Vigilance is required since history contains misleading information. Accurately recording facts and events are not always feasible. This isn't a fabricated charge.

Alan Ball states “past evidence does leave—alarming gaps, and political history is often simply a record of great men and great events, rather than a comprehensive account of total political activity.” (Ball et al, 2000) Few historians give historical events and facts a broad and liberal interpretation. They have a warped vision of reality due to their narrow perspective. Political science could not have a more strong and secure foundation. The historian must be truthful and objective in their assessment of the data when acquiring it. Such an approach can only improve the study of politics.

Sir Ivor Jennings is a well-known British constitutional specialist, and his interpretations of several aspects of the British Constitution are still considered trustworthy. His perspective on history is singular. His research was aided by the depth of his analysis, the breadth of his vision, and the objectivity with which he treated his subjects, and students of politics still remember him. (Jennings I, 1959) Based on historical documents, Jennings has compiled a detailed description of the British Prime Minister, Parliament, and other government ministries. Robert Mackenzie (Mackenzie, R.T, 1955) researched the party system, while Mackintosh investigated the workings of England's cabinet system. Their method is historical, although the records have been carelessly construed. (Mackintosh et al 1872) The words of these authors are both inspiring and precedent-setting. Many other academics have relied on historical evidence to examine politics. Many have been successful, but not all.

2.4.3 Empirical Approach (Empiricism)

The history of empirical approach can be traced back to Aristotle (384-22 BCE) who attempted to classify constitutions and to Machiavelli (1469-1527 CE) who gave a realistic account of statecraft in *The Prince*. Even John Rawls (1921-2002) also used empirical method for theorizing at his principles of justice. In many ways such writings form the fundamental basis of what we today read as comparative government and politics, and gave rise to a principally institutional approach to the subject. Empirical approach is the doctrine which believes that all the hypothesis and theories should be tested by a practical process of observation and experiment. This approach out rightly rejects theories that make value judgements as having the status of knowledge. John Locke (1632-1704), advocated that the brain of a human is a *tabula rasa* (blank tablet) on which information gets imprinted in the



form of sense-data through the use of our senses. In the twentieth century empirical approach has got closely associated with reasonableness or pragmatism, as an epistemological theory. All forms of empiricism draw a clear line of difference between ‘facts’, that are arguments that have been supported by experience, observation and experiment, and ‘values’, which are mere beliefs and opinions that cannot be trusted upon. In a nutshell empirical approach seeks to establish a dispassionate and impartial approach to political analysis in order to provide an account of the political reality. Unlike the normative approach which is ‘prescriptive’ in nature which attempts to make only judgements and offer recommendations; empirical approach is ‘descriptive’ in nature as it seeks to analyze and explain phenomena.

Thus, empirical approach forms the basis for the later on rise of other pragmatic approaches like positivism and behaviorialism. Under the influence of positivism, political theorists marched in the lights of gaining scientific understanding about the political processes based on principles that could be objectively confirmed and proven. As a result they strove to develop a natural science of society, and philosophy was reduced to a simple branch of science in the process. Such a view of theory also presented the function of the theorist as that of a detached spectator, devoid of any loyalties and ideals. The golden years of this approach were in the early twentieth century, whereby it reached greater heights, and has subsequently been come under attack. Stringent empiricism has been criticized on the ground that it tends to produce a simplistic model of science that has been badly dented by the advances in Philosophy of Science. The empirical approach has significantly enhanced our knowledge of the theoretical foundations of political science, is now being utilized for better understanding of classical questions, including those which are eventually value-judgements. Science relies on evidence, similarly Political Science also bank on empirical and logical statements. It is maintained that value-free accurate observation and reasoning by different persons would lead to similar conclusion; hence empirical and logical evidences may be verified.

2.5 SUMMARY

To summarize, Political Theory is an independent domain within the broader subject of Political Science. Political Theory is an attempt to understand what the political order is. It is formal, logical and systematics study of the political activity and its consequences. It is a combination of description and explanation form of writing. It tries to give political things some order, consistency and significance. Theoretical statements regarding the nature of politics are more important to political theorists than empirical claims about the nature of politics. As Sabine states, ‘Political theory is, quite simply, man's attempts to consciously understand and solve the problems of his group life and organization. It is the disciplined



investigation of political problems not only to show what a political practice is, but also to show what it means. In showing what a practice means, or what it ought to mean, political theory can alter what it is.' There are several approaches to understand the politics and political realities broadly clubbed under two categories- Traditional and Modern. While the traditional ones dominated till World War II, Contemporary ones which were pragmatic in approach rule the world of Political Theory till date. These approaches help one understand critical concepts like State, Society, Values etc.

2.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTION

1. Distinguish between Political Theory, Political Philosophy and Political Science.
2. Write a short note on the contemporary approaches to Political Theory.
3. Site the differences between Normative and Empirical Approaches.

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TRADITIONS OF POLITICAL THEORY: LIBERAL, MARXIST, ANARCHIST, AND CONSERVATIVE

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STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Liberal Tradition
 - 3.3.1 Core Themes
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3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After reading this unit, we will be able

- To make students aware of political traditions of liberalism, marxism, anarchism, and conservatism.
- To make students understand the differences between the existing political traditions.
- To make students understand the implication of political tradition on the socio-political and economic order.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The idea of political tradition is not static, it could mean anything from believing in a set of values - such as voting for one political party to a set of beliefs such as freedom of speech and expression. The major tenant of a political tradition however is represented by consistency although that might not always be the case. For example, the proponents of negative liberty believe that the state is inherently “evil” whereas proponents of positive liberty associate the state with a proactively positive role of the state.

This chapter focuses on four major political traditions: Liberalism, Marxism, Anarchism, and Conservatism. The chapter attempts to understand *what* these traditions are, the *central tenants* or themes of these traditions, and the *differences* which exist within these traditions.

3.3 LIBERAL TRADITION

The liberal tradition of Political Science is derived from the Latin word *liber* which refers to a class of free people. The idea of Liberty represents the freedom of an individual which is consistent with the freedom of the society the individual inhabits. Liberalism works on the premise of constitutionalism and consent and the state under liberal tradition works under the principle of Laissez-Faire i.e leave the man alone. The pillar of liberalism is to protect the citizen from the tyranny of the government. Liberalism as a political alternative emerged after the breakdown of Feudalism in Western Europe. The idea of liberty and freedom, to break away from the hierarchical feudal division of power created radical shifts across Europe. The English civil war in the seventeenth century, French Revolution in 1789, and the American Revolution in 1776. All three of them were based on questioning the divine rights of monarchical powers which derived their legitimacy from an unelected aristocracy. Liberalism became the rallying cry of the middle class who wanted to replace absolutism with the idea of constitutionalism that is being governed by laws that are consensually agreed upon rather



than the will of a single ruler. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1996)

The development of Liberalism as a political tradition was also a result of industrialization happening in 19th century Europe. Industrialization offered economic mobility to a certain section of society that was previously not in a position to assert its rights. Liberalism thus opened doors for a “rising middle class” that was previously out of the decision-making processes. The context of liberal tradition as mentioned is eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. It was largely influenced by Enlightenment which subscribed to the values of universal reason and the potential of human beings to flourish under the aegis of Personal Autonomy (Bhargava & Acharya, 2008).

3.3.1 Core Themes

Individualism

The liberal tradition puts the individual as the central unit of analysis, the individual is both, an entity with unique attributes and inner qualities specific to themselves and at the same level as other individuals. The idea that an individual should have the full autonomy to develop their potential to the maximum extent possible is an article of faith of liberal tradition. Special reference needs to be made to two thinkers here. Immanuel Kant expressed a belief in the dignity and equality of all human beings and how individuals are an end to themselves. On the other hand, C.B Macpherson characterizes liberalism as “possessive individualism” due to liberalism overemphasis on individual who is first and foremost concerned with their interest and welfare rather than the welfare of the society. (Barry, B.1979)

Freedom

The idea of freedom is the unifying force of the entire liberal ideology. Human existence is not fulfilled unless nourished by the idea of liberty. Freedom is the means to the ends of individuals. However, the liberal tradition does not endorse liberty which infringes the liberty of others in the social order. John Stuart Mill terms this as a harm principle where the liberty of one person does not harm the liberty of anyone else. He divides every action as “self-regarding” and “other-regarding”. Self regarding action allows the individual to enjoy absolute freedom and the other regarding which can restrict the freedom of others or do them damage.

Similarly, John Rawls endorses the idea that everyone has entitled to the widest possible liberty that is consistent with a like liberty for all. (Rawls, J.1971) While the idea of freedom is a common ground for liberals across the spectrum, the agreement on what it means to be free is not settled. Isaiah Berlin for example distinguishes between two kinds of liberty -



Negative Liberty and Positive Liberty. The former is negative in the sense that it denotes an absence of external restrictions or constraints i.e., an individual is to be left alone and must be able to act in a way he or she prefers. Positive Liberty on the other hand represents that one is autonomous or one's own master. Here the individual has the liberty to develop his or her skills and talent to achieve their fullest possible potential. (Berlin, I, 1958)

Reason

The liberal tradition gains its legitimacy from the idea of reason. Individuals are free or are at liberty because they are capable of thinking rationally and deciding on and pursuing their best interests. Liberals are strongly biased against the values of paternalism which is authority exercised from above and is modeled on the relationship between father and child. The second key of the reason is the idea of progress and advancement, the power of reason gives human beings the capacity to transform their lives and fashion their destinies. The third pillar for the case of the reason is Knowledge, it is only through knowledge that an individual can be free from superstition and prejudice. Finally, Reason dictates the ideas of supporting discussion debate, and arguments, the liberals staunchly believe that conflict can be settled through debate and negotiation, the use of violence is only justified for self-defense, countering oppression, and defending one's liberty. That is also when one has exhausted the capacity to reason and argue. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1996).

Justice

Justice in a more general sense is giving an individual what they are due i.e. what is entitled to them. The liberal idea of justice on the other hand represents different types of equality. The tenets of equality for liberals are based on the idea that individuals have equal moral worth. The second foundational principle is the idea of equal citizenship i.e. each citizen is entitled to rights and liberties extended to the next citizen. Factors such as class, caste, gender, race, color. Liberalism in this sense is "difference blind". The idea of liberty enforces the principle of legality in the decision-making and electoral process where every citizen gets a vote and that vote has one value. (Bell, D, 2014) The third tenant of liberal justice is the idea of equality of justice, there needs to be an equal playing field. The idea is that an individual must have equal opportunities to develop their unique skills and abilities. This leads to the idea of "meritocracy" that is one's social position is defined by one's ability and hard work. (Riesman, D, 1967)

Toleration

"I detest what you say but will defend till death your right to say it" - Voltaire

Along with the ideas of justice, individualism, and freedom; is vital of toleration. Toleration



is built on the fact that individuals may differ in endowments, opinions, gender, caste, religious inclinations sexualities, etc but they must be free to pursue their for liberal tradition stand. John Locke for example defended an individual right to pursue his or her religion without the interference of the state. J.S Mill in his treatise titled *On liberty* defended the right to freedom of speech by arguing:

“If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person was of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind”(Mill, J.S 1859).

3.3.2 The Liberal State

The values of liberal tradition cannot be realized on their own, they require a mechanism and a political social order to be implemented. Here the idea of a liberal state creeps in, Liberals staunchly believe that both law and governance are necessary to prevent individuals from exploiting each other. The liberty of one person must not become a license to abuse another. Freedom must be therefore be exercised within the means of law. As John Locke eloquently puts is “Where there is no law there is no freedom”. John Locks and Thomas Hobbes thus proposes the idea of a social contract where individuals get into a contract with a sovereign state whose purpose is to defend the individual’s life and liberty. In exchange, the individual is expected to follow the laws and obey the government. The social contract is based on two premises that political authority comes in the sense “from below” (authority elected by the people) and that the state acts as an umpire or a neutral referee in society. The liberal state follows the idea of constitutionalism where the government derives its power and legitimacy from an agreed-upon set of laws and principles that are consensually agreed upon by the citizens. This prevents any potential tyranny by the government which also has to work within the constraints of a constitution. Another requiem of the liberal state is the idea of a liberal democracy which is based on the idea that competing interests of the society can be represented via the idea of political equality where each individual has a stake in the collective decision-making power. (Das, R.J, 1996).

3.3.3 The Schools of the Liberal Tradition

Classical

The classical tradition comes into being during the transition of feudalism to capitalism predominantly in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and Classical Liberal tradition subscribes to certain ideas which differentiate it from Modern Liberalism: ideas of egotistical individualism i.e individuals are self-interested. The second concept is negative liberty, in which the individual is free of all restrictions; the third concept is that the state is a



"necessary evil," as Thomas Paine put it, in that it is required to provide conditions for orderly existence but is evil in that it imposes a collective will on individuals. (Paine, T, 1975). Finally, the classical liberals subscribe to the positive impact of civil society which is the "realm of freedom" as opposed to the state which is a "realm of coercion".

According to Stanford Encyclopedia Of Philosophy Tenet of Classical liberalism are:

Rights: For Thomas Jefferson and John Locke Natural rights are endowed on human beings by God and thus cannot be violated by anyone. **Utilitarianism:** Utilitarianism as a doctrine was developed by Jeremy Bentham and J.S Mill. Bentham advocated a utilitarian social order which was based on "the greatest happiness of the greatest masses" here the values of pain and pleasure for Bentham were understood in the quantitative sense where each action had an equal worth. Mill modifies this idea where he deemed that every action differs qualitatively where it brings different degrees of pain and pleasure. Certain acts hold more pleasure or pain than others.

Economic Liberalism: Adam Smith and David Ricardo endorsed the idea of freedom of the market which was invariably linked to the freedom of individuals who are making voluntary economic association with each other. The forces of demand and supply are adequate to regulate these associations.

Social Darwinism: The idea of Social Darwinism is derivative of the theory proposed by Darwin in the origin of species by Darwin of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. Here the individual will only survive based on his one merit and hard work. **Neoliberalism or Neoclassical Liberalism:** The idea of neoclassical liberalism was "counter-revolution" which was to halt or reverse the trend towards big government and state intervention. The idea of the market was supreme to the government and must be free from any political control.

Modern Liberalism

The idea of modern liberalism developed in the 20th century in the later stages of industrialization to address the spread of slums, poverty, ignorance, and disease. The idea of unrestricted freedom of individuals and a free market could not translate into an equally just society. Modern Liberalism was based on certain values which differed from the classical ones: The idea of Individuality- According to J.S Mill liberty did not just mean the absence of constraints but also a positive and constructive force where individuals take control of their destiny and achieve self-realization. He believed in the idea of individuality which is the fulfillment of self achieved through the realization of an individual distinctive or unique identity or qualities that distinguish one person from all others. The second value endorsed by the Modern Liberals is the idea of Positive Freedom advocated by T.H Green who believed the pursuit of unrestricted profit was responsible for giving rise to poverty and injustice, he



emphasizes individuals who are egotistical but are constrained by some degree of altruism that is the concerns for interests and welfare of others based on either enlightened self-interest or belief in common humanity. Social Liberalism was sought by the Modern Liberals where the minimal state was to be replaced by a welfare state which takes the responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens discharged through a range of social security, health education, and other services. The final tenant of modern liberalism is the idea of economic management. The modern liberals discarded the idea of *Laissez Faire* and instead replaced it with the Keynesian doctrine which is named after John Maynard Keynes who in his *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (Keynes, 1936) argued that government could manage their economies by influencing the levels of aggregate demand.

3.4 MARXIST TRADITION

Marxism as a school of political thought is a compilation or is inspired by the ideas developed by Karl Marx and to some extent Friedrich Engels in the 19th Century. Marxism can be largely divided into three disciplinary fields, an economic and political program, a theory of history, and philosophical anthropology. Marxism as a political agenda has been utilized throughout history, the Russian revolution in 1917, where the ideas of Marx were influenced by the work of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin under the umbrella of Marxism-Leninism. Offshoots of Marxism are adapted by scholars like Leon Trotsky, Mao Zedong, etc. Post World War 2 the world was divided into two opposing camps, one representing liberal Capitalism in the United States of America and the other influenced by Marx's idea of revolution: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. Given the controversy, passions, and regrettable bloodshed in the names of Marxian philosophy, it becomes imperative to understand the core tenants of Marxism.

3.4.1 Historical Materialism

In 1859, in *The Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx formulated his ideas of society as follows:

“In the social production that men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness



of men which determines their existence; it is, on the contrary, their social existence which determines their consciousness.”(Marx, K 1970)

Marx here established the idea of a historic bloc of society where the society is based on an economic base that dictates all social relationships in the society. It is the economic position according to Marx which determines one socio-political position in society. If the above paragraph is understood emphasizes to it establishes two major points of Marxian philosophy:

1. The basic structure of a society is its economic structure which consists of (a) the “material forces of production,” that is, the labor and means of production, and (b) the larger “production relations,” which refers to the social and political institutions that control production and distribution.
2. A superstructure arises from this economic base, consisting of legal and political “forms of social consciousness” that correspond to the economic foundation. One’s political and social ideology, consciousness, and location are all determined by one’s economic base, which Marx refers to as a class. The economic foundation of social order lies at the heart of Marx’s whole school of thinking.

The idea of class thus becomes the referent unit of Marxian analysis where Marx states that “The history of all existing society is the history of class struggle”. History for Marx goes in a dialectical form where there is a Thesis, Synthesis, and Antithesis. The progression is enabled by the struggle between the two classes which gives rise to a new structure of society that is based on the resulting economic order. The class struggle, therefore, is expressed in a dialectical nature. Two classes are opposed to each other through various points in history: The owners of the means of production which is the bourgeoisie and the workers which are the proletariats. Historical materialism explains the progressive nature of the history of class struggle. Primitive communism, in the hunting-gathering stages there was no private property hence there were no classes. Ancient history had a class of slave owners who were the oppressing class and slaves who were the oppressed class. During the Feudal period, the Landowners were the oppressing class and serfs were the oppressed class. During the Capitalist period, it is the bourgeoisie and proletariats, in the socialist phase the oppressing class would be the state managers and the workers would be oppressed, and eventually, communism would come into being and there will be classes in society. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003)



3.4.2 Alienation

Alienation comes from the Latin work Alienare which means to remove or take away. For Karl Marx, it is a social or political process. He uses the term entfremdung which translates into estrangement which is separation or detachment from things to which they are naturally tied to. Entfremdung represents the situation of separation from social affairs and estrangement of their human nature i.e species essence as a result of living in a class-based, class-conscious stratified society. (Petrovic, G 1963)

Workers in a capitalist order are compelled to sell their labor to the capitalist and lose control over it and their labor becomes simply a means to the end of capitalists. They also have no control over the product of their labor. Their labor itself which is their life activity does not belong to them. They get estranged from their labor and the product of their labor. Hence the workers become alienated from their own self and own nature and also alienated from other human beings as well as their work. Alienation for Marx is of four types:

1. Objectification is the alienation of a worker from the product of his or her own labor
2. Self-Alienation is the alienation of a worker from his or her own self and activity where the labor is simply producing for the ends of a capitalist profit. The worker is merely a cog in the capitalist machine. Labour does not add value to his being but is simply a means to survive and thus is alienated from himself or herself
3. Species-Alienation Man according to Marx is not an atomistic individual but has an inner life or spiritual being which is based on previous history. According to Marx, it is labor that distinguishes man from other lower animals. Man can only produce when he is free and the production conforms with the ordains of nature. A condition which is not allowed by capitalism hence man is alienated from his species being
4. Alienation from other people - If a person is alienated from his or her species being, they would be alienated from their fellow beings. (ibid)

3.4.3 State and Revolution in Marxist Tradition

Apart from liberal state theory, Marxist state theory is arguably the most well-known. Marxist ideology not only questions the fundamental conceptions of the liberal state but also emphasizes that it enslaves the majority of men in society to organizational achieve its goals and that it must be abolished or crushed for common men to be free. However, one issue with the academic examination of the Marxist theory of the state is that the theory has never been rigorously examined by Marx. (Ypi, L.2014)

“Political power, properly so-called, is just the organized power of one class for dominating



another,” Marx writes in the communist manifesto. “The executive of the contemporary state is merely a committee for administering the common concerns of the whole bourgeoisie,” says the same book. (Marx, Karl 1818-1883)

Marx, Engels, and their followers (especially Lenin) were skeptical of the social contract theory as a source of state formation. They took a mechanistic approach to the origins, emphasizing that, while the state is man's invention, there is no emotion or concept behind it, just the impact of material conditions, which they called economic conditions.

They've classified society's evolution into four categories: ancient communist society, slave society, feudal society, and industrial society. There was no state in the original communist society since private property did not exist. The private property system served as a possible catalyst for the emergence of the state. Where the anti-state came to exist as a defense to private property. For Marxist State will wither away with a communist revolution. People will be able to move to a radical transformation of their position through revolution after they have become conscious of their loss, alienation, as a universal inhuman predicament. This revolution will pave the way for the return of liberty and the foundation of communism.

“In the place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and its class antagonisms, there will be an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all”.

3.5 ANARCHIST TRADITION

The word Anarchy comes from the Greek word Anarkhos which means “without rule”. It was first used in a negative sense during the French Revolution to discredit the protesters. Anarchism popularly means chaos and disorder. The first time the word was used in a positive sense by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in his text *What is Property?* He declared, “I am an anarchist”. (Proudhon, 1993) anarchists believe that the state is both evil and unnecessary, their idea of stateless society through the abolition of law and government. The core value of anarchism is unrestricted personal autonomy.

The first statement of the Anarchist principle was produced by William Godwin in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. (Godwin, W, 1793) However, Anarchism as a political tradition has been unusual in the sense that its philosophy has not succeeded in winning power at least national level. The closest Anarchy came to be as a political force is post the Spanish Civil war where anarchists controlled the eastern part of Spain and set up workers' and peasants' collectives throughout Catalonia. Anarchists emphasize a non-hierarchical and egalitarian social order.



3.5.1 Core Themes

Anarchists' central belief is the opposition to the state or any form of government and law. Anarchists endorse the idea of a stateless society in which free individuals manage their affairs by voluntary agreement without compulsion and coercion. Anarchism as a doctrine is wanting on two accounts: the first is the assumption that Moral assertion is stronger in anarchism than analysis and explanation. Anarchism focuses more on the fact that human beings are morally good and are drawn to freedom and autonomy, than on analyzing how to challenge the system of state oppression. The second is that anarchism is a less coherent theory in its own right and more of a midpoint between two other political traditions: "Ultra-liberalism" so far it emphasizes extreme liberal individualism and form of ultra socialism which emphasizes extreme socialist collectivism. Both of them represent an anti-state attitude (Stanford, Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). However anarchism is different from both these schools of thought in significant ways, Anarchism central tenants are:

Anti-Statism

Sebastien Faure in his treatise *Encyclopedie anarchiste* which consists of four-volume defined anarchism as 'the negation of the principle of Authority'. Authority according to anarchists is opposed to absolute freedom and unrestrained political equality. Authority according to anarchists gives one person the right to influence the behavior of others, enslaves, oppresses, and limits human life.

The anarchist critique of authority is centered organizational on political authority, particularly when it is backed up by contemporary state apparatus. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon captures the essence of the anarchist critique of law and government in the following words:

To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in. indoctrinated, perched at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded; all by creatures that have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue. In a nutshell state by anarchists is seen as nothing less than legalized oppression operating in the interests of the powerful, propertied and privileged and is inherently evil.

The basis of this critique lies in how anarchists view human nature. They believe the almost utopic human nature can be easily influenced by or corrupted by political power or economic inequality. As a result, a state that is the repository of sovereign, obligatory, and coercive authority is nothing short of a concentrated form of evil.

Utopianism

Unlike the social contract theorists which believe that man in the state of nature is short nasty and brutish, anarchists believe in the natural goodness, or at least potential goodness, of



humankind. From the perspective of anarchists state is not required to create a harmonious social order, it will arise spontaneously and naturally.

For collective anarchists, the human capacity for sociable and cooperative behaviors will come naturally and for individualistic anarchists, it is the enlightened human reason which will enable cordiality. (Parsons, L.E, 1890)

Anti-Clericalism

Anti clericalism for anarchists is stemmed from a similar distaste for authority that they show towards the state. Religion itself has been seen as a source of authority in general. The idea of God required complete submission to a higher authority. This submission must be unconditional and unquestioned. Religion does not leave any space for free will or individual autonomy and thus anarchists find themselves at odds with religion. (ibid)

Economic Freedom

Besides the anti-state state attitude, Anarchists hope to transform the social and economic system. Bakunin states “Political power and wealth are inseparable”. When anarchism initially developed as a political camp it grounded itself in the workers’ movement which was driven by socialist principles. However, for anarchists, the ruling class was not understood in simply economic terms. It was anyone who had access to wealth, power, and privilege in society. Bakunin divided the social order into three parts: a large majority that was exploited, a smaller section who did exploit but was also exploited, and finally an elite group of oppressors and exploiters. All anarchists are against capitalism as well as state intervention which they felt was simply an extension of control in society. (Ibid)

3.5.2 Branches of Anarchism

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy in its compilation of Anarchism (2017) discuss the following schools of anarchist thought:

Anarcho-syndicalism is another name for Collectivist Anarchism. Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), a Russian anarchist, was the first to argue for the total elimination of private ownership of means of production and the state of the means. It, like Communism, advocated for the collective ownership and management of the means of production by the producers themselves. The revolution would be sparked by limited acts of violence perpetrated by an elite clique, inspiring workers to revolt and jointly seize control of the means of production. Workers would be compensated based on the amount of time they devote to output. The main distinction between communal and communist anarchism may be found here.

Communist Anarchism (or Anarcho-Communism): This school of thought advocates for a



free society with numerous self-governing communes that are linked through federation and have direct democracy or democracy based on common consent as to the political organizational structure.

The means of production will be used jointly rather than owned collectively. Rather than payment, the commune would have free access to resources and excess. Egalitarianism and the elimination of social hierarchy and class differentiation are central to anarchy Communism. It is unique in that it represents both the eradication of capitalism and the abolition of money.

During the English Civil War (1642-1651) and the French Revolution, early Anarchist Communist currents emerged (1788 - 1799). Although the Frenchman Joseph Déjacque (1821 - 1864) was an earlier example, Peter Kropotkin (1842 - 1921) and Emma Goldman (1869 - 1940) are arguably the neoliberals emphasizes best-known Anarcho-Communists. In the early twentieth century, anarcho-syndicalism was a form of anarchism that focused largely on the labor movement. It advocates revolutionary trade unions as a tool for social transformation, intending to replace was capitalism and the state with a new society controlled democratically by workers. It seeks to abolish the wage system as well as private ownership of industrial assets, both of which it thinks contribute to class divisions. Communist or Collectivist Anarchism (see above) is commonly followed by Anarcho-Syndicalists, and the movement is more of a workplace organizational framework than a full economic theory.

Individualist Anarchism (or Libertarian Anarchism)

Individualist anarchism is focused on the pursuit of self-interest and individual conscience. They think that any collective entity or public power will only result in individual tyranny. Individualist anarchism can be argued to coincide with the concept of negative liberty. Positive liberty is emphasized in social anarchism. Individualist Anarchism promotes the private property and the market economy, although some adherents think surplus should be distributed.

William Godwin (1756 - 1836) argued for an extreme version of Individualist Anarchy, urging the abolition of all forms of labor collaboration. Max Stirner (1806 - 1856), one of the first and most well-known proponents of Individualist Anarchism, suggested an extreme egoist variant of it, which supports the person doing precisely what he wants without regard for God, state, or moral norms.

There are several types of Individualist Anarchism, including the following:

Mutualism is an anarchist school of thought associated with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-



1865), who envisioned a society in which each individual might own a means of production, either individually or collectively, with trade reflecting equal amounts of labor (the labor theory of value). Mutualists support markets and private property in labor's product only to the extent that they guarantee the worker's right to the entire result of their labor. Mutualists, according to some observers, are more concerned with the association and so fall halfway between Individualist and Social or Collectivist Anarchism.

Individualist Anarchism, often known as Free-Market Anarchism (or Anarcho-Capitalism), is a more radical variant of Individualist Anarchism that tries to reconcile Anarchism with Capitalism. It is an element of the libertarian movement. It advocates for the state's abolition, as well as the provision of law enforcement, courts, national defense, and all other security services in a free market rather than through compulsory taxation; complete deregulation of non-intrusive personal and economic activities; and a self-regulated market.

Agorism is a radical form of anarcho-capitalism and libertarianism developed by Samuel Edward Konkin III (1947 - 2004) and based on Murray Rothbard's (1926 - 1995) ideas, with the ultimate goal of a society in which all human interactions are voluntary exchanges, a completely free market in an underground or "counter economy" in which the State is obsolete.

3.5.3 Roads to Anarchy

Anarchists are anti-political in the sense that they are repelled by conventional processes and machinery of politics. They limit their scope to simply writing and experimenting in communal or cooperative politics. So what methods do anarchists pursue to realize their goals?

Revolutionary Non-violence

The 19th century saw a period where anarchist leadership tried to provoke the masses for insurrection and revolt. Michael Bakunin for example led to a conspiratorial brotherhood, the Alliance for Social Democracy in anarchist risings of France and Italy. But more or less Anarchist uprisings failed to gather long-term momentum since they support spontaneous action rather than the careful organization.

Anarchist violence has been prominent in two periods particularly: the Late 19th century, reaching its peak in the 1890s and again in the 1970s. Anarchists have employed terrorism or clandestine violence often involving bombing or assassination designed to create an atmosphere of terror or apprehension. For anarchists violence itself is justified as a form of revenge and retribution.



Direct Action

Short of a revolutionary assault on existing society anarchists have employed tactics of direct action. Direct action may change from passive resistance to terrorism. Anarcho-Syndicalists for example refuse to engage in electoral politics instead exert pressure on employers by boycotting their products, sabotaging machinery, and organizing strike action. From anarchists' point of view, direct action has two advantages. The first is that it is uncontaminated by the process of government and machinery of the state. The second is that direct action can be organized based on decentralization and participatory decision-making.

Non-Violence

Anarchists like Godwin and Proudhon regard violence abhorrent principle. These latter anarchists have often been attracted to the principles of nonviolence and pacifism developed by the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi. The principle of nonviolence has appealed to anarchists for two reasons: First, it reflects a respect for human beings as moral and autonomous creatures. As a political approach, nonviolence has proven appealing. Mahatma Gandhi emancipated India with the use of Satyagrah based on principles of truth and non-violence.

3.6 Conservative Tradition

Conservatism as a term with political connotation was first used in the United States of America to imply a pessimistic state of affairs. The group of people who were opposed to the French Revolution was also deemed to be conservatives. In the United Kingdom "Conservatives" came to be known as "Tory" which became one of the two political parties in the UK. Conservatism stems from a desire to conserve other existing orders and resist any changes to the same. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2015)

It was Edmund's Burke *Reflection on the Revolution in France* which stated deep regret of the state of affairs in France kicked off the French revolution. According to Burke the destruction of the ancien regime was one of the worst atrocities in the history of mankind. The idea of conservatism was placed defensively against the changing social order of the 19th century. The trend towards conservatism has been varied across Europe and the western world: In the United Kingdom conservatism has been associated with the willingness to "change to preserve". The authoritarian conservatism which persisted in Europe in the early twentieth century especially in Germany and Italy only transformed post World War II, when conservative political groups finally accepted the ideas of political democracy and social reforms. (Burke, E, 2006)



The resilient character of conservatism is perhaps found in the fact that it is one of the most intellectually modest of political ideologies. It has been ironically constantly evolving through various stages of political history. The two biggest examples would be the new right which developed under Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom.

The problem with understanding conservatism is first it is easier to understand what they oppose. A second problem is the fact that defining conservatism runs at the risk of irritating conservatives themselves. They prefer to think of conservatism as a state of mind rather than a well-defined ideology. To understand what conservatism is the following tenets of conservatism are required to be understood.

3.6.1 Core Themes

Tradition

The major pillar of conservative tradition is its defense of tradition which could be religious faith or social order or even a form of authority such as monarchical tradition. There are also instances when all three snowball into one as was the medieval English society. Edmund Burke defined a social order based on all three- in terms of religion he stated that society was shaped by “the law of our creator”. Similarly, a society for Burke is a partnership between “those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born”. A tradition for conservatives is the repository of the wisdom of the past. The logic is that the values which have survived have done so only because they survived the test of time and therefore must not be tampered with.

In the United Kingdom, the monarchy still exists because it provides a focus on national loyalty. Tradition also gives both society and the individual a sense of identity, rootedness, and belonging. (Key elements of Conservatism)

Human Imperfection

Conservatives vouch for the notion that human beings are both imperfect and unpredictable. Human beings according to conservatives are firstly psychologically limited and dependent creatures who fear instability and isolation. They are drawn to what is “known”. They desire security which compels them to go for a social order which ensures stability in an unpredictable world. They subscribe to the Hobbesian view of human nature which is inherently selfish and greedy. Crime exists in society because of human nature. Only order can allow human beings from giving in to their violent and selfish impulses. Human beings' intellectual powers are also understood to be limited, for conservatives the world is far too complicated to be understood by human beings. Ideas must be grounded into something



which is known, in the case of conservatives that is tradition. (ibid)

Organic Society

As explained in the previous section human beings are security-seeking creatures, dependent on each other. According to anarchists, this makes them incapable of living without a society. The social order exists to nurture the individual. Society is what gives human life meaning. Freedom for anarchists cannot be understood in negative terms rather freedom is a willing acceptance of social obligation and ties by individuals who recognize their values. Freedom for conservatives is thus doing one's duty. Conservatives subscribe to the belief of organicism which is that society is like an organism or a living entity. With a society like an organism, the whole is more than the collection of parts. And it can "stay alive" if each part fulfills its assigned part or duty. An organic society comes into being naturally, which comes into being with natural social impulses such as love caring, and responsibility. This view of society has some relevant implications, If society is organic, its structures and institutions have been shaped by forces that are not in human control. Hence it must not be tampered with. (Ibid)

Hierarchy and Authority

Conservatives have long claimed that hierarchy and inequality are unavoidable aspects of every society. This implies that they believe that achieving real social equality, such as in terms of position, money, or power, is an unattainable goal. There is some overlap between Conservatism and Liberalism in this regard. While Liberals see inequality as a compromise that must be accepted to accommodate differences in likes or talents among people, Conservatives see it as something deeper that is essential to society's functioning - in other words, something that should be understood positively. Conservatives have insisted that it must be accepted that some should lead while others follow; that some should control while others work; and that some should go out to earn a living while others stay at home to raise children, based on the belief that everyone in society has their natural place and function. (ibid)

The Conservative focus on authority reinforces the aforementioned belief in a hierarchy and the inevitability of inequity. Conservatives see power as a natural entity that already exists and is imposed on us 'from above,' much like society itself. As a result, unlike Liberals, Conservatives do not believe that exercising legal power requires the explicit permission of the subject of the authority. This, it is said, would be meaningless because the authority holder must offer advice, support, and help to people who lack the capacity, knowledge, or experience to make their own decisions. Conservatives do not believe that authority that comes from above is a negative thing. Rather, it is seen to help to societal stability by instilling in the populace a feeling of what is expected of them. Furthermore, it is claimed that



having a clear authority helps to promote discipline. For these reasons, Conservatives have a reputation for being wary of attempts to undermine governmental authority. Indeed, doing so would be completely unacceptable to nineteenth-century Authoritarian Conservatives, who see political authority in whatever form as absolute. (ibid).

Property

Property is a notion that conservatives place a high value on. They think that having private property or assets offers several advantages. Conservatives, like many Liberals, accept the notion that property ownership is a manifestation of merit; that is, a person's ability to build a significant amount of property or money is a result of his desire to work hard throughout his life and put his abilities to good use. Many Conservatives, on the other hand, maintain that property ownership has broader social and psychological benefits.

First possession of property ensures financial security. Second, it is argued that a society that enables private property ownership drives its citizens to follow the law and behave lawfully. (ibid)

3.6.2 Types of Conservatism

Authoritarian Conservatism

Authoritarian conservatism comes from the tradition which has favored authoritarian rule, especially in Europe. Joseph De Maistre was one of the staunchest defenders of the French monarchy and the toughest critic of the French revolution. In his text *Le Pape* he endorsed the idea that above the earthly rule there exists a higher spiritual authority of the Pope. He stood for the preservation of order without which he felt the society would be thrown off in chaos and oppression. Another example of authoritarian rule was Russia where Russian ruler Tsar Nicholas I proclaimed the principles of “orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality”.

Paternalistic Conservatism

Paternalistic conservatism can be traced back to the Anglo-American tradition inspired by Edmund Burke who espoused that if the change is natural and inevitable then it must not be resisted. The characteristic of this style of conservatism is cautious, modest and pragmatic. The values of conservatism can only be preserved under practical circumstances. There are two strands of paternalistic conservatism:

One Nation conservatism Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom set up the foundations of this type of conservatism via his texts *Sybil* (1845) and *Coningsby* (1844). These novels focused on the principle of social obligation rather than extreme individualism. Disraeli's ideas can be best summed up as prudent and principal. He stated



that Britain was in danger of becoming two nations which are the Rich and the Poor. Social inequality would contain seeds of revolution. Hence it would be prudent to have reform to prevent any drastic revolution. Disraeli also appealed to the morality of getting wealth and privilege which must be accompanied by social obligation to the poor and the less well off. This concept came to be known as One Nation.

Christian Democracy

After world war II many Christian democratic parties adopted interventionist policies. The most significant of these parties were the Christian Democratic Union in West Germany and Christian Democratic Party in Italy. After the war, many conservatives abandoned their authoritarian stands and adopted the paternalistic social traditions of Catholicism. Catholic theory focuses on social groups rather than individuals and social harmony and balance rather than competition. Democratic corporatism was encouraged to highlight the importance of intermediate institutions such as churches, Unions, and Business groups which are all bound together with the notion of social partnership.

Libertarian Conservatism

Libertarian conservatism, sometimes known as conservative libertarianism, is a political theory that blends conservatism with libertarianism, with the libertarian side of conservatism representing the conservative wing and vice versa. Libertarian conservatism promotes maximum economic liberty and little government control of social life, similar to laissez-faire classical liberalism, but with a belief in a more socially conservative worldview emphasizing authority, morality, and responsibility. Libertarian conservatism, which has its roots in the United States, places a premium on liberty, encouraging free expression, freedom of choice, and free-market economics to achieve conservative goals while rejecting liberal social engineering. In the libertarian drive to minimize governmental power, libertarian conservatism may also be defined as strengthening civil society through conservative institutions and authority—such as family, country, church, and education.

New Right

Theorists believe that the free market is effective in achieving economic and political liberty. The works of Hayek and the American economist Milton Friedman contain the core concepts of the new right ideology. The new right is 'new,' but not in the sense that their ideas have never been heard before. Indeed, they are heavily influenced by Adam Smith and closely resemble the concerns of nineteenth-century liberal philosophy. When compared to the 'old right's preoccupations with tradition, moderation, and support for the postwar political consensus, they can only be described as 'new'.

Hayek's early 1940s book *The Road to Serfdom* and his 1960 book *The Constitution of*



Liberty both aimed at what he called "state socialism." Hayek associated socialism with the central planning of the economy. He does, however, state that market processes can only function successfully in the correct social and moral environment. To this purpose, he emphasizes the significance of tradition in passing on the cumulative knowledge and experience of past generations, which is paradoxically reminiscent of 'old right' thinking. Friedman's analysis of the assumed tradeoffs between lower unemployment and higher inflation levels provides the theoretical foundation for the attack on trade union strength. Friedman claimed that such tradeoffs were only conceivable in the short run. The 'nonaccelerating inflation rate of unemployment (NAIRU), often known as the natural rate of unemployment, is the equilibrium real wage at which the quantity of labor provided willingly matches the amount of labor employed voluntarily by companies in the long term. As a result, any natural rate of unemployment is frictional and structural. According to Friedman, the latter can only be dispersed by lowering the natural rate and eliminating the institutions that obstruct the labor supply. As a result, trade union authority is particularly targeted since it prevents jobless people from agreeing to labor for less than the natural rate of pay. The labor market will become more competitive and the natural rate of unemployment will decrease only if this power is decreased.

3.7 SUMMARY

The chapter attempts to create an understanding of various political traditions that exist in contemporary society. Any social order does not exist within a singular tradition, often overlapping values of different traditions come together to form a plethora of socio-political institutions. Each tradition has something to offer. Liberalism realizes the values of freedom and the role it can play in achieving individual self-realization. Marxism attempts to understand the cause of inequality and offers a way to rectify it. The anarchist school gives a unique alternative to a social order which exists and maintains itself without the state and the conservative stresses on the values of preservation of traditions and represents the continuity of social and political order.

3.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How does the positive conception of liberty differs from the negative conception of liberty?
2. What are the different stages of class struggle according to Marx?



3. What is the criticism of anarchist tradition? How do anarchists propose to reach their goals?
4. What are the different schools/branches of conservatism?
5. Differentiate between the Liberal and Marxist ideas of the state.

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Unit 4

**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN POLITICAL THEORY:
FEMINIST AND POSTMODERN**

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STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Feminist Perspective
 - 4.3.1 Schools of Feminism
 - 4.3.2 Waves of Feminism
 - 4.3.3 Post Feminism
 - 4.3.4 Personal is Political
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- 4.4 Post Modernism
 - 4.4.1 Defining Postmodernism
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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able

- To understand the social structures by which people are dominated and oppressed, also helping them to overcome domination.
- To understand Feminist perspective and Postmodern perspective.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

With the advancement in science and the arrival of enlightenment it was believed that it will lead to human emancipation. But in oppose to the universal common view critical perspective believes that science like other forms of knowledge has also been used as an instrument of oppression. Thus they warn against the blind faith in scientific progress and knowledge.

Critical Theory was established as a school of thought by the Frankfurt School Influenced by Western Marxist philosophy. It has been largely drawing upon the ideas of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. The primary development took place in 1930s in Germany. Major personalities and advocates of critical perspective were Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin and Max Horkheimer. Among them Max Horkheimer was the first and foremost as he defined critical theory for the very first time in his essay “*Traditional and Critical Theory*”. For him a traditional theory is one which only understanding or explaining the society but a critical theory is oriented toward the critiquing as well as changing society. So a theory can be understood as critical as far as it tries to liberate human beings from the enslaving situations. In that sense critical theory have emancipator tendencies.

Feminist theory and postmodernist theory have challenged the ongoing norms and tries to rescue people out of the illusion of science and erstwhile established knowledge system. Feminist at the one hand tries to the break the male dominance over the knowledge system and society, postmodernists challenge the modernist claim over about the universality and homogeneity of truth.

4.3 FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

How many political theorists do you come across while reading your political science text books? Probably very less number or sometimes no female at all, may be that is the reason some feminist claimed that the history of political theory is the history of male theorist. Not



only political theory but most of the fields are male dominated and male managed. The term feminism first came in use during the period of 1890s. But the origin of modern feminism can only be traced back to late seventeenth century surely not in its present form. Initially feminist started in its liberal form and the first full expression of liberal feminism came in Mary Wollstonecraft's book "*Vindication of the Rights of Woman*" (1792). Here she claimed that like men, women are also rational beings, hence they should be entitled to the equal rights as per men. She challenged her contemporaries who excluded the women from enjoying the full citizenship rights. She argued that women have the same potential for rationality that men have and thus there is no reason why women should not enjoy the same status that men enjoy. Nurture, not nature, argued Wollstonecraft, is the cause of gender distinctions. Wollstonecraft criticized such appeals to the 'natural' differences between men and women.

Not only women like Wollstonecraft was concerned with the equal rights for men and women but some enlightened men like John Stuart Mill was also advocated for the same. In the "*Subjection of Women*" 1869 Mill came up with full scale analysis of women's situation and advantages to society of giving them full legal and political equality as per with men. He advocated this because he believes that what is now considered as the nature of women is completely spurious and a result of a forced suppression and fabricated incitement.

4.3.1 Schools of Feminism

Feminist movement as a whole was concerned with the women rights and advocated for equality of sexes Vis-a-Vis challenged male dominance. But did not prescribed a universalized single path, different feminist have advocated different roots for women cause. Broadly speaking there can be three varieties of Feminist traditions namely liberal, socialist and radical feminism.

Liberal feminism emphasizes upon the equal worth of all individuals whether male and female. The main focus is on achieving gender equality through political and legal reforms within the liberal democratic framework. Liberal feminism has a great admiration and belief for the respective laws, the political institutions and the education. As they are among the most relevant factors of human development, the major source of inequality is the denial of equal legal and political rights. Unlike other major brands of feminism, liberal feminism did not undermine the existing institutions of power in liberal democratic societies thus seems more inclusive and socially progressive. They also believed that men can be an active participant in female struggle. As both are rational, they should be treating alike; both can complement each other in their fight. As some of men like JS Mill, have successfully done by advocating equal rights for women. The major feminist associated with this theory



include Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Stuart Mill, Helen Taylor, and Gina Krog, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, Rebecca Walker and many more. The primary concern for feminists is the liberation of women and liberal feminists believe that an enlightened version of liberalism can inspire a public philosophy that will help in counter the present social injustices.

Many feminists believe that liberalism is the source of the problem and not the solution. Liberal feminists initially wanted equal right as per men but treating men and women equally leads to two problems. This sameness approach denies the very particularities of male female difference. First while taking men as standard it undermines the idea of femaleness. A female and male are two different categories; women's identity cannot be compromised to attain an equality built on the male parameters. Secondly in the process of treating female and male as equals it fails to accept that women and men are actually different and so their problems. For example it is women who suffer the menstrual pain, carries the physical qualities to bear a child. Equal treatment here can be harmful to women and denied them of the maternity relief benefits and other such policies.

Socialist feminism focuses upon the interconnection between capitalism and patriarchy as both capitalist system of production and a gendered biased institutionalized system of patriarchy is collectively responsible for the women's condition. Between 1960s and 1970s this variant of feminism has spread widely. Socialist feminists believe that financial dependence over males is a major cause of women's oppression and discrimination. In capitalist system of production unequal ownership of wealth between women and men further give a boost to male domination. In this sense subjugation of women to men is a result of economic dependence. Gender equality can only be established by eliminating this economic and social structure. Women's liberation here is imperative to larger quest for economic, social and political justice. Some of main socialist feminist are Barbara Ehrenreich, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Johanna Brenner, Silvia Federici, Clara Fraser, Donna Haraway, Emma Goldman and so on.

Though it did not repeat the mistake of liberal feminists who consider both men and women equal but they too were subject to certain criticism. Alexandra Kollontai criticized the feminists to neglect the poor working class women at the expense of upper-class bourgeois women who were still oppressing the poor working women. So, feminist movement is actually a movement for the so cold upper class women's dominance over the poor lower class women.

Radical feminism as its name suggests is a perspective which advocates for radical reordering of a male dominated society. The male dominated society is characterized



by the male supremacy in all social, economic and political sphere of life. Radical feminism advocated the elimination of male's supremacy and women's experiences should also be count along with other divisions like race, class, and sexual orientation. They proposed that the society is basically patriarchal based upon the women oppression by men. For this they wanted to abolish the patriarchy to liberate women from existing social norms and institutions. Janice Raymond, Andrea Dworkin, Catharine MacKinnon, Germaine Greer, John Stoltenberg, Monique Wittig, Mary Daly and Robin Morgan are some important radical feminist.

They collectively struggled against the sexual objectification of women; oppose the violence against women in form of rape and other such crimes. They are challenging the prescribed traditional gender role like limiting women to the household. Patriarchy is the fundamental reason of systematic oppression and marginalization of women, it make women other.

Besides having divergence of opinion about the gender discrimination, it's causes and the possible routes to improve the condition, there are certain points upon which all feminists agree. Three common points all feminist supporting are:

1. **Entrenchment of Gender**–Gender inequality is widespread in all societies in all times. All feminist are in one voice confirmed that the unequal bifurcation of individual roles on the bases of gender has been a major and common issue of concern as this gendered division lead to long term inequality in society. Assigning gender roles like private sphere for women (the household responsibility) and the public sphere to men (the breadwinner of household) is problematic to all feminists.
2. **Existence of Patriarchy**–Patriarchy literally means ‘rule of father’. Normally it signifies towards a condition where all necessary and relevant decisions in a family are taken by the male member. Feminists have consensus over the existence of patriarchy in society. Kate Millett who wrote the “*Sexual Politics*” (1970) portrays patriarchy as a ‘social constant’ running through all the political, social and economic structures. It according to her is grounded in and operates from the family which works as a fertile ground for patriarchy. She has suggested a radical solution to patriarchal oppression, and the solution is the abolition of conventional family system along with consciousness-raising. Existence of patriarchy restricts women's reasoning and chances to participate in the decision making process, devoid them of the basic facilities in life.
3. **Need for Change**–All feminists believe that there is a deep need of change in the attitude and the manner hitherto society is running. Different path can be adopted for the betterment of the women. It can be through revolution the idea advocated by the



revolutionary feminist or the through strengthening laws as the liberal feminist wanted. Shulamith Firestone in her best known work *“The Dialectic of Sex”* (1970) advocated an entirely different kind of solution to alter the status quo. Unlike socialist feminist she believes that society cannot be structured through the process of production, but through the process of reproduction. She argued that women can only be emancipated by outdo their biological roles either by the use of modern technology like test tube babies or through other routes. This is more a kind of individual change she was talking about, but a collective change in the existing institutions, policies, values and practice is required.

4.3.2 Waves of Feminism

The present form of feminism did not develop gradually and overnight. It rather took a long period to systematize feminist thought. The period of its development can be seen in different waves.

First wave This wave of feminism was emerged in the 1840s and 1850s and closely associated with the women’s suffrage movement. Feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Sylvia, John Stuart Mill, Emmeline, Christabel Pankhurst and Sojourner Truth have advocated for women rights in political and economic sphere. The major argument they presented to strengthen their claim over women rights was equality of sexes. So one group claimed that women were equal to men, other group argued that women were superior to the men. The major demand in this wave was women’s interest cannot be sacrificed and not subject to any reductionism. Women should be able to vote and represent themselves and not politically dependent over their husbands or other male members of their family. The result was a partial success in building consciousness regarding women rights in Europe.

Second wave came in 1960s with more radical and sometimes revolutionary vigor. Women’s Liberation Movement. It is associated with the resurgence of feminist activism, specifically the radical feminism, in 1960s and 1970s. Germaine Greer, Shulamith Firestone, Andrea Dworkin and Mar Daly are some key feminist in this wave. During this wave feminism, prime concern was male violence toward women particularly sexual violence. Major focus was on attacking this kind of violence, rejected the feminine norms like the sexual submissiveness and participation in beauty practices. Oppose those practices considered as common norm is society such as gendered distinction of work and do favor female solidarity and sisterhood.

A wide range of changes have taken place and many more laws have been initiated for the betterment of women but the radical and tragic change is still a far cry.



4.3.3 Post Feminism

It is characterized by the resistance towards the themes of second wave feminism by feminists like Katie Roiphe, Camille Paglia, Natasha Walter and Pat Califia. Feminists during this wave demanded that women must not see themselves as victims, rather consider themselves as active agents. Sexuality should be thought as liberating and consensual sex should not be treated as a taboo. Feminism should focus on women's material equality rather than symbolic aspect of gender.

Throughout the different waves of feminism, the phrase 'personal is political' was used widely particularly in the second wave. The phrase was popularized by the Carol Hanisch through her article "*The Personal is Political*" in 1969. Let's discuss what it denotes.

4.3.4 Personal is Political

It means that unlike common belief personal is not so personal in fact it is very much political as what happens in household is a reflection of the political decisions. In "*Justice, Gender and the Family*" Susan Molar Okin argues that there are four major respects in which the personal is political. These are:

1. Power, a distinguishing feature of the political but private sphere is also a sphere of power. Power exists within the family, among the gender relations between husband and wife, sister and brother and so on. For example domestic violence is clear reflection of the use of power within family.
2. The domestic sphere itself is the result of the political decisions taken in other sphere. In that sense political sphere infiltrates private sphere. State interference in family matters and the institution of marriage reveals this infiltration. Marriages are sanctioned by the state; the state is the supreme authority to decide who can be marrying and whom you cannot marry. Every state has their own marriage criteria such as a particular age of marriage, guidelines about homosexual marriages and other such laws.
3. Domestic life is where most of individual's early socialization takes place. Private sphere creates the psychological conditions that can govern public life. The social construction (gender division of labor) and patriarchal surrounding (where key decisions are taken by the male member in family) work as an initial setup.
4. The division of labor within majority of families raises psychological and practical barriers against women in all other spheres. The household responsibilities cause



women's underrepresentation in most relevant public institutions like government, judiciary and economy (Okin, 1989: 128–33).

The slogan 'the personal is political' shows how deeply entrenched sexual differences are in society and requires us to consider closely the role of the family perpetuating the social inequalities. Feminists reject the liberal idea that the family is part of a 'private' realm where principles of justice cannot be actualized. Okin advocated the creation of a genderless society through the changes in education curriculum and the institution of marriage. She actually brings out the practical significance of the feminist idea of 'the personal is political'. To remove the difference between personal and political, difference of sex and gender must be abolished first.

4.3.5 Sex and Gender

Simone De Beauvoir in "*The Second Sex*" (1949) argued that women's sex is defined relative to maleness, a woman is a 'not-man'. Men on the other hand are defined independently of their sex and of women, as autonomous and rational beings. This imbalance resulted in the inequality between male and female. Women needs civil liberties, economic independence, removal of passive femininity and sexual submission in order to achieve gender equality. Further women identity must be redefined independent and autonomous of the male.

Feminists have confirmed the fact that gender and sex are two different things and gender distinctions are socially constructed. It means that it is the result of political arrangements and is acquiescent to social and political analysis. Since the seventeenth century, some feminist have argued that the women's nature which is characterized as natural and universal is actually artificial and distorted, a product of constructed societal upbringing. In the words of the Simone de Beauvoir, a French writer, 'One is not born but rather becomes a woman'. In the later period this statement starts formalized into the sex/gender distinction. As per this distinction, *sex* is about the biological characters of males and females, mainly those associated with reproduction. These differences are also seen in physical size and shape of men and women, the organs and functions of reproduction. It is distinct from the gender, which are socially constructed attributes of masculinity and femininity, and the social roles and arrangements prescribed by them like what should women do and what should men do. Gender refers to those differences that are imposed only by social norms such as girls should wear pink and boys should wear blue or the norm that women should be kind and emotional and men should be tough and rational.

Sex/Gender difference became quite relevant because constructed gender division forced women to sacrifice their careers for parenthood, do the majority of unpaid domestic work and



are made vulnerable through the institution of marriage. These differences between men and women do not stem from biological differences but from unequal power relations between male and female. All feminists are united in their concern for liberating women and adopt diverse theoretical positions for identifying these injustices. In accordance with their findings they present different prescriptions of what needs to be done to create a more equal society.

But some feminists oppose the sex/gender distinction. They believe that biological categories of male and female are not as distinct as they seem. It is society, not the biology which makes these categories so significant.

Feminist political thought has been primarily concerned with at least two issues.

First, it analyses and explains the processes, institutions and practices through which women have been subordinated to the men. The women have been marginalized through a set of constructed societal norms. Second, feminism is not limited to the analysis of the problem but it also tries formulated the most appropriate and effective ways to challenge this subordination and domination. Feminists have a firm belief that the gender is a political construct, normally based upon stereotyping of 'feminine' and 'masculine' idea about the gender behavior and their social roles.

To be a political theory as a 'feminist' theory it should be emphasizes upon the eliminating of oppression of women by men and also by women in all forms. Feminism should not be misunderstood as against the men as it is not against by but the male dominance over the women or for that matter any such domination either by men or women. It is characterized by its political stance and the attempt to advance the social role of women. They have highlighted the problem of unequal political relationship between the sexes, the supremacy of men in every sphere and the subjection of women in most the societies.

There is a famous saying of Karl Marx that 'the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways but the point is to change it'. The Feminism has not merely reinterpreted the contribution of major theorists and shed new light upon established concepts such as power, domination and equality, but also introduced a new sensitivity and language into political theory related to ideas such as connection, voice and difference. In "*Sex and Social Justice*" Martha Nussbaum defends a kind of feminism that has the following five features. First it should be internationalist not limited to a particular region or nation, second humanist humanity should be the highest consideration, third liberal means advocating equal rights for all, four the concern with the social shaping of preference and desire and finally the concern for sympathetic understanding.



4.4 POST MODERNISM

Post modernism is a product of modernism and modernist values, a late 20th-century movement outlined by broad level of skepticism, relativism and subjectivism against the prescribed and established set of knowledge. Other features include the suspicion towards the reason and a deep sensitivity for the role of ideology in avowing and nourishing political and economic power. It opposes the modernist statement that there is an objective reality. It believes that the explanatory statement of scientists and historians can be objectively true or false. It dismisses modernist idea of objective natural reality and dubbed it as a kind of naive or immature realism. They reject the viewpoint of objectivity, they elucidates that there is no such thing as truth. The term is associated with Jean Francois Lyotard as it first came in 1979 with the publication of his “*Postmodern Condition*”. Unlike common belief and collective claim of modernists, post modernists have denied the faith in science and technology as the instruments of human progress. Many postmodernist in oppose assured that the misguided objective of scientific and technological knowledge led to the development of destructive technologies. It was widely used evil weapon for killing on a massive scale in World War II and other consecutive wars.

Post modernism is not a single unified perspective or a systematic universal philosophy. It includes a range of theoreticians like Francois Lyotard, Mikhail Bakhtin, Paul De Man, Michel Faucault, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, William E Connolly, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Gaston Bachelard, Richard Rorty, Herbert Marcuse, Luce Irigaray and others.

4.4.1 Defining Postmodernism

Martin Heidegger a German philosopher and post modernist thinker along with Lyotard have popularized the term postmodern. They define it as ‘incredulity (disbelief) towards meta narratives’. It means that postmodernism is about the distrust towards all those theories and ideologies which claimed them to be the universal theories. Friedrich Nietzsche another German philosopher and also one of the postmodernist rejected all the moral and political principles as a mere nihilism. He also used the phrase ‘death of god’ widely to denote the triumph of reason, enlightenment and scientific reasoning upon the moral values in the west. Michel Faucault was mainly concerned with the forms of knowledge. He believes that truth is always socially constructed. Derrida’s deconstruction is another approach to understand the postmodernism. He opposed the claims of a single truth and knowledge. Like Derrida, Rorty also rejects the conception that there is an objective point of view.

The wide range of discussion between these thinkers suggests that it is very difficult to arrive



at unanimous and agreeable definition of postmodernism. Scholars themselves involved in this process of understanding post modernist idea denies the possibility of attaining any clear meaning and definition of the concept. In actual there is some kind of confusion and chaos linked to the term. Francois Lyotard in his book, *“The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge”* (1979) rejects all grand narratives. He also rejects the claims of enlightenment, the progress of the world, the all know ability of the science, and the possibility of absolute freedom as such. In a way he challenged the supremacy of science and technology as a final source of knowledge and truth.

According to Jane Bennett the term postmodernism can be understood in three ways.

First as a sociological designation for an epochal shift in the way collective life is organized (from centralized and hierarchal control towards a network structure). Second as an aesthetic genre (literature that experiments with non-linear narration, a playful architecture of mixed style, an appreciation of popular culture that complicates the distinction between high and low). Finally third as a set of philosophical critiques of teleological or rationalist conceptions of nature, history, power, freedom and subjectivity.

Postmodernism in participates in all three ways, but most intensively in the third way (Bennet: 2004 p 46).

4.4.2 Difference between Modernism and Postmodernism

Postmodernist thought was the result of opposition and repudiation to the modernist thought. It challenged most of the modernist ideals but there were several points where modernism and post modernism are completely contradictory. This distinction can be understood through the following table. Table-1

Modernism has a deep faith in the idea of grand narrative as it believes that there can be a grand theory. In oppose postmodernist are tend to challenge this idea and they always seen it with skepticism. With the arrival of scientific experimentation and stress upon the factual knowledge modernism start claiming the existence of universal objective truth but for postmodernism there is no such thing as universal knowledge and there is always multiple truth. There cannot be a linear logic and reasoning, rather knowledge is decentralized. For postmodernist, subjective experience and diversity has its own place as uniformity and homogeneity is a clear myth.



Table-1

Modernism	Postmodernism
Grand narrative	Skepticism against grand theory
Universal objective truth	Deconstruction/ multiple truth
Linear logic and reasoning	Decentralizing of knowledge
Uniformity and homogeneity	Subjective experience and diversity

Source: Singh, Pushpa. (2014). Traditions in Political Theory Postmodernism.

4.4.3 Opposition of Modernity

The difference between modernism and postmodernism and emergence of post modernism in modernist antipathy is evident. Modernist political theorists like Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire and others have contributed toward the idea of representative democracy, rational stature, formal equality and other relevant concepts. Immanuel Kant's assertion about individual's autonomy was further strengthened the emancipator quest of modernity. Scholars in this period all around the world have continuously defend the void promise of emancipation through modernity. In this way modernist, also seen as rationalist have superadded their power and continue to maintain themselves.

One of the vehement critique of this conception of modernity, Alasdair Macintyre who was not a postmodernist though, in his book "*After Virtue*" argues that it was only in the later part of seventeenth and dawn of eighteenth century that Northern European culture started projecting the modernity as unquestioned discourse through the Enlightenment assignment. Later, postmodernist confront the Universalist approach as there cannot be a universal answer to any question. No single theory carries the transcendental truth because there is no single and simple way to interpret the historical process.

The claim of postmodernist was simple that there is no objective value, no established reality an off course no universal truth. Rather, there are numerous realities, diverse of truth and variety of people with their own set of values and realities.

Postmodernists attacked all such modernist projections and questioned existing established styles of understanding. It interrogates the universality, certainty and objectivity linked to modernism and any such mode of thinking. It also challenges all those system of knowledge



that suggests that society's up gradation towards any kind of development, progress or coherence.

It is characterized by straight repudiation of the common philosophical viewpoints that were not much challenged during the 18th-century enlightenment age. Postmodernist roots are developed on the denial and opposition of the modernist land.

1. At the very first place it challenged the modernist claim that there is an objective natural reality. Postmodernists called this idea as a kind of void realist ideal.
2. Unlike modernist claim reason and logic are not universally valid like laws and domain of knowledge are the same for everyone or let's say apply equally. Instead for postmodernists whether it is reason or logic they are merely conceptual constructs and only valid within the established set of intellectual traditions in which they often used.
3. Modernist believes that the human nature is derived from the birth itself rather than learned or induced through social forces. Postmodernists rather insist that almost all aspects of human psychology are wholly socially determined.
4. The explanatory and descriptive statements of historians and scientists can be objectively true or false in the principle. But the post modernists have denied the possibility of any such truth.
5. Modernists believe that human beings for the better are likely to change themselves and their societies through the use of reason and logic, and through more specialized scientific tools. For them it is reasonable to anticipate that subsequent societies will be more just full, more humane, more enlightened and more prosperous, in away somewhat better than from what they are now. But postmodernists have no such faith in science and technology as a tool of human progress and an enlightened society.
6. It is possible for modernist to construct general theories that can explain several aspects of the natural and social world within a given realm of knowledge for example a general theory of human history in form of dialectical materialism. Postmodernists have denied any such possibility.
7. Human beings are capable of acquiring knowledge about natural reality, and on the basis of evidence and certain founded principles, this knowledge can be ultimately justified. Postmodernists reject this kind of philosophical foundationalism.

4.4.4 Foucault and Derrida

Though Michel Foucault has declined, he is considered as one of the important postmodernist. He defined the post modernism through two guiding concepts: the power and the discourse. For example, the criminality discourse reflects the people's view in a certain society about crime and this is the discourse through which the power works. Power as per



him is knowledge; means in whole, discourses are ultimately shaped by knowledge.

In his book “*Discipline and Punish*” and “*The History of Sexuality*” he discussed about the emergence of disciplinary and regulatory bio powers. He argued that societies have devised creative ways for excluding those who do not fit in their already prescribed categories like the sick, poor, disable and insane in the name of cognizance. Modern institutions viz the hospitals, schools, mental asylum, sanatoriums and prisons are disciplinary tools of power to make people disciplined.

Faucault seeks to uncover and denounce the ways and the process through which human beings are normalized. It is important to understand that this normalization is not forceful rather the state or society has trained people in a way that they became the willing subjects, who themselves participate in their own oppression. This willingness takes the form of legitimating state. In this sense modern liberal societies are still oppressive and exploitative but the domination is not as overt as in previous times. He severely challenged this legitimization of modern society as it increases the surveillance which is a result of progress and development in science and technology. This modern science and technological advancement are the major tools of modernization.

His idea of surveillance better reflected in the concept of panopticon that fulfils the desire of state and other institutions to monitor, control and do the surveillance over the subjects. So Foucault challenged the whole purpose and argument of modernism and was nearly demolished it.

Derrida the other important figure in post modernism whose writings are full of skepticism, tries to challenge the argument and constructed character about the truth of knowledge by examining various oppositions and called it deconstruction. He argued that in attempt to establish a conclusion through logical means ultimately ‘deconstructs’ (logically erode) itself. As he believes that any text can be interpreted in numerous ways, it is despairing to search for a ‘correct’ interpretation hence objective truth is unfeasible. According to him all attempts to represent reality produce not knowledge or truth. But are different representation, none of which can be proven to be better/truer than any other. All social phenomenon and forms of human experience like revolutions, wars, relation between sexes and so on exist only through their representation.

Derrida’s idea of deconstruction signifies his approach of challenging the foundations and hierarchies on which the western political tradition and culture have been based. It questions the entire process of accreditation or assigning of meaning to any phenomenon or thing.



4.4.5 Critique of Postmodernism

Postmodernism established itself by critiquing modernism, further it also part to certain criticism. The drawback of the relativism and the anti-foundationalism advocated by postmodernists is that it completely undermines the possibility of a truth or ideas that may qualify as universal political values. But the real problem with this is the acceptance of this premise compels us to believe that the entire history of injustices and its opposition by the weak and marginalized is just absurd. Many small movements driven by enlightenment are under postmodernist threat. Postmodernists themselves are not able to sustain the very same objective of emancipation that it intended to adhere to.

Secondly postmodernism lack the coherence and a common understanding that can be shared by all. The de-centered understandings of all categories that make the world meaningful to us make postmodernist discourse appear as incomprehensible and ambiguous. Post modernism is routinely denounced as nihilistic, immoral or politically irresponsible.

4.5 SUMMARY

Thus postmodernists regard their theoretical position as uniquely inclusive and democratic, because it allows them to recognize the unjust hegemony of Enlightenment discourses over the equally valid perspectives of non elite groups. In the 1980s and '90s, academic advocates on behalf of various ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious groups embraced postmodern critiques of contemporary Western society, and postmodernism became the unofficial philosophy of the new movement of "identity politics."

Postmodernist believes that there is no absolute or universal truth and the truth changes with the advent of new events and discoveries. It means that scientific events that took place historically on one side of the world have influenced political and social events that are now taking place on another. It embraces and encourages individual expression, the cross-cultural dialogue and debates as a necessary factor.

4.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is feminism? Discuss different schools of feminism.
2. Discuss the idea of feminism. Explain the different waves of feminism?
3. Explain 'the personal is political' with reference to the understanding of Susan Molar Okin.
4. Differentiate between sex and gender. Define how gender plays role in society?



5. Define postmodernism. How it is different from modernism
6. Discuss Foucault and Derrida's postmodern approach.

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THE IDEA OF POLITICAL COMMUNITY: POLITICAL OBLIGATION

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STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Duty, Obligation and Conflict
- 5.4 Theories of Unlimited Obligation
 - 5.4.1 The Doctrine of *Force Majeure*
 - 5.4.2 Divine Rights Theory
 - 5.4.3 Prescriptive Theory
- 5.5 Theories of Limited Obligation
 - 5.5.1 Principle of Consent
 - 5.5.2 Idealist Theory
- 5.6 Theories against Political Obligation
 - 5.6.1 Marxist View
 - 5.6.2 Anarchist View
 - 5.6.3 Gandhian Perspective
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.9 Bibliography



5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to

- Explain the concept of political obligation, duty and conflict
- Point out the various theories developed to explain the concept of political obligation and revolution
- Examine the advantages and limitations of political obligation with regard to the state and individual

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The concept of political obligation is often inferred as the commitment or duty to act in a particular way. As per, H.L.A Hart (*The Concept of Law*, 1961), there are two kinds of obligation- 'being obliged' to do something, which includes an element of coercion, and 'having an obligation' to do something, which implies only a moral duty. Thus, political obligation is one of the most contested issues of political theory and philosophy. Following of duties such as of payment of taxes, political participation and voting, military services etc. are a part of legal obligation which are often backed by punitive actions, however, duties such as keeping a promise and obliging by it is sustained by my moral obligations. Political theorists have dwelled around the concept of obligation primarily with the question of how much, how far, when and why an individual is obliged to obey the law and commands of political authority. This question is so complex that it is not possible to find its definite answer which would be universally acceptable. However, an inquiry into different viewpoints expressed in this behalf can enlighten us in finding an answer to this problem in a particular context.

Almost every thinker has meddled with the concepts revolving around "political obligation", beginning with Hobbes and later on Austin who mainly focused on the grounds of political obligation and called for absolute obligation to the "command of the sovereign". On the other end, Locke was possibly the first thinker to reject this absolutist view and to postulate 'rights' of the individual against the state. Perhaps, this is the reason Locke is regarded as the pioneer of individualism which later developed into liberalism. Kant further on evolved the concept of 'human dignity'. J.S. Mill made an attempt to explore the limits of political obligation by describing the conditions of the state's intervention. Rousseau and Hegel on different grounds carried forward the Hobbesian legacy of absolute political obligation. John Rawls advances on the Kantian notion of 'rational negotiators' to build his theory of justice. While on the other side, Marx sought to annihilate political obligation by identifying a man's position in the



social class, and projected the working class as an instrument of revolution. Finally, Neo-Marxists have been looking for alternative instruments as well as alternative strategies of revolution. In a nutshell, political philosophy mainly resided on the logic of the grounds and limits of political obligation.

5.3 DUTY, OBLIGATION AND CONFLICT

Obligation and duty have a lot in common. There isn't anything that distinguishes the two. Between the two, there is a strong analytical relationship. Obligation and duty are often used interchangeably. To be obligated means to have a responsibility; to fulfil a responsibility means to fulfil an obligation. In this context, a duty is the conception of a behaviour as the subject of legal obligation. When we say that someone is performing their responsibility, we often mean that they are obligated to do something. As a result, it is apparent that an obligation cannot exist without a will that imposes a responsibility or an obliging will.

Because there are so many distinct kinds of obligations, there is a chance that they will conflict with one another. A moral commitment may clash with a legal obligation; and political legitimization may clash with a religious one. Any endeavour to find a solution may elicit or include major moral dilemmas. A conflict between a legal requirement and a political commitment may appear to be less likely, but a conflict between a moral obligation and political obligation can, and typically is a real one. For example, my moral obligation to assist an accident victim by rushing him to the hospital may conflict with my legal obligation to follow the traffic rules. Similarly, compulsory immunization or say sterilisation might be an act of political obligation, however as a religious obligation may claim an almost opposite act. Where do we stand when several obligations come into conflict with one another is a more essential concern (and this is exact about the various kinds of duties). Are we to attend to a particular type of obligation while ignoring the others? To be just to these numerous types of obligations or duties, one must attend to these various forms of obligations or duties and its extremely rare that one does not. It is quite rare that one likes to sacrifice/ignore one at the expense of the other. Political obligations may be more demanding at times, it may seek immediate rectification, for fear of punishment or otherwise, than other types of obligation.

5.4 THEORIES OF UNLIMITED OBLIGATION

It is important to remember that obligation is an obligation. It doesn't matter if it is political or moral. Attending to one's obligation is a sort of performance. The intensity of the event will determine whether we attend it today or tomorrow. If we are obligated, we are obligated;



similarly, a duty is a duty. Obligation is the acceptance of a task; its compliance is an expression of our willingness.

5.4.1 The Doctrine of *Force Majuere*

Force Majuere is a French word meaning superior strength, an alluring compulsion or coercion. As per this theory it is the superior strength of the state that is the source as well as the reason for political obligation. This view of political obligation identifies the state or government as the personification of political authority and its infallible power as the source of its authority. The state is so powerful that the individual has no option but to abide by its laws, dictates and commands, without any choice of not to follow them. In this sense, political obligation is based on the fear of punishment or coercion for disobedience to the political authority. Since individual is too weak to challenge the authority of the state, its political obligation is unlimited. The idea of the supreme, absolute and unlimited authority of the state reduces individuals to the status of dumb-driven cattle who have to follow the dictates of the state or face rash penalties.

The theory has been criticised on the grounds that it is not based on any moral foundations. It simply invokes the unconvinced rule of 'might is right'. It does not allow the individual to inquire fairness of the law; it does not take into consideration whether the individual wants or does not want to abide by the command or the law. There is no scope for a resistance against any law or command which could be wrong in public judgment. It creates a ground of coerced obedience which is based on a threat of repercussion in the absence of submission rather than following the advice of a doctor in the interest of individual's own health. With these characteristics, it could hardly be treated as a proper theory of political obligation.

5.4.2 Divine Rights Theory

The divine right theory holds that, the source of power withheld by the sovereign is directly derived from the god, hence obedience to the state is as imperative as obedience to God. Therefore, he who resists the authorities, resists what God has allotted, and those who resist will incur judgment. In the recent times, this theory was upheld in pre-communist Tibet and some tribal kingdoms. It is rarely practiced in the modern state. Since God's will is obligatory on all mortals, this theory also advocates an unlimited political obligation. The foundations of this theory is religious instead of it being rational. The king can be a tyrant or a benevolent, obedience to him is a must. Disobedience is a direct confrontation with god. James I of England (1566-1625) sought to justify his tyrannical rule precisely on this ground. Some writers synonymously use the divine right theory with 'charismatic authority'. This comparison is not well-founded. Charismatic authority is the characteristic of political leaders



who command compliance of their followers not because of any divine origin but because of their personal qualities like personality, oratory skills, presentation etc. Moreover, charismatic authority is entirely personal which may wither away with the disappearance of the person holding such qualities. But divine rights theory admits to 'traditional authority' rather than charismatic authority. The theory denies the right to resist against the state or the authority by the people, hence it is anti-theoretical to a democracy.

5.4.3 Prescriptive Theory

As per this theory, political authority and its respect are based on the principle of “customary rights”. Authority is legitimate, if it is endorsed by customs or tradition. For the instance the 7 rounds of hindu marriage legitimizes a marriage because the authority is derived from traditions and customary rules. The people follow the commands of their rulers because the fact of compliance has become like a well-established convention. The conservatives view the state as a fragile structure built over a long period of time representing a balance of differing and contrasting interests. Institutions like the state evolve gradually, adapt slowly to change and transform over a period of time; hence, it is a matter of duty to accept state authority and obey it while working only for gradual peaceful change. This conservative theory of political obligation finds its existence in the writings of Hegel, who believed that ideas of morality evolve concretely in the customs and institutions of the state. Further, since the state is the incarnation of time tested customary morality, it becomes the duty of every citizen to follow what the state expects from one. An eminent scholar of this school of thought is, the English Parliamentarian Edmund Burke, he states that it is unwise for a person to totally disregard custom and tradition. Political obligation is contained in paying constant respect to tradition, which is a sacrosanct concern. Thus, Burke extended his support the English colonialist in the revolt of American independence, as he was in the favour of traditional rights of Englishmen, on the other hand he opposed the French Revolution as it was stirred by the abstract rights of man completely disjointed from the national traditions.

Prof. M. Oakeshott, another conservative philosopher, believed that political activities can never be anything other than conventional, because political contemplation cannot exist prior to political action. Politics is a skill that requires more practise than theoretical maxims, algorithms or systems to master. As a result, even when we try to understand other people's views, we are constantly working inside our own framework. In a nutshell, Political authority is based on principle of established customary right. The person who obey customs also obey the rules because the fact of obedience has become like a well-established convention. political authority is legitimate, if it is approved by custom.

The prescriptive theory has its own set of flaws. The basic foundations of political duty is



based on adhering to the existing established practices and conventions. However, there is scope for its abolition also as per the demand and need of the society. People seek change, and if their aspirations are not fulfilled, they turn to revolution. Prof. Oakeshott has been chastised for seeing even revolutions as historical events, therefore reducing them to strictly cons derivative matter. This means that the proponents of this school of thought even urge to accept the traditional practise of racism, that is the indigenous population of African and Latin American countries must accept racial discrimination legislation as “valid”, because they are based on best available evidence. Similarly, Sati and genital mutilation is also justified on the grounds of traditions. However, this is far from the reality, people only observe their traditions, in so far as they have their utility and do away with them when they become redundant or useless.

5.5 THEORIES OF LIMITED OBLIGATION

Depending on source of obligation and the position of individual in society, different thinkers argue for different kind of obligation.

5.5.1 Principle of Consent

Some theories advocate man to be master of his will, hence any sort of obligation can only be inflicted upon him by his consent. There is no acceptance for a coercive imposition of an obligation by an authority. Individual's consent is the proper source of political obligation. Substantiating Hobbes and Locke who claimed that in the state of nature there were certain inconveniences being faced by man due to the absence of the existence of clear laws and authority. Thus, state was created when man agreed to enter into contract where all gave their consent to give up some amount of liberty for the establishment of an authority to maintain a peaceful society. Thus, it is the moral and political obligation of the individuals to obey laws, Leslie Green (Green, 2004) explains, “In Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, we discover that many variations on the statement that our duties to law are determined by some kind of individual agreement, whether expressive or tacit. Promises, contracts, oaths, and vows all fall into this general area. In its central meaning, consent of these sorts is not only voluntary, it is performative: it is given with the intent of changing the rights, duties, powers, or liabilities of another, and it succeeds in part because it is known to be done with that intention”. In other words, a government can exercise its power only with an explicit or implicit consent of its citizens. Some thinkers argue that if an individual accepts the political authority of the land and abides by the set laws, his tacit consent may be taken for granted. Others hold the view that mere recognition of a legitimate authority is not enough to explain the source of political obligation: it must be proved that people themselves created that



authority with their consent. Thereby, the theory of 'Social Contract' substantiates the fact that the authority was given as well as created through a consent. The chief exponents of the theory of the social contract are: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), and Jean Jaques Rousseau (1712-78). These thinkers have claimed a 'state of nature', that is a hypothetical stage to exist before the creation of political authority. Social contract represents the method whereby an agreement is reached at for the creation of a state-which has both legitimacy as well as authority. The social contract is responsible for transition from a state of nature to a civil society. The terms of the contract define the ground and limits of political obligation.

Hobbes equates in his *Leviathan* life in a state of nature as "solitary, poor, brutish and short, it was absolute anarchy where "might is right" was the rule of the day. It was a state of war of each against all, and hence fraught with insecurity. Man decided to thereby surrender all their natural rights to the newly created political authority—the sovereign (Leviathan). This surrender was final and unchangeable, because any departure from this position would result in the return to the state of nature. Although Hobbes advocates an unlimited political obligation, yet it is solely based on consent; not imposed from above.

On the other hand, Locke had a more optimistic view regarding the state of nature. He believed man to be rational by nature, who is generally inclined to follow the rules of morality. Hence the state of nature was a state of "peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation." The acceptance of the social contract led to the establishing of a civil society through a mutual consent of the people only to deal with the few law breakers who could not be allowed to be the judge of their own case. Under the social contract, man surrenders the right to be the judge in his own case in lieu of an assurance that the state will be responsible for the protection of his natural right to 'life, liberty and property'. Government is, therefore, created as a trust which can be dissolved if it fails to perform this function. Accordingly, Locke upholds a limited political obligation and acknowledges individual's right to resistance and revolution.

In his *Discourses and Social Contract*, the state of nature, for Rousseau, was a peaceful and morally neutral condition in which self-contained individuals acted according to their basic urges as well as their natural desire for self-preservation- when man was close to nature and enjoyed the beauty and bounty of nature without any restriction. However, as the population expanded, there also emerged a scarcity of resources which brought a sense of insecurity when "natural liberty" ceased to be a source of constant happiness. This led to a conflict between individual's actual will (guided by his immediate interests) and real will (motivated by his ultimate interest which coincided with the interest of the community). In order to



overcome this conflicting situation, men entered into the social contract by placing themselves under the direction and control of the “general will” which represented the convergence of the real will of all members of the community, thereby replacing their natural liberty by civil liberty which provided for an effective preservation and security of their possessions. Rousseau, therefore advocated absolute sovereignty and unlimited political obligation. The social contract involves the total alienation of each associate from the entire community, including all of his rights. As there is no associate over whom he does not acquire the same rights as he yields over himself, he receives an equivalent for whatever he loses, and an increase of force for the maintenance of what he has. However, this obligation is not owed to any external authority, it represents the consent or agreement of an individual to subordinate his individual will to general will. This subordination is not contrary to his freedom. That is why Rousseau postulated that 'man can be forced to be free'.

In a nutshell, although all the three established a civil society with the state or the government given the responsibility and authority to preserve the life of the people, Locke alone postulates a conditional consent; hence he clearly creates a limited political obligation. Hobbes and Rousseau postulate unconditional consent and absolute sovereignty. They seem to create an unlimited political obligation. But since this obligation is based in their consent, and it is intended to serve their interest, it cannot be treated as unlimited in the true sense. The contract theory, as advocated by the contractualists, especially Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, offers that obligation of the people to obey the government is guided by the fact that we have entered into a contract to do so.

Though evolved in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the consent theory has its relevance even now. Its significance lies on the account of constituting the moral basis of a democratic order, however like every other theory, the consent theory also suffers from certain weaknesses. The theory contemplates the state as an artificial institution. Furthermore, the element of consent as postulated in the contract made in a hypothetical state of nature is nothing more than a fiction, hence, not legally binding on the existing generation. Thus, the people may go to the level of staging a rebellion in response to a plea demanding that they withdraw their consent in cases when the government has done so in contravention of the “general will”. The result is that the theory of political obligation is converted into a theory of rebellion. People submit to the laws of the state, because the contract demands from them a compulsion that they are legally bound to comply with the orders issued by the state. This theory forms a legal relationship between the rulers and the ruled, binding the former to rule the latter, binding the latter to obey the former. Non-compliance is not an option under this theory, rather non-compliance is met with punishment. The concept of once-for-all consent is not a sound basis of political obligation. A consent based government must be reliant on the



continuous consent of a vigilant electorate or those who have agreed be governed by it. In this light Locke's formulation of the social contract may be considered sound in this light.

5.5.2 Idealist Theory

An idealistic view of political authority may involve a serious deviation from a realistic position. The Idealists believe that the man's innate natural rationality is the source of political obligation. Man is seen as a 'political and rational creature' and the state as a 'self-sufficient community' that encompasses the entire society. The idealists school of thought, whose one of the proponents was Hegel initially created an unconditional and unlimited obligation, but later it was modified by scholars like T.H Green. According to Hegel, the state as 'the incarnation of divine reason' and the 'march of God on earth'. He argued that when individual obeys the state, he basically follows divine reason and thereby exercises his freedom. As a result, no anti-thesis between the state and the individual may exist. As a result, by accepting, the state's orders, each individual can seek his best possible development in the society on his own. In other words, allegiance to the state is the basis of political obligation. Hegel has carried on the legacy developed by Plato and Aristotle whereby they had agreed that the state and the people who make it up "form an organic totality". He therefore, advocated an unlimited political obligation without drawing a clear distinction between the state and government.

It was T.H. Green who declared that government cannot claim an unconditional and absolute obedience of its citizenry. He went on to say that individual owes his allegiance to the society, and neither to the state nor to the government. He proposes that only those actions should be made into obligations, which are made to further a certain moral end. Accordingly, the organized power of society should be acknowledged as political authority for the purpose of determining political obligation. He pointed out it is not the state, but the society which is the pivot of the common good. Hence, allegiance is to the society. T.H Green embodies man and women as self-conscious beings who have an aspiration to realize the good which they comprehend along with other members of the community. The concept of common good not only comprehends the good of all members of the community (collective good), but their origins of the common good are also alike. In his *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (1882) he postulated that the state itself is indebted to promote the common good as conceived by its citizens, and that individual is obligated to obey only those laws which will promote the common good. Thus, it is the common good is the guiding force for generating compliance. He further accepts disobedience by the individuals, if they think that they will serve the cause of the common good by defying any command of the state.

He goes on to conclude that individuals carryout their responsibilities and duties as members



of a society and not for individual advantages because they realize that their self-interest truly lies in the common good. It is the consciousness of the common good which prompts human beings to embrace their duties. He reduces the state to an instrument of protecting the common good as conceived and defined by its citizens. By distinguishing the organized power of the community from the state as the, Green rules out the claim of any government to demand unconditional allegiance from its citizens. Likewise, Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) also rejected unconditional obedience to any government by drawing a dichotomy between the state and government. He stated that if a government claims obedience of its citizenry, it will have to compete with other human associations (church, school, community etc) in securing their highest welfare.

The idealistic theories have been critiqued on the ground of being too abstract. It places regular and everyday things in a highly philosophical or metaphysical forms that are beyond the understanding of an average man. Furthermore, the concept of political obligation encompasses not just the man's obedience to the state, but is also inherently connected with his right to resist an abusive political authority. In their notion of political obligation, the idealists are hesitant to accommodate the right to resistance in their doctrine of political obligation. Even if Green and Bosanquet recognised the right in certain exceptional or rare circumstances, their treatment is vague and imprecise and they are unable to shake off the influence of English liberalism. Trietschke even goes to the extent of saying to worship the state and kneel down in front of it. Thus, the idea of political obligation is renewed into the inoculation of blind worship of the authority.

5.6 THEORIES AGAINST POLITICAL OBLIGATION

Certain theories are completely against political obligation in any form. These theories advocate the means and the end of unjust and unfair law.

5.6.1 Marxist View

Marxism postulates state does not represent the organised power of the community, rather it represents the organised power of the dominant class- particularly the class owning the major means of production. Its sole purpose is the welfare of the bourgeoisie class; helping the strong competitors to increase their wealth and power by exploiting the weak competitors as well as the dependent class and not general welfare. In such a class divided society the individuals can not have any obligation towards the state. At best, an individual can have any or some obligation towards its society, provided it is a classless and stateless society. Till such a society comes into existence, we can only think of worker's obligation towards its own working class. Under the capitalist system, where those having the means of production and



exploiters of the working class are in power, the worker has obligation 'against the state'. The obligation is to show solidarity with the working class in order to generate a strong organization for revolution against the capitalist regime and end the exploitation.

A careful examination of Marxian thought reveals that it approaches the question of political obligation in a way that is quite far away from real perspective. What is empathetically prompted in the phase of capitalism is categorically denied in the latter stage of social development. People who are encouraged to disobey the bourgeoisie state are instructed not to disobey the state at all after the establishment of a new social system. As a result, Marx is accused of constructing up a theory of political obligation solely on the basis of expediency, and he thereby, ignores the independent individual whose experience only matters in the determining his allegiance to the laws of the state. Marxian thought has also been criticised on the ground that a change accompanied by chaos and confusion is most likely to be exploited by anti-social elements. If old order is destroyed arbitrarily without leaving the foundations for the construction of a new order, the result would be disastrous, because, to destroy is easy, to reconstruct is difficult. Thus, a revolution has both pros as well as cons.

5.6.2 Anarchist View

The anarchist view argue for a stateless society, simply put a society without any government. Anarchism is usually placed on the extreme-left of the political spectrum. They advocate for the removal of all organised authority and state apparatus in order to create a society in which all human beings can live freely, peacefully and happily without requiring any form of external force to regulate their interactions. Anarchists like P.J. Proudhon (1809-65) and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) stated, the state is a coercive entity and hence all governmental authority is illegitimate and hence its presence is suited only to a corrupt and unmerited society. The individual is only obligated to uphold justice, thus he is obliged to resist the state and devote himself to build a new institution where all members of society will cooperate with each other.

5.6.3 Gandhian Perspective

The Indian National Movement witnessed the tacit use of principle of civil disobedience indicating the recognition of severe limits of political obligation by Gandhi. Civil disobedience implies deliberately disobeying an unjust authority and breaking an unjust law. Civil disobedience may be resorted to as a protesting a government policy which is unjust or to raise the government's attention to a need for political reform. It serves both a means and an end to an unjust and unfair law. Originally, the word was coined by American writer Henry David Thoreau, who attempted to explain the reason for his refusal to pay taxes to the state for several years for which he was also imprisoned through an essay in 1848. He argued



that citizens must protest and show discontent against any injustice committed by their own government. An example of this is the case of 'conscientious objectors' to military service during the period of the First World War (1914-18), who was awarded rigorous punishment for refusing to render military service as they believed in peaceful solution of all human disputes as highlighted by Harold J. Laski.

Mahatma Gandhi collaborated the principle of civil disobedience with the principle of non-violent struggle and *satyagraha* throughout the freedom struggle. Gandhi set a practical example of civil disobedience first through the Champaran satyagraha and later on the 1930s famous civil disobedience movement to break the salt law. The ban (ban on manufacture of salt by Indians) imposed by the British which was thought to be unjust by Gandhi and his followers. He firmly believed that civil disobedience was based on a profound respect for law in general; only unjust law should be overturned—that, too, when all attempts of persuasion, negotiations and petition for its amendment or withdrawal of such law had failed.

Gandhi was of the belief by any form of resistance against injustice must be non-violent, hence the act of civil disobedience should also be performed non-violently and in full public view; and penalties caused by such an act should be accepted willingly. It is again important that the true object of civil obedience is 'change of heart' of the authorities concerned-moral awakening. Civil disobedience is a weapon only against a tyrannical regime, autocratic, unjust government or a foreign rule. If a government wilfully preserves the citizens' rights and can be influenced through democratic means, resort to civil disobedience will not be compulsory. lastly, an act of civil disobedience should not be resorted to for demanding the rights or privileges of any particular section against the general or public interest.

5.7 SUMMARY

An external domain of standards and regulations is created by political obligation. It is governed by laws, customs and by-laws. It refers to a set of legal obligations and responsibilities that persons might be legally compelled to fulfil under the fear of penalty or punishment or other legal repercussions. The term “political obligation” refers to a set of legal responsibilities that citizens must fulfil. This should, however, not mean that political obligation is the same as legal obligation. Political obligation extends beyond the sphere of legal obligation. Political obligation necessitates for compliance to the laws of the state, but it too admits means to challenge the system in order to safeguard the obligation ends. It does include the duty of the citizens to obey the laws of the state, but it also incorporates in its sphere a wider obligation, i.e., duty to protect the country, or to fight against injustice. This latter connotation of obligation is much more than what one would like to include either in



moral or legal obligation. The concept of legal obligation merely serves to safeguard the existing established legal structure, however, the concept of political obligation serves to protect the system as a whole against dictatorship, political disputes, totalitarianism, injustice, exploitation and alike. How to construct a legitimized political or social order is the problem of political duty? Political responsibility is a form of obligation that aims to develop a political system that is free of all types of injustices and promotes the general good. Political justice does not totally fall under the purview of either the law or ethics. Its domain that exists somewhere between ethics and law. It is what is connected to its foundations (why obey?) and substance (as to what it contains so that it is obeyed).

5.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of Political obligation?
2. Do we have political obligation to obey the state? Discuss the scope of civil disobedience in a liberal democratic republic.
3. Provide an account of the major debates on the question of 'why should we obey the state'?
4. Write a short note on idea of political obligation to state.
5. Examine critically Marxist approach to the notion of political obligation?

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