Nour El-Bachir El-Bayadh University Center

Institute of Law and Political Science

Department of Political Science

A pedagogical publication on political sociology module

Intended for first-year Bachelor's degree students - dual major: Political Science + English

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Introduction

For a generation, political science has been dominated by the analysis of interests within the framework of rational choice. Although this has enabled major advances, it struggles to provide a plausible analysis of many instances of sociopolitical dysfunction**.**

Politics is about power and authority. But the production, conservation, and distribution of power and authority occur far beyond Capitol Hill; it features in family dynamics, neighborhoods, schools, welfare policies, social movements, nation-states, and the globalized economy. In this course, we examine such areas using the theoretical framework and analytic tools of political sociology. We ask such questions as: what is power exactly, and how can we measure it empirically? How do class, race, and gender affect power relations? Where did the nation-state as we know it come from? What kinds of social movements are there and how do they produce change? How does capitalism relate to the state and civil society? Where did the welfare state come from, and what kinds are there? Who are the elites and rulers, and how would we know? What are some forces of exclusion or discrimination in democratic society? What is globalization and how do we best explain it? The course is divided into five parts according to the following major themes: foundations, the nation-state, capitalism, democracy, and the big picture of global processes.

Although political sociology is generally thought to be a distinct border field between political science and sociology, there have been variations over time in the tendencies to emphasize it as a genuine field of its own. A central element has been that political sociology is related to the distinction between the social and the political, between society and state.

Chapter one : A conceptual and historical introduction to political sociology

Preface

Political sociology is a discipline that is widely known as the study of states, societies, and political affairs. The analysis of social trends that directly affect political progress is the major focus and to understand this, the historical context of political forces and theories, formation, and behavior of social groups concerning the state is majorly researched. The state is looked at from a macro and micro perspective, and this entails nation-states and their political background, social and political movements and what caused them, and so on. The main idea is to understand why political affairs are the way they are in a certain state and why they take the form they do. On the contrary, the micro perspective focuses more on social groups and their effect on individual political behavior and how their attitudes affect affairs such as voting and participation.[1]

One might confuse political sociology with political science as in fact, a lot of political sociology overlaps with political science but the difference is that political science focuses more on the internal working of the political system and political sociology tries to understand the social forces that affect the political affairs of a state and how they shape the system.

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1 Neha Ankam ,**Political Sociology: Definitions, Scope, Importance, Theories** November 19, 2017,retrieved from :https://www.sociologygroup.com/political-sociology-meaning-scope-concept-development,on 12/04/2026 at 11.00h.

The discipline only became prominent after World War II due to the major effects the war had on society and vice versa. Political sociologists turned towards social groups and aspects such as race and education and their behavior towards the political system. Furthermore, it also developed into looking at the big picture and they were looking into the effects of revolutions and war, large-scale development of the state, and so on. This article aims to introduce the discipline by discussing its various definitions stated by various thinkers over time and also discusses the scope and importance of the same. Moreover, it details the different approaches and theories that have been developed in the discipline over time and ends with a discussion of the most famous sociologists and their contributions to political sociology.[2]

In this lecture, we will explore the **definition of political sociology, the nature of political sociology, and the scope of political sociology** to give you a comprehensive understanding of this subject.

The first section : Conceptual framework of political sociology

The first requirement : Definition of political sociology

The discipline of political sociology dates back to Aristotle's time. His word for politics or 'politike' is derived from politike episteme

1 Neha Ankam ,Political **Sociology: Definitions, Scope, Importance, Theories** November 19, 2017,retrieved from :https://www.sociologygroup.com/political-sociology-meaning-scope-concept-development,on 12/04/2026 at 11.00h.

which means political science. However, it was developed into an actual academic field in the late 19th century at Columbia University.1

As the 20th century approached, it garnered significant attention, prompting sociologists to investigate the state in relation to historical context, political ideology, and various methodologies. Many sociologists have defined political sociology based on their backgrounds and perspectives over time. Some of these are: 1 [3]

- Robert E. Dowse and John A. Hughes stated that "Political Sociology is the study of political behavior within a sociological perspective of the frame .
- Giovanni Sartori defined it as "a cross-disciplinary breakthrough" that entails the "sociological and politico-logical approaches combined at the point of intersection.2
- Lewis Coser opined that it is concerned with social causes and consequences of power distribution between societies and that social and political conflicts lead to allocation of power .3
- Keith Faulks said that it is "concerned with the relationship between politics and society and the acknowledgment of

1 https://www.sociologygroup.com/political-sociology-meaning-scope-concept-development
2 Das, S, Political Sociology. Tripura University. Vikas Publishing House. 2017, retrieved from https://www.tripurauniv.ac.in/Content/pdf/Distance%20Education%20Notice/Political%20Sociology%20-%20MAPol%20Science_%20901C%20English_21072017.pdf
3 Ibid.

political actors and social movements function from a wider social context .1 [4]

Based on the previous defenitions, political sociology is the study of the relationship between society and politics. It examines how power and authority are distributed, how policies affect people, and how people influence political processes. It's a subfield of sociology that brings in the analytical tools of political science, economics, history, and anthropology.

It doesn't just look at institutions like governments and parties , it looks at you, me, us — and how we interact with those institutions.

Political sociology is the study of how society and politics interact. It examines power structures, political institutions, public behavior, and the influence of social factors on political outcomes.

The second requirement : **Historical roots of political sociology**

The historical development of political sociology can be roughly outlined by emphasizing three periods of special importance.

A-The birth of political sociology can be dated to the mid-nineteenth century, when the founding fathers of social science began to conceive of the social and political, the society and the state as separate entities, and to analyze their relationships .2

1 Das, S, Political Sociology. Tripura University. Vikas Publishing House, 2017, retrieved from https://www.tripurauniv.ac.in/Content/pdf/Distance%20Education%20Notice/Political%20Sociology%20-%20MAPol%20Science_%20901C%20English_21072017.pdf

2https://www.sociologygroup.com/political-sociology-meaning-scope-concept-development

This type of inquiry had its intellectual roots in the writings of earlier philosophers about the state and the social life, however, as a broad and joint interest of an academic community, political sociology emerged in the scholarship of the nineteenth-century fathers of social science. [5]

B-The post-World War II studies of the conditions for and the citizen activities in political democracies with a special focus on parliamentary elections conceived them as expressions of the political competition between different social groups.2 The joint focus on the prerequisites of democracy and voting patterns proliferated during the 1950s and 1960s, receiving institutionalized expression in the work and activities of the Committee of Political Sociology, founded in 1959 with Seymour Martin Lipset as chairman and Stein Rokkan as secretary and functioning under the auspices of both the ISA (International Sociological Association) and the IPSA (International Political Science Association).3

C-The late twentieth-century studies of nation and state building placed a special emphasis on great political transformations and breakdowns of regimes.

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1 Runciman, W. G. **Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England,**1966,pp 22-42.

2 Pizzorno, A. (1971). "**An Introduction to the Theory of Political Participation**." In A. Pizzorno (Ed.), Political Sociology: Selected Readings (pp. 7–18). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books,pp 7-18.

3 Rokkan, Stein. **Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development.** New York: McKay, 1970, pp 1-20.

This type of inquiry received a strong impetus from the renaissance of Marxist thinking in the 1960s and 1970s, but it was not restricted to social scientists with a leftist orientation . 1 [6].

The third requirement : Scholarly definitions

1-According to Seymour Martin Lipset, "Political sociology is the study of the relationship between political and social structures."
2-Max Weber defined it as "the study of power and authority in various forms of social organization."
3-Robert Dahl emphasized that political sociology examines "how individuals and groups influence political decision-making."
From these definitions, we can understand that political sociology is not just about government structures but also about power relations within society.2

The second section : Origins and Theories

The first requirement The origins and evolution of political sociology

Political sociology emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as sociologists sought to understand the role of the state, authority, and power in rapidly changing industrial societies. Thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim laid the foundations for the field. Marx examined how economic structures and class conflict shape political systems, while Weber analyzed

1 Linz and Stepan 1978, Skocpol 1979
2 E Allardt, Political Sociology, retrieved from Political Sociology – ScienceDirect, on 11/01/2026 at 15.00h.

different types of authority and the rationalization of modern governance. Durkheim focused on the moral foundations of society and the role of collective consciousness in political integration.The discipline grew through the 20th century, incorporating diverse perspectives and methodologies. Post-war political sociology focused on electoral behavior, elite theory, and the institutional dynamics of democracy. The 1960s and 1970s saw a shift toward conflict theory, critical perspectives, and analyses of social movements. More recently, political sociology has expanded to include the study of globalization, identity politics, transnational movements, and digital political communication. Its evolution reflects broader changes in the political landscape and demonstrates the discipline's flexibility in analyzing both macro- and micro-level power relations.

The second requirement Classical theories of power and authority[7]

Classical sociological theorists have profoundly influenced the conceptualization of power and authority. Karl Marx viewed political power as a reflection of economic relations. According to Marx, the state is an instrument of class domination, serving the interests of the bourgeoisie by maintaining conditions favorable to capital accumulation. In contrast, Max Weber offered a more nuanced view by distinguishing between different types of authority: traditional (based on customs and inherited status),

1 https://www.sociologyguide.com/basic-concepts/political-sociology.php

charismatic (based on personal qualities and leadership), and legal-rational (based on rules and procedures). Weber emphasized the role of bureaucracy in modern state structures, arguing that rational-legal authority forms the basis of modern political institutions. Émile Durkheim, while less focused on politics per se, emphasized social cohesion and the collective conscience as foundations for political order. Later theorists, such as Antonio Gramsci, introduced the concept of cultural hegemony to explain how the ruling class maintains control not only through coercion but also by shaping ideology and cultural norms. These foundational theories remain central to political sociology, offering diverse lenses through which power and governance can be analyzed.[8]

1 https://www.sociologyguide.com/basic-concepts/political-sociology.php

The third section : Pillars of political sociology: approches, nature, scope, and importance

The first requirement : Nature of political sociology

3-1- The nature of political sociology can be understood through its interdisciplinary approach and key characteristics.

1- Interdisciplinary Nature

It draws from sociology, political science, history, economics, and psychology. It blends social theory with political analysis to give a holistic view of power and governance.[9]

2-Focus on power and authority

Power is a central theme in political sociology. It explores how authority is distributed, who holds power, and how it affects different social groups.1

3- Relationship between state and society

It examines how governments function and how societies influence political systems and studies elections, political parties, and civil movements.

4-Influence of social structures

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1 Avijit Biswas,Political **Sociology: Understanding Its Meaning, Nature**, **and Scope**,April 10, 2025, retrieved from :https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/political-sociology/#:~:text=Political, on 30/03/2026 at 10.00.

2 Ibid .

Social class, caste, gender, race, and religion play a crucial role in politics. It investigates how these factors shape governance and policy-making.2

5- Empirical and theoretical spproach

It combines theories with real-world data. Researchers analyze case studies, historical events, and current political trends to derive conclusions**.**

3-2- The scope of political sociology

It is broad, covering various aspects of politics and society. Here are some key areas it focuses on:[10]

1- Political institutions and structures

It studies how governments, parliaments, bureaucracies, and legal systems function. It analyzes their role in shaping policies and maintaining social order.

2. Political behavior and participation

Why do people vote? How do protests emerge? It examines political participation, voter behavior, and mass movements to understand public engagement.

3. Social movements and revolution

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1 Avijit Biswas,**Political Sociology: Understanding Its Meaning, Nature, and Scope**,April 10, 2025, retrieved from :https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/political-sociology/#:~:text=Political, on 31/03/2026 at 14.00.

From civil rights movements to feminist struggles, political sociology investigates how social groups challenge power structures and bring about change.1

4. Influence of ideology

Political ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, and nationalism influence governance. Political sociology studies how these ideologies shape public opinion and policy-making.

5. Power and class struggle

Karl Marx emphasized the role of class struggle in politics. It examines how economic disparities and power imbalances impact governance.[11]

6. Globalization and politics

With the rise of globalization, politics is no longer confined to national boundaries. It explores international relations, global governance, and transnational movements.

7. Role of media in politics

In the digital age, media plays a crucial role in shaping political opinions. It studies how news, social media, and propaganda influence public perception.2

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1 Marx, K. Capital: Critique of Political Economy. Penguin Classics, 1867, pp 01-20.
2 Avijit Biswas,**Political Sociology: Understanding Its Meaning, Nature, and Scope**,April 10, 2025,https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/political-sociology/#:~:text=Political

The second requirement : The Importance of political sociology

1-Helps understand power structures in society

In every society, power is not equally distributed. Some groups hold more influence than others — sometimes because of wealth, sometimes caste, class, race, gender, or religion.

Political sociology helps you **analyze these power structures**. For instance, why do certain political elites continue to dominate elections? Why are tribal communities often underrepresented in national politics?

By studying these questions, you gain insights into how power operates and how it can be redistributed for a more just society. This is the first **importance of political sociology** — it trains your eyes to see power not just in politics but everywhere around you.[12]

2-Bridges the Gap Between Society and Government : Often, there's a disconnect between what people need and what policies deliver. Political sociology plays a crucial role in **bridging this gap**.

✓ **Economics**

- Why governments may fail to address poverty despite good intentions.
- How social movements influence public policy.

- What roles institutions like the media and judiciary play in shaping perceptions.

It emphasizes that policy isn't made in a vacuum — it's deeply affected by societal demands, class structures, and cultural values.

✓ **Encourages civil participation and awareness**

Have you noticed how some people actively vote, campaign, and discuss public issues, while others stay silent? One of the vital **importance of political sociology** is its ability to **encourage civil engagement**.

Political sociology teaches that politics isn't just for politicians — it's for every citizen. It explains:[13]

✓ **Science**

- Why participation matters in a democracy.
- How marginalized voices can organize and advocate.
- What motivates people to vote or protest.

As students, when you understand the mechanisms of political action, you're more likely to become engaged, informed citizens the very backbone of a healthy democracy.1

✓ **Explores the role of identity in politics**

Have you ever thought about how caste, religion, gender, or language shape political choices?

1Giddens, A. **The Consequences of Modernity**. Stanford University Press. 1991.

Political sociology doesn't treat voters as a homogeneous group. It studies how **social identities influence political behavior**. For example:

- Why do caste-based parties thrive in certain Indian states?
- How does religion impact voting patterns in multi-faith societies?
- What role does gender play in political representation?

This area of study is vital in multicultural societies like India, where identities deeply impact politics.

✓ **Helps analyze political change and revolutions**[14]

Change is the only constant in politics — and political sociology gives you the tools to understand *why* and *how* change happens.

Whether it's the fall of the Soviet Union, the Arab Spring, or India's anti-corruption movement, political sociology analyzes:

- The **social conditions** that cause revolutions or reforms.
- The **role of leadership** and ideology.
- The **mobilization of the masses**.

It allows you to understand that revolutions aren't random — they are products of deep-rooted social and political factors. Understanding this is key to predicting and managing political transformation.

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1 Avijit Biswas , retrieved from : https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/10-importance-of-political-sociology, on 30/03/2026 at 11.30.

✓ **Provides insights into public policy formulation**

Another major **importance of political sociology** lies in **shaping public policy**.

Because public policy must reflect social realities. For example:

Politics

- If you're making an education policy, you must understand class and caste inequalities.
- If you're designing a women's safety program, you must understand gender-based violence patterns in society.

Political sociology equips policymakers and analysts to **design inclusive, responsive, and realistic policies** that actually work.

✓ **Enhances understanding of political ideologies**[15]

Ideologies like liberalism, socialism, conservatism, feminism — these aren't just theories in books. They influence real decisions, laws, and leadership styles.

Through political sociology, we understand how and why different ideologies appeal to different social groups, leading to diverse political landscapes.

✓ **Explains the evolution of state and governance**

1Ibid.

Have you ever wondered why modern governments look so different from the kingdoms of the past?

- ✓ **Politics**

Political sociology traces the **evolution of state systems**:[16]

- From tribal systems to monarchies,
- From colonial rule to democracies,
- From welfare states to neoliberal governance.

It shows how historical, economic, and social forces shape political institutions over time. Understanding this helps us **make sense of contemporary governance** and the future direction of the state.1

- ✓ **Promotes tolerance and pluralism**

Here's something we don't talk about enough — politics can be divisive, but political sociology can be a unifier.

By analyzing different political systems, ideologies, and societies, political sociology encourages **tolerance, empathy, and dialogue**. 2

[1] https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/10-importance-of-political-sociology

✓ **Supports careers in public affairs, governance, and research[17] :** If you're considering careers in:

- Civil services
- Political analysis
- Policy research
- Journalism
- Academia

…then the **importance of political sociology** is massive for you. It offers a foundational understanding of political behavior, governance models, policy challenges, and citizen engagement , all critical in shaping real-world impact.

Many successful public leaders, administrators, and analysts attribute their perspective to a strong grounding in political sociology.1

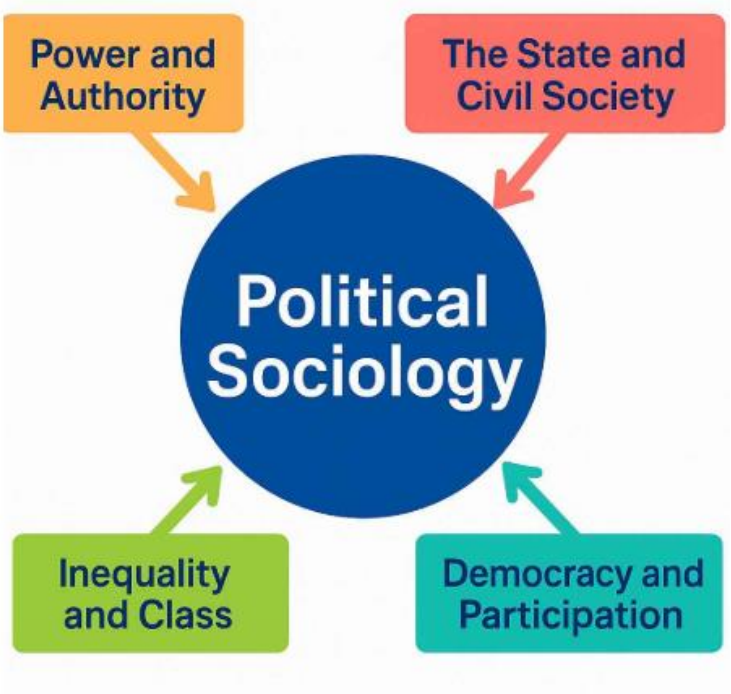
✓ Why political sociology matters today

Understanding political sociology is crucial in today's world. With increasing political polarization, social inequality, and rapid technological advancements, this field helps us critically analyze current events. It equips individuals with the knowledge to engage in informed discussions, challenge injustices, and participate actively in democracy.

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1 Dahl, R. A. Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City. Yale University Press. https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/10-importance-of-political-sociology, 1961.

For students, researchers, and political enthusiasts, political sociology offers valuable insights into the functioning of society and governance. It helps in careers related to public administration, policymaking, journalism, activism, and academia. 1[18]



Political sociology is the study of power, governance, and social structures. It helps us understand why certain policies benefit some groups while others suffer. By exploring the **definition** of political sociology, nature of political sociology, and scope of political sociology, we gain a deeper understanding of political processes and their impact on society.2

As a student of politics, engaging with political sociology will sharpen your analytical skills and broaden your perspective on

1 Marx, K. Capital: Critique of Political Economy. Penguin Classics, 1867, pp 02-12.
2 Avijit Biswas,Political Sociology: Understanding Its Meaning, Nature, and Scope,April 10, 2025,https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/political-sociology/#:~:text=Political

governance. Whether you aspire to work in government, academia, or civil society, this field will equip you with the tools to navigate the complexities of politics and society.

The third requirement : Approaches to the study of political sociology

The study of political sociology contains two major approaches and they are the classical and behavioral approaches. [19]

3-1- : Approaches of political sociology

- ✓ **Classical Approach**

Classical contributors such as Hobbes, Rousseau, Machiavelli, and Locke and their work were prominent in the development of modern political thought. 1890-1920 was the classical period of the discipline, and during this time period, the establishment of it as a university discipline with its major response to the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution aided journals and major research. Classical social theory in specific gained its status with the establishment of it as a separate systemic knowledge that studied moral and political philosophy. People's critical ideology towards the nature of human society resulted in the involvement of society within the political and moral levels. It started as a way to signify the importance of social change but was enhanced into making people aware of the significance of freedom and equality of people.1

Within the approach, several dichotomies were developed to understand and analyze societies and social groups and those are

1 Jordan White, Political Sociology Definition, Theories & Examples, retrieved from Political Sociology Definition, Theories & Examples | Study.com

traditional vs modern division, the individual vs society division, the secular vs sanctified division, and the stature vs contract division. Overall, the classical social theory developed modern political thought and used the effect of social groups on politics to understand and aid societies better. Some of the major political sociologists who contributed to classical social theory are **Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Alex de Tocqueville.**[20]

✓ **Behavioral Approach**

The behavioral approach in political sociology came to light with the emergence of behavioral sciences and this approach specifically from a micro perspective of the actions of individual factors rather than the characteristics of institutions. A major difference from the classical approach is that this approach heavily relied on empirical research and standard research methods which had a major impact on social theory. The use of strict methods such as sampling, scoring, and scaling are used to understand political affairs and their behavior. The stress on moving away from ethical to strictly analytical and explanatory has been criticized by many conservatives stating that it lacks proper political research.1

3-2-Political sociology theories

1 Jordan White, Political Sociology Definition, Theories & Examples, retrieved from Political Sociology Definition, Theories & Examples | Study.com

Political sociology draws on several theoretical traditions that offer different perspectives on the relationship between society and politics:

Marxist approaches emphasize class conflict and economic structures as the primary determinants of political arrangements. From this perspective, politics is largely a reflection of class interests, with the state serving as an instrument of the dominant economic class. Neo-Marxist theories have expanded this framework to consider how other forms of social division interact with class dynamics.

Weberian theories, derived from Max Weber's work, focus on the multidimensional nature of power and stratification. Weber distinguished between class, status, and party as different but interrelated sources of power, providing a more complex understanding of political dynamics than purely economic explanations. 1[21]

- **What are the key differences between Marxist and Weberian approaches to political sociology?**

Marxist approaches to political sociology primarily emphasize economic class conflict as the fundamental driver of political arrangements, viewing the state largely as an instrument that serves the interests of the dominant economic class. 2

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1 Jordan White, Political Sociology Definition, Theories & Examples, retrieved from Political Sociology Definition, Theories & Examples | Study.com

2 Catlin, G.CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY. Sociology, 1(3), 1967,pp 293-301. Retrieved JANUARY 12, 2026, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/42850545

This perspective focuses on how economic structures determine political outcomes and how class consciousness shapes political action.[22]

In contrast, Weberian approaches, based on Max Weber's theories, recognize a more multidimensional nature of power and stratification, as he distinguished between class (economic power), status (social prestige), and party (political organization) as separate but interrelated sources of power. This framework provides a more complex understanding of political dynamics than purely economic explanations, acknowledging that power can derive from various social resources beyond just economic position. Weberian political sociology tends to recognize greater autonomy of political institutions from economic forces than does Marxist theory.

1-**Pluralist theory** is the view that the framework of the government determines the political affairs in society and the direction of the decision-making. This also adds to the idea that nongovernmental individuals can exert influence on the same, affecting political affairs. It is based on functionalism with a focus on stability and gradual change. The main focus would be the influence of power in politics. Robert A.Dahl is one of the most important pluralist theorists.

1Catlin, G. CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY. Sociology, 1(3), 1967,pp293-301. Retrieved JANUARY 12, 2026, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/42850545

2 RATHORE, L. POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY: ITS MEANING, EVOLUTION, AND SCOPE. The Indian Journal of Political Science,1986,pp119-140. Retrieved JANUARY 30, 2026, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/41855222.

1. **Elite theory** of the state describes and analyzes power relationships in contemporary times. Especially focusing on a small community, consisting of the elite or more privileged who consist of the most economic value and hold power over everyone else. The elite's power and its effect on political processes are widely studied. The most important narrative of this theory is that the elite are concentrated in number and are unified due to aligned backgrounds and the non-elites can be diverse but are powerless. Vilfredo Pareto is a well-known elite theorist. Read more about **Elite Theory.**
2. **Marxist theory** refers to the implementation of the Marxist perspective within political sociology. This political philosophy focuses on society and economics, but also on the dynamics of social groups and social strata and their effect on political affairs. The division of the working class and elite classes' division and relationship and how these individual characters affect political systems such as alliances, voting, and so on. The main subject of overthrowing capitalism and replacing it with communism is a result of the socio-political affairs of society**. Antonio Gramsci** was one of the most significant Marxist theorists. 1[23]
3. **Realist theory** is the view that politics is just the way it is and that it should be autonomous or independent from moral struggles. The main focus of this theory is strictly the national interest of nation-states and their relationship with other

1Das, S. Political Sociology. Tripura University. Vikas Publishing House. 2017,https://www.tripurauniv.ac.in/Content/pdf/Distance%20Education%20Notice/Political%20Sociology%20-%20MAPol%20Science_%20901C%20English_21072017.pdf

nation-states. The objective of power relations and absolute power of the state differentiates this theory from the others. Thomas Hobbes was an influential realist theorist. 1[24]

4. **Corporatist theory** is part of post-pluralism and is also known as the more sophisticated version of elite pluralism. It stresses a strong central state which allows citizens to operate under their directives. The state acts as a moral authority that regulates order to maintain national unity. The state still has the role to maintain major institutions like the economy but only with an alliance between the state, organizations, and labor. John Stuart Mill was an influential corporatist theorist.

Conclusion

In conclusion, political sociology is the intersection of political science and sociology that deals with the circumstances of social groups and their effects on political systems. That is, how politics is molded by societies and vice versa. Many famous sociologists such as Marx, Weber, Gramsci, Miliband, Poulantzas, and Jessop have made significant contributions to political sociology. Their work has enabled us to get an understanding of the socio-political structures and their implications which is only possible with the study of political sociology. The analysis of social forces and politics rather than studying the mechanics of politics puts forth the idea that society should come over political institutions. Political sociology in specific has major contemporary relevance, especially with the

1 https://www.sociologygroup.com/political-sociology-meaning-scope-concept-development/

current socio-political affairs going on all over the world. A prime example is the impeachment of Donald Trump. The dynamics of the republican office did not align with the individuals in society as it did not include all social strata in the policies that were being put out. When external forces, such as individuals in a society are not happy with the governmental system and its decisions, then the external forces have the power to overthrow the government. Donald Trump's inconsiderate remarks of such an intersectional society and not understanding the effect of social forces on politics had gotten him out of the presidency. So, it is important for political sociology to be a major part of academics to be able to apply it to society and help run the social forces and governmental institutions better.

Chapter two: The Basic concepts in political and social analysis

In the study of government, Power, Authority, Legitimacy, and Sovereignty are regarded as basic concepts and principles because they form the foundation of political science and governance.[25]

The first section : The Trilogy of Power (Authority, Legitimacy, and Sovereignty).

1-1- Power : refers to the ability to influence or control people and decisions.

All politics is about power – achieving and maintaining it – Hobbes – basic human urge is to seek 'power after power'. Programmed – Dawkins' selfish gene. Conservative viewpoint :

- The ability to get someone to do something they otherwise wouldn't do – 'power to'.1
- Distinguished with authority by power being the ability to do and authority right to do.
- Distinction from influence – ability to affect outcome even if not having actual final power to decide – influence is a minor form of power by affecting their actions without inciting force/fear – e.g. manipulation.
- Lukes sees power in three forms: decision-making, agenda setting and thought control.2

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1 university London, retrieved from : https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/politics/power-authority-legitimacy-theory, on 15/04/2026 at 12.00.
2 https://myschool.ng/classroom/government

- Decision-making – associated with liberal and pluralist perceptions focussing on who actually makes the decisions. Boulding argues decision-making influenced in three ways: the stick (coercion), the deal (mutual benefit through negotiation), and the kiss (sense of loyalty and commitment to individual, thus he has power).[26]
- Dahl observed decision-making 'Critique of the ruling elite model' and found no single elite in charge, pluralist approach, everyone has a say. Different groups have a say on different aspects. Reality was an "example of a democratic system warts and all".
- Elitist critiques argue this fails to understand unequal influence of key elites – real decisions made by a fixed elite – real power belongs to banks and military C.Wright Mills.
- Hobbes – physical or mechanical power whereby power is used against an individual's will – individual is subservient to it, otherwise life would be nasty, brutish and short. Advocates strong, monarchical government.

1-2-Authority

Generally distinguished from power through the means by which compliance and obedience are achieved Heywood "authority is power cloaked in legitimacy". Authority a form of rightful power.1

1https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/politics/power-authority-legitimacy-theory
https://myschool.ng/classroom/government

- Authority based on a perceived 'right to rule' (Weber) with a moral aspect.
- Weber linked authority to legitimacy – different approach from others stating that legitimacy gave power authority.
- Weber – authority is important irrespective of how it's achieved. As long as there is the perception that authority is legitimate it's fine.[27]
- Authority seldom exercised in absence of power.
- Weber – traditional (respect for elders), charismatic (value opinions and words through their responsibility), legal-rational (respect for right of state – parliament's legal rights to pass new laws).
- Traditional – sanctified by history and based upon 'immemorial custom'. Hierarchy – Burke – 'wisdom of the ancients'. Patriarchalism – links to hereditary systems. Less relevant today, although evident in one form in theocratic states – the resurgence of this type of authority can be seen as a response to the failure of other types in degenerative Western capitalism.
- Charismatic based entirely upon the power of an individual's personality. Owes nothing to status, social position or office, yet can be used to promote the interests of society (Rousseau and Law Giver).
- Charismatic has an almost messianic quality – treated with suspicion – Talmon and criticism of Rousseau.1

1 https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/politics/power-authority-legitimacy-theory
https://myschool.ng/classroom/government

Relationship between power and authority[28]

- Authority is the legitimate exercise of power but debate as to whether this requires morality or PERCEPTION or rightfulness.
- Ruling by power alone eventually lead to unsustainable use of coercive resources – Mao – "all power stems from the barrel of a gun" and is the antithesis of authority.
- **Can authority exist without power?** Weberian sense of traditional and charismatic forms all exert influence without the need to persuade. Legal-rational based on office and power invested in the office thus need power. Also being 'an authority' doesn't need recourse to power but can have influence.

Different views of authority

*Liberals – authority instrumental, coming from below through the consent of the governed – social contract.

*Do not want too much state involvement therefore authority is limited, rational and purposeful leading to preference for legal-rational.

*Conservatives – comes from above from those with experience and wisdom. Benefits other but there are few limits leading to authoritarianism through charismatic.

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1 https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/politics/power-authority-legitimacy-theory
https://myschool.ng/classroom/government

1-3-**Legitimacy** [29]

Legitimacy – The acceptance of authority by the people, giving it credibility.

*To be in a position to exercise authority. Links to power and authority by transforming the former into the latter – turns naked power into authority.

*Moral right to rule – Locke and consent – social contrast theory – we consent to be governed. If there is a formal constitutional basis, we can see legitimacy.

*Hobbes – social contract – dictatorship could have legitimacy as it is meant to protect the individual – the Leviathan state – legitimacy comes about by preventing people getting harmed – implied consent.

*For Rousseau the state is legitimate if it upholds the general will.

*Likes of Weber see a belief in legitimacy as important no matter how it is achieved.

1 Avijit Biswas ;Types of Sovereignty, Meaning and Key Features,retrieved from : https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/meaning-and-types-of-sovereignty

1-4-Sovereignty

Sovereignty is an important idea in political science that refers to the highest authority of a country to govern itself. It means that a government has the power to make laws, enforce rules, and manage its affairs without interference from other countries. [30]

The way sovereignty works can be different depending on the system of government and who holds the power. Understanding the **types of sovereignty** helps us learn how authority is exercised in different nations. In this article, we will explore the meaning of sovereignty, its main features, and the five major types that shape how governments function.

Sovereignty, though its meanings have varied across history, also has a core meaning, supreme authority within a territory. It is a modern notion of political authority. Historical variants can be understood along three dimensions — the holder of sovereignty, the absoluteness of sovereignty, and the internal and external dimensions of sovereignty. The state is the political institution in which sovereignty is embodied. An assemblage of states forms a sovereign states system.1

The history of sovereignty can be understood through two broad movements, manifested in both practical institutions and political thought. The first is the development of a system of sovereign states, culminating at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

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1 Avijit Biswas ;Types of Sovereignty, Meaning and Key Features,retrieved from : https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/meaning-and-types-of-sovereignty.

Contemporaneously, sovereignty became prominent in political thought through the writings of Machiavelli, Luther, Bodin, and Hobbes. The second movement is the circumscription of the sovereign state, which began in practice after World War II and has since continued through European integration and the growth and strengthening of laws and practices to protect human rights. The most prominent corresponding political thought occurs in the writings of critics of sovereignty like Bertrand de Jouvenel and Jacques Maritain. [31]

The English word Sovereignty comes from the Latin word 'Superanus' which means extreme or superficial. Although the term sovereignty is of the modern age, the concept of the word has been around since the time of Aristotle. Aristotle has repeatedly used the word extreme power of the state.

Jean Bodin was the first political thinker who used the term Sovereignty in his famous book called 'The Republic. He meant sovereignty, the ultimate power of a state founded on citizens and subjects that are not regulated by law.1

According to Hugo Grotius, Sovereignty is the supreme political power entrusted to a person who is not under anybody else and whose will is impossible to violate.Books & Literature

To Hobbes, The king or ruler created by the social contract has sovereign power. The power of the ruler was uncontrollable, his order was the law. The ruler of sovereign power was the

1 Avijit Biswas ;Types of Sovereignty, Meaning and Key Features,retrieved from : https://schoolofpoliticalscience.com/meaning-and-types-of-sovereignty

source of all laws and restrictions. He describes sovereign power as the ultimate, indivisible, non-transferable, and free from all external control.

Locke's theory found the basic idea of limited monarchy and mass sovereignty. According to him, people possess real political power; the ruler is just their guardian. According to Locke's second agreement, it was clearly explained to the ruler that the governed people were able to control the power of the ruler, even, if necessary, to overthrow the ruler.[32]

According to Rousseau, Sovereign power is supreme, indivisible, non-transferable, permanent, and united. The source of this power is the people. No mention of the king or ruler can be found in his social contract theory.

Bentham noted a close relationship between individualism and state sovereignty in terms of the philosophy of utilitarianism. According to him, there exists an unlimited sovereignty of the state by which the state enacts laws for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people.

According to Harold Laski, sovereignty is the ultimate power of the state to exercise power over individuals and groups within the state.

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1 ibid.

The second section : Exploring the meaning of State and society

2-1- State

The concept of the state is a cornerstone of political science and an essential element of our everyday lives, yet it can often seem elusive and complex. By understanding the definitions and evolution of the state, we can gain a clearer picture of its role and significance. This blog will take you on a journey through the historical and philosophical interpretations of the state, from ancient times to modern perspectives, helping you grasp this fundamental concept.

Definition

The term "State" is often used interchangeably with "country," "nation," or "government," but in Political Science, it has a precise and distinct meaning.[33]

A-Definitions of the state

- **Max Weber's classic definition:** The State is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory .Emphasizes the state's unique claim to authority and coercion.
- **Woodrow Wilson's Definition:** "A people organized for law within a definite territory."1

1 Weber, Max,Politics as Vocation. (For the classic definition and concept of legitimacy.2004.
2- https://fr.slideshare.net/slideshow/polsci-state/33159373

- **Aristotle's Ancient View:** The *Polis* (city-state) is a "union of families and villages having for its end a **perfect and self-sufficing life** by which it meant a happy and good life."

2- 2- The four essential elements of the state[34]

At its core, the state is a political association that possesses four key elements: population, territory, government, and sovereignty. Derived from the Latin word ‘status,’ the state signifies a condition or a set of circumstances, particularly in the context of political order and governance. Let’s break down these elements:

Population: A state must have people. The citizens form the backbone of a state and are subject to its laws and governance.

Territory: A state requires a defined geographical area, within which it exercises control and jurisdiction.

Government: This is the organizational structure through which the state enforces laws, provides public services, and conducts external relations.

Sovereignty: The ultimate authority within a territory, free from external interference. Sovereignty is what distinguishes a state from other political entities.1

3- **Historical conceptions**

1 Weber, Max,Politics as Vocation. (For the classic definition and concept of legitimacy.2004.
2 https://fr.slideshare.net/slideshow/polsci-state/33159373

3-1-Greek and Roman precedents

The history of the Western state begins in ancient Greece. Plato and Aristotle wrote of the polis, or city-state, as an ideal form of association, in which the whole community's religious, cultural, political, and economic needs could be satisfied. This city-state, characterized primarily by its self-sufficiency, was seen by Aristotle as the means of developing morality in the human character. The Greek idea corresponds more accurately to the modern concept of the nation—i.e., a population of a fixed area that shares a common language, culture, and history—whereas the Roman res publica, or commonwealth, is more similar to the modern concept of the state. The res publica was a legal system whose jurisdiction extended to all Roman citizens, securing their rights and determining their responsibilities. With the fragmentation of the Roman system, the question of authority and the need for order and security led to a long period of struggle between the warring feudal lords of Europe. 1 [35]

3-2-Machiavelli and Bodin

*Niccolò Machiavelli

Niccolò MachiavelliNiccolò Machiavelli, oil on canvas by Santi di Tito; in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

1 Ibid.

It was not until the 16th century that the modern concept of the state emerged, in the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli (Italy) and Jean Bodin (France), as the centralizing force whereby stability might be regained. In The Prince, Machiavelli gave prime importance to the durability of government, sweeping aside all moral considerations and focusing instead on the strength—the vitality, courage, and independence—of the ruler. For Bodin, his contemporary, power was not sufficient in itself to create a sovereign; rule must comply with morality to be durable, and it must have continuity—i.e., a means of establishing succession. Bodin's theory was the forerunner of the 17th-century doctrine known as the divine right of kings, whereby monarchy became the predominate form of government in Europe. It created a climate for the ideas of the 17th-century reformers like John Locke in England and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in France, who began to reexamine the origins and purposes of the state.[36]

***Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau**

For Locke and Rousseau, as well as for Locke's English predecessor Thomas Hobbes, the state reflected the nature of the human beings who created it. 1The "natural condition" of man, said Hobbes, is self-seeking and competitive. 2

1 Locke, John, two treatises of government. (For the liberal view of the State,1988.
2 Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan. (For the Social Contract Theory,1996.
3 Marx, Karl, and Engels, Friedrich, The communist manifesto,2004.

Man subjects himself to the rule of the state as the only means of self-preservation whereby he can escape the brutish cycle of mutual destruction that is otherwise the result of his contact with others.

***John Locke**[37]

For Locke, the human condition is not so gloomy, but the state again springs from the need for protection—in this case, of inherent rights. Locke said that the state is the social contract by which individuals agree not to infringe on each other's "natural rights" to life, liberty, and property, in exchange for which each man secures his own "sphere of liberty."

***Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Rousseau's ideas reflect an attitude far more positive in respect of human nature than either Hobbes or Locke. Rather than the right of a monarch to rule, Rousseau proposed that the state owed its authority to the general will of the governed. For him, the nation itself is sovereign, and the law is none other than the will of the people as a whole. Influenced by Plato, Rousseau recognized the state as the environment for the moral development of humanity. 1 Man, though corrupted by his civilization, remained basically good and therefore capable of assuming the moral position of aiming at the

1 Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan. (For the Social Contract Theory,1996.

general welfare. Because the result of aiming at individual purposes is disagreement, a healthy (noncorrupting) state can exist only when the common good is recognized as the goal.

4-Theories on the origin of the state

Different theories attempt to explain *how* the State first emerged:

Theory	Key Idea	Prominent Thinkers/Example
Divine right theory	The State was created by **God**, and rulers are God's chosen agents. Obedience to the ruler is obedience to God.	Early European Monarchs, James I of England.
Force theory	The State arose out of the need for protection and was created through the **subjugation of the weak by the**	Early state formation through conquest and domination.

	strong.	
Social contract theory	The State is a result of a **voluntary agreement** (*contract*) among individuals to leave the 'State of Nature' and create a political authority for protection.	**Thomas Hobbes** (*Leviathan*), **John Locke**, **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**.
Evolutionary/historical theory	The State evolved slowly over a long period from primitive society, driven by factors like kinship, religion, property, and war.	Widely accepted modern view; **Mclver**.

5- Major theories on the nature and purpose of the state

Political thinkers have different ideas about *what* the State is and *why* it exists:

- **Liberal view (Pluralism):**

-Views the state as a neutral arbiter among competing groups and individuals in society.1

-The state's main purpose is to protect individual rights and liberties and promote the common good.

-Thinkers: Locke, Madison, classical liberals.2

1-Marxist view (Instrumentalism):3

-Views the State as an instrument of class oppression, used by the economically dominant class (the bourgeoisie) to maintain its power and exploit the working class (the proletariat).

-The state is destined to wither away after the communist revolution.

-*Thinkers:* Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels.[38]

- **Organic theory:**

-Views the State as a living organism where the individual is merely a part.

-The State is considered an ethical institution that promotes the highest moral life, and its interests supersede individual interests.

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1 Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan. (For the Social Contract Theory,1996.
2 Locke, John, two treatises of government. (For the liberal view of the State,1988.
3 Marx, Karl, and Engels, Friedrich, The communist manifesto,2004.

-Thinkers: Plato, Aristotle, Hegel.

5- Functions of the state

Modern states perform an enormous range of functions, which can be broadly categorized: 1[39]

- **Essential and primary functions:**

-Maintenance of **law and order** (internal security).

-External defense (protecting borders and national integrity).

-Administering **justice** (judicial system).

- **Non-essential functions:**

-Providing public goods (infrastructure, education, health care, social security).

-Regulating the **economy** (monetary policy, trade, consumer protection).

-Environmental protection and promotion of culture.2

1 https://polsci.institute/comparative-politics/understanding-concept-of-state-definitions-evolution
2 Garner, James Wilford, political science and government,1932

2-2-Society

If the state is narrower than society and the nation is a subset of society defined by shared identity, then society is the broadest of the three concepts. Society refers to the entire web of social relationships, institutions, and organizations through which human beings live together. It is not tied to political authority like the state, nor to cultural identity like the nation. Society is simply the totality of organized human life.

Society encompasses **institutions** — family, education, religion, economy, law, and politics. It includes both formal organizations and informal social norms. It includes people who agree with each other and people in deep conflict. It includes the state as one institution among many, and it includes the nation as one community among many. As the German sociologist Franz Oppenheimer described it, society refers to the totality of purely natural relations and institutions between people — the cooperative fabric of collective life, distinct from the coercive apparatus of the state.[40]

2-3-Nation

The concept of the nation refers to a powerful form of collective human identity that emerged significantly in the modern era. While often used interchangeably with "country" or "state," the nation is fundamentally a socio-cultural and psychological community, distinct from the formal political and legal entity known as the state.

1 https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/foundations-political-sociology, consulted on 10/04/2026 at 14.00

1-Defenition

A nation is fundamentally different from a state. Where the state is a political and legal institution, the nation is a cultural and identity-based community. A nation is a group of people who share a common identity — built from shared language, history, religion, ethnicity, cultural practices, or a combination of these. Nations do not need governments or armies to exist. They exist in the minds and lived experiences of the people who belong to them. 1 [41]

A nation is a large group of people who share a common and deeply held sense of collective identity. This identity is typically forged through a combination of shared features, which may include:

Common Language: A shared tongue that unites the community.

Shared History/Myths: A collective memory of historical events and founding stories.

Culture and Traditions: Shared customs, values, and practices.

Ethnicity or Religion: While not always necessary, these can be powerful binding elements.

Territorial Attachment: A belief in a specific, shared homeland.

Crucially, a nation is often described as an "imagined political community" (a concept popularized by political theorist Benedict Anderson). The members of a nation will never all meet, but they

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation, consulted on 11/04/2026 at 12.00.
2 https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/foundations-political-sociology, consulted on 11/04/2026 at 12.00

hold a strong, subjective belief in their shared, deep-seated communion and distinctness from other groups.1

Nation-state, a territorially bounded sovereign polity—i.e., a state—that is ruled in the name of a community of citizens who identify themselves as a nation. The legitimacy of a nation-state's rule over a territory and over the population inhabiting it stems from the right of a core national group within the state (which may include all or only some of its citizens) to self-determination. Members of the core national group see the state as belonging to them and consider the approximate territory of the state to be their homeland. Accordingly, they demand that other groups, both within and outside the state, recognize and respect their control over the state. As the American sociologist Rogers Brubaker put it in Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe (1996), nation-states are "states of and for particular nations."[42]

A nation is a type of social organization where a collective identity, a national identity, has emerged from a combination of shared features across a given population, such as language, history, ethnicity, culture, territory, or society. Some nations are constructed around ethnicity (see ethnic nationalism) while others are bound by political constitutions (see civic nationalism).

A nation is generally more overtly political than an ethnic group. Benedict Anderson defines a nation as "an imagined political

1 https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state, consulted on 15/04/2026 at 12.00.

community …. imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion,while Anthony D. Smith defines nations as cultural-political communities that have become conscious of their autonomy, unity and particular interests.Black's Law Dictionary also defines nation as a community of people inhabiting a defined territory and organized under an independent government.Thus, nation can be synonymous with state or country. Indeed, according to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, what distinguishes nations from other forms of collective identity, like ethnicity, is this very relationship with the state. 1 [43]

- Related term : **Nationalism**

Nationalism is a political ideology that emphasizes loyalty, devotion, or allegiance to a nation or nation-state and places its interests above those of other countries.2

How state, nation, and society relate to each other ?

These three concepts are not sealed off from each other — they overlap, influence, and sometimes clash in important ways. Understanding their interaction is the real work of political sociology.3

1 https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/foundations-political-sociology, 1 https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state, consulted on 12/01/2026 at 17.00.
2 https://fiveable.me/key-terms/intro-to-poli-sci/nation; 1 https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state, consulted on 12/01/2026 at 17.00.
3 https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/foundations-political-sociology, 1 https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state, consulted on 12/01/2026 at 14.30.

Conclusion

The political power of the nation lies in its connection to the ideology of Nationalism, which asserts that each nation has a right to self-determination (the right to govern itself) and that the nation is the only legitimate source of political authority. This concept has been the driving force behind modern world history, inspiring everything from anti-colonial independence movements to global wars and ethnic conflicts**.**

The third section : Political identity and social affiliation

3-1- Political identity

Identity is not new to political science. Research on personality and group membership from social psychology, and more recently from economics, has long inspired both empirical work and formal modeling. 1 [44]

An analysis of autobiographical accounts of political activists carried out by Catellani et al. has shown the presence of three main levels of political identity, characterized by a different degree of abstractedness and embedded within each other: ideological identity, party identity, and sub-party identity. These identity levels are likely to satisfy different needs, and, accordingly, the relative salience each of them assumes for the individual is likely to vary depending on circumstances. Ideological identity is characterized by the highest degree of abstractedness. When people identify themselves with left-wing or right-wing people, they state their inclusion within a social category that is difficult to visualize, with wide and ill-defined boundaries, including a large number of heterogeneous individuals. At the same time, such an abstract category of identification is likely to be perceived as more stable over time and less subject to transformations as compared to a more concrete category, such as a political party.[2]

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1 Libby Jenke , Scott A. Huettel, Issues or Identity? Cognitive Foundations of Voter Choice,retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1364661316301310.

2Patrizia Catellani, Political Psychology, Overview, retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/chapter/referencework/abs/pii/B0126574103003627

In fact, ideological identity has been shown to be especially salient after a political schism, when a previous existing party splits into two or more new parties. In these changed circumstances, stressing one's ideological identity has the function of safeguarding a certain degree of continuity with the past, to keep a balance in one's own identity.

Political identity is a form of social identity marking membership of certain groups that share a common struggle for a certain form of power. This can include identification with a political party, but also positions on specific political issues, nationalism, inter-ethnic relations or more abstract ideological themes.[45]

When the influential political psychology book The American Voter was published, political identity, and in particular partisan identity, was described in terms of emotional attachments to certain social groups. Nevertheless, there are many definitions of political identity, from both political scienceand psychology. The literature does, however, seem to agree on the idea that political identity is a form of social identity marking membership of certain groups sharing a common struggle for a certain form of power.1

In political psychology, the development of social identity theories in the 1970s[6] led to a reinterpretation of political identity in terms of attachment to social groups. The emergence of this new

1 Political_identity, retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_identity, on 15/01/2026 at 22.00h.

theoretical framework has improved the predictive power of individual political behaviour and attitudes.

This theory showed that each person can be linked to many groups at any time. The circumstances of the moment then determine which category the individual chooses to interpret his or her environment. In this context, political identity is one possible form of social identity among others[46].

3-2- Social influence

Among people is widely understood to be a universal component of the human experience. However, studies of political behavior have generally approached social influence as specific to a type of behavior, such as voting, in a particular national context. There are good reasons to expect that social influence is observable across diverse behaviors and national contexts.1

Comparative analysis of political behavior rightly emphasizes how variation in national context is important to understanding variation in individual-level behavior across countries. For the most part, relationships between predictors and political behaviors are not universal but vary among countries with dissimilar institutions, parties, electoral rules, and cultures.2

A predictor of behavior could be defined as universal to the extent that it meets two criteria: exerting consistent effects across

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1 Bruce Bimber and Homero Gil de Zúñiga , **Social influence and political participation around the world** Published online by Cambridge University Press: 04 April 2022, retrieved from https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-political-science-review/article/social-influence-and-political-participation on 10/04/2026 at 20.00.

2 Verba, S., Brady, H. and Schlozman, K. **, Voice and equality: Civic voluntaristm in American Politics**, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.CrossRefGoogle Scholar,1995.

diverse national contexts, and across diverse behaviors. The most well-studied category of predictors with a high degree of universality is political and civic resources at the individual level. Time, skills, income and related resources are frequently predictive of behavior, although these vary with the behavior in question and with context . 1 [47]

1 Verba, S., Brady, H. and Schlozman, K. , Voice and equality: Civic voluntaristm in American Politics, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.CrossRefGoogle Scholar,1995.

Chapter three: Social and political determinants of behavior

Political and social influence refers to the ability of individuals, groups, institutions, or ideologies to shape public opinion, policy decisions, and societal norms. Political influence is often exercised through governance structures, laws, and public policies, while social influence is manifested through cultural trends, media, activism, and interpersonal relationships. These two forms of influence are deeply interconnected, as political decisions impact social structures, and societal movements often drive political change.1 [48]

This chapter entail :

The first section : Social class and political behavior

The second section :Race and ethnicity in politics

The third section : Religion , gender and women's representation in politics

The impact of political and social influence extends across all aspects of society, from the formation of governments to the evolution of cultural values. Political influence determines the distribution of power and resources, affecting economic stability, human rights, and global relations. Social influence, on the other hand, shapes collective attitudes, behaviors, and ethical norms, contributing to societal progress or regression. Understanding these forces is essential for evaluating how governance systems evolve,

1 Charlie Luca, **Political and Social Influence**,February 2025, retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389357236_Political_and_Social_Influence,on 29/01/2026 at 23.00h.

how social movements gain traction, and how policies respond to the changing needs of populations

Overview of key factors influencing politics and society

Several key factors contribute to political and social influence, including: [49]

1-Leadership and Institutions: Political leaders, policymakers, and institutions such as governments and international organizations shape national and global affairs. 1

2-Media and Communication: Traditional and digital media platforms play a significant role in shaping public discourse, spreading information, and mobilizing public action. • Economic and Social Structures: Economic disparities, class divisions, and access to resources influence both political decisions and societal attitudes.

3-Cultural and Ideological Beliefs: Historical traditions, religious ideologies, and cultural narratives shape societal values and policy preferences.

4- Public Participation and Activism: Grassroots movements, protests, and civic engagement can drive political change and challenge existing power structures.

1 Charlie Luca, Political and Social Influence,February 2025, retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389357236_Political_and_Social_Influence,on 29/01/2026 at 23.00h.

This lecture explores the intricate relationship between political and social influence, examining how these forces interact to shape governance, public policies, and societal transformation in various contexts.[50]

Society is composed of various groups, each with its own interests, values, and access to resources. These differences play a crucial role in shaping political behavior. Class, race, gender, and religion are among the key social categories that influence how people engage with politics. Political sociology examines these dynamics, exploring how social identities intersect with political participation.

The first section : Social class and its impact on political behavior.1

Social class can impart a sense of identity and grievance that provides a basis for the expression of dramatically different political preferences. It helps explain why some people are more opposed to immigration, more nationalist and supportive of punitive law-and-order policies, and more likely to oppose economic redistribution. we examine how and why someone's class position impacts on their perceptions, values and attitudes in ways that influence their political choices. Answers to these questions require us to examine different interpretations of what class position is, the class-related vulnerabilities, motivations and concerns that influence voters'

1 Geoffrey Evans ,Aleksei Opacic**, How Social Class Influences Political Choice**s , Forthcoming in the Cambridge Handbook of Political Psychology Edited by Danny Osborne & Chris G. Sible,retrived from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351191141_How_Social_Class_Influences_Political_Choices,on 08/04/2026 at 23.00.

political preferences, and the impact of the signals sent by political actors seeking their vote.

Sociel class has historically been a significant determinant of political engagement. In industrial societies, the division between working and upper classes shaped the emergence of political parties and labor movements. Economic disparities continue to influence voter behavior, with wealthier individuals often having greater access to political power and resources. 1 [51]

The second section : The impact of race and ethnicity on political interactions.

Similarly, race and ethnicity have profound implications for political life. In many societies, marginalized racial groups have had to fight for equal representation and protection under the law. Political sociology highlights the role of systemic inequalities in shaping political outcomes, shedding light on movements like civil rights struggles and demands for racial justice.2

The third section : Gender ; Religion and women's representation in politics

The first requirement : Gender

Gender also plays a significant role. Women’s political participation has evolved significantly over time, from suffrage movements to current debates about gender equality in leadership. 3

1World Reporter Staff, **How Social Structures Shape Political Behavior**, April 14, 2025, retrieved from https://worldreporter.com/how-social-structures-shape-political-behavior, on 12/04/2026 at 14.00h.
2 Ibid.
3Ibid.

Political sociologists examine how traditional gender roles and systemic barriers impact women's involvement in politics, as well as how these dynamics are changing.

The second requirement : Religion and its role in shaping political systems

The intersection of religion and politics has long been a subject of scholarly inquiry and societal debate, influencing governance structures and dynamics worldwide. Recent research has increasingly focused on understanding how religion shapes political processes and governance, highlighting its impact on individual attitudes, societal norms, and policy decisions. [1][52]

The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Ideologies and Policies

The influence of religious beliefs on political ideologies and policies is a topic of considerable scholarly interest, with recent research shedding light on the multifaceted ways in which religion shapes political thought and action. It explores the intricate relationship between religious beliefs and political ideologies, emphasizing how individuals' religious convictions often inform their political attitudes and behaviors. Drawing on empirical evidence, Smith demonstrates that religious identity plays a significant role in shaping preferences on a wide range of political issues, from social welfare policies to foreign affairs. 2

1Hadija Nantale, **Religion and Politics: Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Governance**,retrived from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381254983_Religion_and_Politics_Exploring_the_Intersection_of_Faith_and_Governance, on 14/04/2026 at 16.00h.

2 Ibid .

This influence extends beyond individual-level preferences to encompass broader societal norms and values, highlighting the pervasive impact of religion on political discourse and decision-making.

Similarly, delves into the influence of religious beliefs on the formulation of public policies, examining how religious values intersect with political processes to shape policy outcomes. Jones argues that religious groups and institutions actively engage in political advocacy, mobilizing support for policies aligned with their theological teachings and moral convictions. Through lobbying efforts, grassroots organizing, and coalition building, religious actors exert influence on policymakers and shape the policy agenda in accordance with their religious principles. Together, the research by Smith and Jones underscores the profound impact of religious beliefs on political ideologies and policies. 1 [53]

By elucidating the mechanisms through which religion shapes political thought and action, these studies provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between faith and governance in contemporary societies. Understanding the influence of religious beliefs on political ideologies and policies is essential for policymakers and scholars alike, as it enables a more nuanced

1Hadija Nantale, **Religion and Politics: Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Governance**,retrived fromhttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/381254983_Religion_and_Politics_Exploring_the_Intersection_of_Faith_and_Governance, on 14/04/2026 at 16.00h.

2 Smith, A , **Secularism vs. Theocracy: Balancing Religion and Politics in Modern Societies**. Journal of Political Science, 45(2), 2023,pp211-228.

understanding of the factors driving political behavior and decision-making.2

The intricate interplay between religion and politics has far-reaching implications for governance, policy-making, and peacebuilding. Historical perspectives on church-state relations reveal the enduring influence of religious legacies on contemporary political structures. Religious beliefs profoundly shape political ideologies and policies, guiding both individual behavior and societal norms. Religious leaders, as political actors, wield significant influence, advocating for policies and mobilizing support based on their moral authority. The ongoing debates between secularism and theocracy highlight the complexities of balancing religious freedom with state neutrality and human rights. Religion can act as both a source of conflict and a catalyst for peace, as demonstrated by the peace process in Northern Ireland. The successful integration of religious perspectives into peacebuilding frameworks illustrates the potential for religion to contribute to political stability and conflict resolution. However, challenges such as sectarian divisions and the secular nature of many governance systems must be navigated to harness this potential effectively. By understanding the multifaceted relationship between religionand politics, policymakers and practitioners can develop more nuanced strategies for governance and peacebuilding. Leveraging religious resources thoughtfully and inclusively can

address conflicts and promote sustainable peace, ultimately enhancing political stability and social cohesion worldwide.

The fourth chapter : Social change and political organizations

The first section :Social movements and political change

Social movements have been studied from the perspective of several disciplines sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economics, and political science. When we conceive of social movements as political phenomena we need to take seriously their relations with the political context in which they act. Clearly, many, if not most, social movements are embedded in political institutions. For this reason, the discipline of political science is of importance in understanding the close link between political institutions and social movements, and how politics matters in shaping social movements in different contexts1[54].

The first requirement : contextual framework of social movements

1- Defenition

A loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society's structure or values. Although social movements differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society.2

1Massimiliano Andretta, **Political Science and the Study of Social Movements**, First published: 27 September 2022 https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm162.pub2, retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9780470674871, on 14/04/2026 at 17.30h.

2 Neil J. Smelser, **social movement**, retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement, on 14/04/2026 at 22.00h.

Social movements and social change

*Women's suffrage: United States

*Women's suffrage: United StatesMembers of the women's suffrage movement in Philadelphia, 1917.[55]

All definitions of social movement reflect the notion that social movements are intrinsically related to social change. They do not encompass the activities of people as members of stable social groups with established, unquestioned structures, norms, and values. The behaviour of members of social movements does not reflect the assumption that the social order will continue essentially as it is. 1

It reflects, instead, the faith that people collectively can bring about or prevent social change if they will dedicate themselves to the pursuit of a goal. Uncommitted observers may regard these goals as illusions, but to the members they are hopes that are quite capable of realization. Asked about their activities, members of a social movement would not reply, “I do this because it has always been done” or “It’s just the custom.” They are aware that their behaviour is influenced by the goal of the movement: to bring about a change in the way things have “always” been done or sometimes to prevent such a change from coming about.

2-Types of social movements

There is no single, standard typology of social movements. As various scholars focus on different aspects of movements,

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1Lewis M. Killian, **social movement**, retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement, on 14/04/2026 at 22.00h.

different schemes of classification emerge. Hence any social movement may be described in terms of several dimensions.

Many attempts at categorization direct attention to the objective of the movement. The social institution in or through which social change is to be brought about provides one basis for categorizing social movements as political, religious, economic, educational, and the like. It may be argued that all movements tend to be either political or religious in character, depending upon whether their strategy aims at changing political structures or the moral values of individuals. 1[56]

A commonly used but highly subjective distinction is that between “reform” and “revolutionary” movements. Such a distinction implies that a reform movement advocates a change that will preserve the existing values but will provide improved means of implementing them. The revolutionary movement, on the other hand, is regarded as advocating replacement of existing values. Almost invariably, however, the members of a so-called revolutionary movement insist that it is they who cherish the true values of the society and that it is the opponents who define the movement as revolutionary and subversive of basic, traditional values.1

Some attempts to characterize movements involve the direction and the rate of change advocated. Adjectives such as radical, reactionary, moderate, liberal, and conservative are often used for

1Lewis M. Killian, **social movement**, retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement, on 14/04/2026 at 22.00h.

such purposes. In this context the designations “revolutionary” and “reform” are often employed in a somewhat different sense than that described above, with the implication that a revolutionary movement advocates rapid, precipitous change while a reform movement works for slow, evolutionary change.

The American sociologist **Lewis M. Killian** advanced still another typology based on the direction of the change advocated or opposed. A reactionary movement advocates the restoration of a previous state of social affairs, while a progressive movement argues for a new social arrangement. A conservative movement opposes the changes proposed by other movements, or those seeming to develop through cultural drift, and advocates preservation of existing values and norms. 1 [57]

Killian and the American psychologist Ralph H. Turner argued that it is useful at times to categorize social movements on the basis of their public definition, the character of the opposition evoked, and the means of action available to the movement. This scheme is designed to eliminate the subjective evaluation of goals inherent in such categories as reformist and revolutionary.

A movement that does not appear to threaten the values or interests of any significant segment of society is publicly defined as respectable. If there is no competing movement advocating the same objective, it is also nonfactional. 2

1Lewis M. Killian, **social movement**, retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement, on 14/04/2026 at 22.00h.
2 Ibid

The respectable nonfactional movement must contend primarily with the problems of disinterest and token support, but it has access to legitimate means of promoting its values. A respectable factional movement must contend with competing movements advocating the same general objective but also has access to legitimate means of extending its influence. A movement that appears to threaten the values of powerful and significant interest groups within the society is publicly defined as revolutionary and encounters violent suppression. As a result, it is denied access to legitimate means of promoting its program. Another type of movement is defined as neither respectable nor dangerous but as peculiar; this type, seen as odd but harmless, encounters ridicule and has limited access to legitimate means. [58]

Social movements may also be categorized on the basis of the general character of their strategy and tactics; for instance, whether they are legitimate or underground. The popular distinction between radical and moderate movements reflects this sort of categorization. An obvious difference between types of movements depends upon their reliance on violent or nonviolent tactics. But a nonviolent movement may also be defined as revolutionary or radical because it accepts civil disobedience, rather than legal or parliamentary maneuvering, as a major feature of its strategy. It should be added that the distinction between violent and nonviolent movements is a relative one because a movement may shift rapidly from one to the other as it develops.1

1 Ibid

The second requirement : Movement process and dynamics

2-1-The dynamics of social movements

As an enduring, sustained collectivity a social movement undergoes significant changes during its existence. This characteristic has led some scholars to formulate a theory of a “life cycle” or “natural history” common to all social movements. Other scholars question the value of the life-cycle approach to social movements, arguing that empirical studies of numerous movements fail to support the notion of invariant stages of development. The American sociologist Neil Smelser suggested as an alternative a value-added theory, which postulates that while a number of determinants are necessary for the occurrence of a social movement, they need not occur in any particular order. Some may be present for some time without effect only to be activated later by the addition of another determinant. At most it can be said that the idea of the life cycle permits the discovery of conditions that must be present if any movement is to proceed from one stage to another. It may also help identify the conditions that cause a movement to change direction. Still, it can be said that a social movement has a career; for as it endures it always undergoes changes in many of its characteristics, though the sequence of these changes may vary from movement to movement. 1 [59]

1Lewis M. Killian, **social movement**, retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement, on 14/04/2026 at 22.00h.

2-2-The causes of social movements

Both individual psychological states and the characteristics of a society at a particular time may be considered as causes of social movements.[60]

1-Psychological factors

Individual factors are psychological states that either convince people to join a movement or so weaken their commitment to conventional groups that they are willing to risk the groups' disapproval because of their belief in an unpopular cause. Failure to achieve a satisfying status and identity within normal membership groups may be such a factor. The prestige and sense of belonging, which such people may gain as members of a social movement, may be even more important to them than the values of the movement. Alienation, feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and estrangement from society may predispose individuals to participation. Some scholars argue, however, that there are different kinds of alienation. One type leads merely to apathy and resignation. Political alienation, however, reflects a loss of faith in the political community and predisposes the individual to join a movement that challenges it.1

2-Social factors

An important task of the student of social movements is to identify those conditions under which social movements are most

1Rudolf Heberle**, Social Movements**: (**An Introduction to Political Sociology**, develops general theories but focuses on the relationship between social movements and political parties,1951.

likely to arise. While the existence of widespread poverty and suffering might seem sufficient to give rise to efforts at reform, it must be emphasized again that some basis for hope must also exist to stir people to make the effort. Paradoxically, partial alleviation of conditions of deprivation may provide such a basis, serving as the impetus for the formation of a social movement just as things seem to be getting better. The success of other people similarly situated, such as victorious revolutionaries in a neighbouring nation, may be another source of hope.1 [61]

1Neil J. Smelser, **social movement**, retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement, on 14/04/2026 at 22.00h.

The third requirement : The importance of social movements

Clearly defining what a social movement is — and is not — has real consequences. If every protest is called a "movement," the term loses its analytical precision. If every crowd is treated as organized resistance, we misunderstand how change actually happens. The distinction between a riot and a movement, or between a flash mob and a sustained campaign, is not pedantic — it shapes how governments respond, how media covers these events, and how participants themselves understand their role. [62]

Sociologically, the definition also matters because it points to what makes movements succeed or fail: the presence or absence of organization, collective identity, sustained commitment, and the ability to coordinate action over time. A grievance alone does not make a movement. According to resource mobilization theory, social movements occur when aggrieved individuals mobilize sufficient levels of resources such as money, communication networks, and elite support for collective action. Without that infrastructure, even the deepest discontent remains dispersed and politically ineffective.1

Conclusion

Understanding the definition of social movements, then, is not just an academic exercise. It is a lens through which we can better

1 https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/defining-social-movements-collective-social-change,on 14/04/2026 at 20.30h.

understand how societies change — and how ordinary people, acting collectively, have repeatedly altered the course of history.

The second section : Political parties

Political and social influence shape societies by guiding governance, shaping public opinion, and driving policy changes. Political influence operates through government structures, laws, ideologies, media, and lobbying efforts, while social influence emerges through cultural norms, education, social media, and influential figures. The intersection of these forces has historically led to significant societal transformations, with social movements and public opinion driving political reforms. However, challenges such as misinformation, polarization, and ethical concerns complicate the landscape of influence, raising questions about responsible engagement and accountability[63].

The first requirement : contextual framework of Political parties

1-Defenitions

1-Political parties are organized groups of people with similar political ideologies and goals, working together to influence public policy, win elections, and govern. They play a critical role in democracies by providing choices to voters and channels for political participation.1

2-Political parties are organized groups of individuals who share similar ideologies and objectives.2 Their primary aim is to gain political power through democratic elections. Political

1 The Fiveable Content Team, retrieved from : https://fiveable.me/intro-to-poli-sci/key-terms/political-parties, on 15/04/2026 at 11.00.
2 Comparative Politics , Issues and TrendsWhat are Political Parties? Definitions and Perspectives,Last updated on:January 7, 2026,retrieved from : https://polsci.institute/comparative-politics/what-are-political-parties, on 15/04/2026,at 15.00.

parties play a pivotal role in shaping policies, mobilizing voters, and ensuring that the government reflects the will of the people. They serve as a bridge between the public and the government, facilitating a two-way flow of information, opinions, and demands.1

2-Historical roots of political parties [64]

In earlier, prerevolutionary, aristocratic and monarchical regimes, the political process unfolded within restricted circles in which cliques and factions, grouped around particular noblemen or influential personalities, were opposed to one another. The establishment of parliamentary regimes and the appearance of parties at first scarcely changed this situation. To cliques formed around princes, dukes, counts, or marquesses there were added cliques formed around bankers, merchants, industrialists, and businessmen. Regimes supported by nobles were succeeded by regimes supported by other elites. These narrowly based parties were later transformed to a greater or lesser extent, for in the 19th century in Europe and America there emerged parties depending on mass support.2

The 20th century saw the spread of political parties throughout the entire world. In less-developed countries, large modern political parties have sometimes been based on traditional relationships, such as ethnic, tribal, or religious affiliations. Moreover, many political

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1 Comparative Politics , **Issues and TrendsWhat are Political Parties? Definitions and Perspectives**,Last updated on:January 7, 2026,retrieved from : https://polsci.institute/comparative-politics/what-are-political-parties, on 15/04/2026,at 15.00.

2 Maurice Duverger, **political party**,retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-party ,on 14/04/2026 at 14.00h.

parties in less-developed countries are partly political, partly military. Certain socialist and communist parties in Europe earlier experienced the same tendencies.

These last-mentioned European parties demonstrated an equal aptitude for functioning within multiparty democracies and as the sole political party in a dictatorship. Developing originally within the framework of liberal democracy in the 19th century, political parties have been used since the 20th century by dictatorships for entirely undemocratic purposes1[65].

Canonical work in the history of political thought recognized the role of parties (or proto-parties)in political representation. An abbreviated list of such thinkers includes Machiavelli, who saw in the Roman contest of plebs and elites a dynamic opposition that could function to stabilize a regime. David Hume appreciated parties in a similar fashion, and against the republican insistence on sameness—enforced through sumptuary laws and a static economy—saw parties as an inevitable and acceptable part of freedom and commercial society. In the late eighteenth century, Edmund Burke's defense of partisanship was more explicit than his predecessors',which is why some see him as the founder not onlyofmodernconservatism but of modern partisanship . 2

What stands out especially is his famous contrast of delegate and trustee models of representation. Some interpreters see a

1 Maurice Duverger, **political party**,retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/political-party ,on 14/04/2026 at 14.00h.
2 Russell Muirhead , and Nancy L. Rosenblum, **The Political Theory of Parties and Partisanship: Catching Up**, Annual Review of Political Science,p3,retrieved from : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341306892_The_Political_Theory_of_Parties_and_Partisanship_Catching_Up,on 15/04/2026 at 18.00.

defense of party even in the writings of Madison, who, though he warned about faction, helped found the first American opposition party as the representative of republicanism. Recent work on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century parliamentarism shows how a variety of thinkers, including Burke and Germaine de Staël, believed that the bond of partisan attachment among representatives "moderated the corrupting effect of patronage".

Scholars of the history of political thought have interpreted and mined these writers and others, paying attention to the theme of representation. Yet, until recently, contemporary political theory did not follow suit.[66]1

Four decades ago, Stokes wrote that although "parties and party systems have played an immensely important role in developing the public's control of leaders and conferring legitimacy on the regime," theorists rarely connect parties to "the concept of representation." In Pitkin's classic account, The Concept of Representation, parties appear briefly and disappear quickly. 2

Although, as Disch argue , Pitkin's understanding of representation is more "radical" than many readers identified.3 Pitkin does not assign a central role to parties and partisans in the dynamic process by which representation is created. Hers is not the only account in which parties remain in the shadows for in many

1 Russell Muirhead , and Nancy L. Rosenblum, **The Political Theory of Parties and Partisanship: Catching Up**, Annual Review of Political Science,p3,retrieved from : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341306892_The_Political_Theory_of_Parties_and_Partisanship_Catching_Up,on 15/04/2026 at 18.00.
2Ibid,p3.
3Ibid, p3.

innovative and compelling recent the ories of representation,parties and partisanship remain absent.

Still, more theorists of representation are heeding the call for normative democratic theorists and party scholars to “talk to each other” and recognize—sometimes with careful analysis, sometimes in passing—the central role of parties and partisanship in representation . In many instances, political representation is conceived of as a relationship between an individual citizen and an official representative, with party and partisanship playing a merely facilitative background role.[67]1

The second requirement : Parties and democracy: not a straightforward relationship

When we talk about parties and democracy, it is usually within the representative democracy framework. However, it has been forgotten that democracy–party linkages were not part of the early philosophical basis of liberal–democratic thought.

Theoretical adaptations including references to parties evolved later under the pressure of real-life processes. Philosophical linkages with establishing the ideational basis for modern capitalist development had also impacted on the understanding of politics in line with rationalism and a (political) market, where choices are made.

1Russell Muirhead , and Nancy L. Rosenblum, **The Political Theory of Parties and Partisanship: Catching Up**, Annual Review of Political Science,p3,retrieved from : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341306892_The_Political_Theory_of_Parties_and_Partisanship_Catching_Up,on 15/04/2026 at 18.30.

More broadly, the literature on democracy has appeared to have evolved without the systematic development of the party politics aspect of democracy, including its dynamics. Rather, democracy has been generally equated with party governing. Post World War Two, the model of liberal democracy with parties at its core had been developed based on empirical studies of democracy in the Western world. This practice had evolved particularly in the United States of America in the frame of a set of literature that had been nicknamed ‘empirical liberalism’.

[68]Since then, it has been a globally promoted model of democracy. What is particularly important is that the globally exported definition of a polyarchy (democracy for a big share of society) included conditions for liberal democracy with a stress on the minimal conditions for democracy. The minimal conditions had been set as low as to only include continuous political competitions among individuals, parties or both in the frame of regular elections. The original sin of this definition is in creating a basis for satisfaction with the minimalistic, elitist electoral democracy in political practice within a nation state and too often also in political science.

Besides this, at least five trends can be observed in political thought since the 1970s. The first is the reductionism of ideas developed in the frame of classical democratic theory. The key

1 Danica Fink-Hafner, Introduction: Studying the Relationship Between Parties and Democracy Chapter,Open Access,First Online: 20 March 2024 ,pp 1–15,retrieved from : https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-54949-6_1, on 15/04/2026at 22.00.

reductionism is replacing the idea of consent with primarily a retrospective control over government and taking interest groups rather than political individuals as fundamental actors in the political system. In the post-electoral democracy, bases for democracy have even multiplied and include ‘one person, many interests, many votes, many representatives, both at home and abroad’ . Nevertheless, in this framework political parties don’t seem to be disappearing. They keep playing various roles in political decision-making directly or indirectly at various levels of governing. However, in practice, models of governing have gone beyond the classical liberal–democratic model.[69]1

Second, the liberal philosophy’s linking with rationalism and particularly the American understanding of the democratic process in line with the economic process have contributed to the increasing reductionism in studying parties. Competition among parties has often been seen as a political game while parties have been increasingly detached from society. Political science has proliferated and fragmented into very narrow subfields. Reductionist approaches in studying party politics and democracy have lost sight of the bigger picture.

Third, models of democracy have evolved since the Second World War within and beyond national borders. We present a short overview of them in Chapter 2. What is worth mentioning here is that different models of democracy also include different

1 Danica Fink-Hafner, Introduction: Studying the Relationship Between Parties and Democracy Chapter,Open Access,First Online: 20 March 2024 ,pp 1–15,retrieved from : https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-54949-6_1, on 15/04/2026at 22.00.

understandings of the role of parties. Some don't explicitly mention political parties at all.

Fourth, a large amount of literature has developed over the last few decades that is based on the understanding of the steering (of societies, various international and transnational political communities) as governance rather than governing. Networks of various actors, rather than the state and political parties, are brought into focus. In this frame, issues of power seem to have lost their place on the political science radar.[70]1

Fifth, ideas of illiberal democracy from the beginning of the twentieth century had started resurfacing again since the 1990s. Real-life undemocratic and anti-democratic trends have been flourishing, particularly during the last decade, both in new and old democracies. They even triggered the development of a thesis on the new global autocratization wave. Illiberalism and the related changes in political systems have often been closely associated with democratic backsliding led by particular parties and their leaders.

To summarize, a long-term simplistic view of the relationship between parties and democracy has been challenged. In times of democratic backsliding, it is particularly important to gain a better understanding of the relationship between parties and democracy.

1 Ibid

The third requirement : The effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies

The effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies can be measured through their ability to influence the legislative process and the implementation of these policies.[71]1 Political parties function as a forum for the aspirations of the community, so their success in fighting for welfare policies depends heavily on how well they can absorb and translate community needs into concrete policy design.2

In addition, the party's ability to build solid coalitions both within the parliament and the executive is also a key factor in determining their effectiveness. In a democratic system, political parties that have strong representation in parliament tend to be better able to promote their welfare agenda.3

Furthermore, parties' ideological commitment to social issues is another indicator of their effectiveness. Parties that have a clear ideological foundation in fighting for social welfare tend to be more consistent in advocating for such policies. They will find it easier to gain public support and mobilise their members to pursue welfare goals.

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1 Carabalí-Méndez, I. J**,From the formulation to the implementation of the tourism sector policy with an Afro-descendant enclave**: The Afrochoteño case. International Journal of Social Sciences, 6(3), 2023, pp180-188.

2 Khan, A. **The Future of Political Parties in Welfare States. Future Directions in Social Policy**, 22(13), 2023,pp830–855.

3 Smith, J ; **The Impact of Political Parties on Welfare Policy**. Journal of Political Science, 45(2), 2020,pp123–140.

However, parties must also be flexible in adapting their political strategies to evolving social and economic dynamics to effectively respond to the needs of society. [72]1

The role of political parties in fighting for welfare policies is also closely related to the quality of leadership within the party. Party leaders with vision and integrity can motivate party members and other policymakers to work together to achieve welfare goals. In addition, the leader's ability to engage in diplomacy and negotiation with other political parties and interest groups is also crucial. Thus, strong leadership can be a locomotive in fighting for pro-people welfare programmes.2

However, the main challenge that often hinders the effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies is the pragmatic political interests that are often prioritised over the long-term interests of the community. Many parties are more focused on winning elections than implementing welfare policies based on real solutions. This can be seen from the attitude of parties that often change their positions on strategic issues for short-term political gain. 3

On the other hand, the existence of a corrupt political system is often a major obstacle to political parties effectively championing welfare policies. A deep-rooted culture of corruption results in sub-optimal budget allocations to welfare

1 Lopez, C. , **The Interplay Between Politics and Social Welfare Systems**. Social Policy Insights, 27(5),2023, pp155–177.
2 Kim, S. ,The Role of Political Elites in Welfare Reforms. Political Elites and Social Policy, 2021,12(1), pp50–75.
3 Stein, R. Understanding Welfare Reforms Through Political Lenses. Contemporary Politics, 19(2),2023,pp 88–110.

programmes. To address this, serious reforms are needed in state financial transparency and accountability mechanisms as well as increased capacity of oversight institutions. Political parties must be committed to fighting corruption to build public trust and ensure the success of welfare policies.1[73]

In the final analysis, the effectiveness of a political party in championing welfare policies depends not only on its political strength and strategy, but also the integrity and dedication of its members. Continuous political education for party cadres is necessary to build a deep understanding of social welfare issues and effective advocacy skills. In this way, political parties can function as agents of change that build sustainable welfare policies that have a positive impact on the wider community.2

1 Brown, C, **Welfare Narratives and Political Discourse**. Political Science Quarterly, 52(7), 2023,pp450–475.

2 Enikolopov, R., Zhuravskaya, E. , Decentralization and political institutions. Journal of public economics, 91(11-12), 2007,pp 2261-2290.

The third section : Political elites (decision-making, and analysis of the relationship between the elite and the masses).

The first requirement : Theoretical rooting of political elites and masses

1-1-Defenition [74]

At its most basic level, the distinction between elites and masses is straightforward. Elites are those who hold significant power, wealth, influence, or status in a society. The masses, by contrast, are the broad, largely unorganized majority who are subject to that power rather than wielding it. But this simple two-group model conceals a lot of complexity – complexity that sociologists have spent over a century trying to untangle.1

Political elite members are individuals who influ-ence or make political decisions that have conse-quences at the national level. De jure elitemembers control the top positions in the threepowers of the state, while de facto members exer-cise influence from the shadows, based on theirprominent role in society. Political elites varyacross countries in their number, recruitment, cir-culation, integration, and diversity.2

1 Political Sociology,Elites and Masses: Delineating Social Divides,Last updated on:August 28, 2025,retrieved from : https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/elites-masses-social-divides-delineation, on 15/04/2026 at 10.00.

2 Ignacio Arana, Comparative Political Elites,November 2017DOI:10.1007/978-3-030-66252-3_1269In book: Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance,p2,retrieved from : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321198308_Comparative_Political_Elites,on16/04/2026 at 13.30.

1-2- Classical elite theory: the founding trio

Elite theory, a foundational concept in political sociology, posits that all societies, regardless of their political structure, are inevitably governed by a small, organized minority – the elite – rather than the majority. Emerging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, largely as a critique of both liberal democratic ideals and Marxist theories of class struggle, the works of Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels constitute the bedrock of classical elite theory. These Italian and German thinkers fundamentally challenged the notion of popular sovereignty, arguing that power concentration in the hands of a few is a universal and enduring feature of human societies. Their theories offer profound insights into the dynamics of power, leadership, and social change.1[75]

✓ Gaetano Mosca and the political class

Mosca introduced the concept of the political class – a term he used to describe the organized minority that always governs the unorganized majority. In his view, elites possess superior organizational skills, particularly useful in gaining political power in modern bureaucratic societies.

1 ibid

For Mosca, all regimes are inherently oligarchic; the number of rulers matters less than the fact that a small group invariably controls the levers of power.1

Notably, Mosca's theory was not entirely pessimistic about social mobility. In his view, elites are not always hereditary – people from all classes of society can theoretically become elite. When this happens, the reproduction of power is defined as democratic; when the turnover remains inside the elite, it is defined as aristocratic. This distinction anticipates later debates about meritocracy and open versus closed elite systems.

- ✓ Vilfredo Pareto and the circulation of elites[76]

Pareto approached the question from a psychological angle. He argued that elites are those who possess superior personal qualities – intelligence, cunning, and what he called residues, which are deep-seated human instincts that shape behavior. To Pareto, every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the qualities necessary for its rise to power. He divided elites into two types – governing and non-governing – and argued that the boundary between elite and non-elite is not fixed. Elites rise, stagnate, decay, and are replaced by new ones in what he famously described as the circulation of elites.2

This circulation is not random. Pareto describes the structure and evolution of social hierarchies in terms of enduring and stable characteristic human sentiments he calls residues – what remains constant even as complex societies transition through different permutations of rulers and ruled. This makes Pareto's framework notably dynamic: elite replacement is ongoing, but elite rule itself is permanent.

- ✓ Robert Michels and the iron law of oligarchy

1 Political Sociology,Elites and Masses: Delineating Social Divides,Last updated on:August 28, 2025,retrieved from : https://sociology.institute/political-sociology/elites-masses-social-divides-delineation, on 15/04/2026 at 10.00.
2 Ibid

Michels focused his attention on political organizations and arrived at one of the most cited conclusions in political sociology: the iron law of oligarchy. Studying the German Social Democratic Party – an organization explicitly committed to democratic ideals – he found that even the most egalitarian organizations inevitably develop hierarchies. Michels asserted that social and political organizations are run by a few individuals, and that social organization and labour division are key drivers of this tendency.1

According to this principle, political power is necessarily secured and wielded by a small but organized minority, while the masses remain the unorganized, passive majority. For Michels, participatory democracy is a utopian ideal – every complex organization generates its own oligarchy. This is not a result of bad intentions but of the practical demands of organization, administration, and leadership.

Similarities in Elite Theories of Mosca, Michels, and Pareto[77]

Despite their distinct analytical frameworks, Mosca, Michels, and Pareto share several fundamental premises that define classical elite theory:2

1-Inevitability of Elite Rule: All three theorists unequivocally assert that minority rule is a universal and permanent feature of social and political life. They believed that in every society, a small, organized group will always dominate the unorganized, passive majority.

2-Skepticism Towards Democracy: They were deeply skeptical of genuine democracy and popular sovereignty, viewing them largely as illusions or "political formulas" used by elites to legitimize their rule.

3-Rejection of Marxist Class Analysis: They challenged the Marxist vision of a classless society, arguing that the abolition of private

1 What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues, retrieved from : https://www.dalvoy.com/en/upsc/mains/previous-years/2025/sociology-paper-i/elite-theories-mosca-michels-pareto-comparison,on16/04/2026 at 15.00.
2 Ibid

property would not eliminate elite rule but merely create a new ruling class, such as party bureaucrats or technocrats.

4-Power as Concentrated: They all agreed that power is concentrated at the top, flowing predominantly from elites to non-elites, and that the characteristics and actions of elites are crucial determinants of major political and social outcomes.1

Where they diverge is in their explanations. Pareto emphasized psychological traits and cyclical elite replacement. Mosca focused on organizational superiority and the legitimizing role of political formulas. Michels pointed to the internal bureaucratic dynamics of large organizations. Together, these three perspectives paint a picture of elite dominance that is sociologically grounded, structurally reinforced, and historically recurring. Writing in response to the perceived problems of social democracy at the time, each identified the goals and ideals of mass popular sovereignty as ill conceived based on empirical observation.2

1-3-Main and crucial issues addressed by each theorist 3

-1Gaetano Mosca: The Ruling Class and Political Formula[78]

1 What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues, retrieved from : https://www.dalvoy.com/en/upsc/mains/previous-years/2025/sociology-paper-i/elite-theories-mosca-michels-pareto-comparison,on16/04/2026 at 15.00.

2 Michael Christensen, **The social facts of democracy: Science meets politics with Mosca, Pareto, Michels, and Schumpeter,** Volume 13, Issue 4,https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X13480646,retrieved from :https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1468795X13480646#con,on 16/04/2026 at 11.30.
3Ibid.

Elite theory raises questions and challenges to advocates of enacting socially just reforms entail : 1

Crucial Issue: Mosca's primary concern was to explain how a numerical minority always manages to rule over a majority. He attributed this to the organized nature of the ruling minority (the "political class") versus the unorganized character of the masses.2

Superior Organization: He argued that the political class's ability to coordinate and act cohesively gives it an insurmountable advantage. This organization allows them to wield political power effectively.

Political Formula: Mosca introduced the concept of the "political formula" – a set of doctrines, beliefs, and myths (e.g., divine right of kings, popular sovereignty, nationalism) that elites create to legitimize their rule and persuade the masses of its justice and necessity. This formula serves to maintain social cohesion and order.3

Universal Applicability: Mosca believed his theory was universally applicable across all societies and historical periods, emphasizing the constant existence of a ruling minority.

2. Vilfredo Pareto: Circulation of Elites and Psychological Traits[79]

Crucial Issue: Pareto sought to explain societal change and stability through the lens of elite dynamics, emphasizing the psychological characteristics that enable individuals to rise to power and the cyclical replacement of elites.

Psychological Residues: He argued that human actions are largely driven by "residues" (instinctive tendencies), which are then

1 Maurizio Toscano, **Reconsidering the Notion of Social Justice from an Elite Theory Perspective**, Pages 345-366 | Published online: 24 Oct 2024, retrieved from : https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00071005.2024.2415621, on 16/04/2026 at 12.30.
2What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues, retrieved from : https://www.dalvoy.com/en/upsc/mains/previous-years/2025/sociology-paper-i/elite-theories-mosca-michels-pareto-comparison,on16/04/2026 at 15.00
3 Ibid

rationalized by "derivations" (ideologies). He identified two main types of residues relevant to governance:

Class I Residues (Instinct of Combinations - Foxes): Associated with cunning, shrewdness, innovation, and manipulation. These elites govern through persuasion, diplomacy, and deceit.

Class II Residues (Persistence of Aggregates - Lions): Associated with force, conservatism, tradition, and decisiveness. These elites govern through authority and coercion.

Circulation of Elites: Pareto's most distinctive contribution is the theory of "circulation of elites." He posited that societies are in a constant state of flux, where elites rise and fall. When a governing elite becomes too dominant in one type of residue (e.g., too many "foxes" leading to corruption and weakness, or too many "lions" leading to rigidity), it loses its vitality and is eventually replaced by a new, more balanced or dynamic elite, often from the non-governing elite or the masses, either through peaceful assimilation or violent revolution.1

3. Robert Michels: The Iron Law of Oligarchy[80]2

Crucial Issue: Michels investigated why even organizations founded on democratic principles, such as socialist parties, inevitably develop oligarchic tendencies. His "Iron Law of Oligarchy" asserts that rule by a few is an inherent consequence of organizational structure.

Organizational Imperatives: Michels argued that the very necessities of large-scale organization lead to oligarchy:

Technical Competence: Leaders acquire specialized knowledge and skills essential for running complex organizations, making them indispensable.

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1 What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues, retrieved from : https://www.dalvoy.com/en/upsc/mains/previous-years/2025/sociology-paper-i/elite-theories-mosca-michels-pareto-comparison,on16/04/2026 at 15.00.
2 Ibid

Bureaucratic Structure: The division of labor, hierarchy, and professionalization within organizations centralize decision-making power in the hands of a few.

Control of Communication: Leaders control internal and external communication channels, influencing information flow and shaping the perceptions of the masses.

Apathy of the Masses: The rank-and-file members, due to lack of time, interest, or expertise, become increasingly apathetic, delegating power to leaders who then become entrenched.1

The second requirement : Elite decision making[81]2

Elite decision making refers to a collective decision-making process that focuses on the instrumental quality of laws, public policies, and political decisions it produces. Since the process aims at producing outcomes of considerable substantive quality, it organizes the existing capacities within a political community to achieve the desired outcome, thus giving greater (or even all) political power to a small group of people (i.e., experts) who are considered to be better at producing correct political decisions. This term has been a central issue in numerous discussions for the last 2,500 years and still represents a relevant political idea because of its strong influence regarding which political system we can see as legitimate.

Rationale for Elite Decision Making For most citizens, most political issues are complex and remote. Citizens generally lack the relevant knowledge about nuclear energy, genetically modified organisms, or climate change, yet they recognize that these are very important issues and want to have correct laws and policies that regulate these issues. Since some citizens (experts) have the relevant knowledge, they should be authorized to rule and to make political decisions about these complex issues. Besides the relevant knowledge, Emilie

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1 What would you identify as the similarities and differences in the elite theories of Mosca, Michels and Pareto? Discuss their main/crucial issues, retrieved from : https://www.dalvoy.com/en/upsc/mains/previous-years/2025/sociology-paper-i/elite-theories-mosca-michels-pareto-comparison,on16/04/2026 at 15.00.

2 Ivan Cerovac, **Elite decision making**, DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483391144.n110,p2,retrieved from : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335022791_Elite_decision-making,on 17/04/2026,at 14.00.

Hafner-Burton, Alex Hughes, and David Victor (2013) point out that members of such a decision-making elite possess a number of other qualities and competences: experienced elites are better at risk management and less prone to loss aversion; they use heuristics more effectively when processing complex information; and they are better in strategic interaction and might even be more cooperative.

The argumentation for elite decision making rests on three premises: (1) there are correct or incorrect (good or bad) political decisions, (2) there are some people who are better at producing correct (or good) decisions, and (3) (only) those who are better at producing correct political decisions should participate in the collective decision-making process. [82]1

Elite decision-making procedures can be realized and implemented in nondemocratic but also (at least to some extent) in democratic systems. Elite Decision Making in Nondemocratic Systems Elite decision making can lead to epistocracy, a rule of experts in politics. Plato famously argued that the political community should be ruled by wise philosopher-kings and used the ship analogy to further support this claim. Men ignorant of navigation cannot successfully command the ship; it takes certain skills to be able to do that, and a few people (e.g., captains) have these skills.

Similarly, it takes certain skills to be able to successfully command the state, and most people lack these skills. Ignorant people (those lacking the relevant skills) should not command the state just as they should not command the ship. This argumentative strategy has been used many times throughout history, and even nowadays some (religious) citizens use it to claim that political authority comes from the understanding of God's will (or some other comprehensive doctrine), thus ascribing all political power to their religious or ideological leaders.

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1 Ivan Cerovac, **Elite decision making**, DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483391144.n110,p2,retrieved from : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335022791_Elite_decision-making,on 17/04/2026,at 14.00.

The third requirement : the relationship between the elite and the masses[83]

In political science, the relationship between the elite and the masses within a political system is defined by how authority is structured, how decisions are made, and the mechanisms through which the "governed" can influence the "governors."1

A-Comparative theoretical perspectives on elite-mass relations

This relationship is often analyzed through the lens of Political Legitimacy and Institutional Design.

The table represent the important key proponents : 2

Perspective	Key Proponents	View of the Relationship
Classical Elitism	Pareto, Mosca	Elites are inevitable; masses are unorganized and led.
Institutional Elitism	C. Wright Mills	Power comes from holding top positions in major institutions.
Pluralism	Robert Dahl	Power is dispersed; masses influence policy via interest groups.
Marxism	Karl Marx	The "elite" is the bourgeoisie; the relationship is one of exploitation.

B- The structural dynamics and evolution of elite-mass interactions in political systems

1-The functional role of the elite

In any political system, the elite (politicians, high-level bureaucrats, and judicial figures) perform functions that the masses cannot perform collectively.

1 Michels, R.,Political Parties. (For the transition from Classical to Institutional logic),1911.
2 Lukes, S. , Power: A Radical View. (Provides a bridge between how elites exercise power and how the masses perceive it),2005.

A-Decision-making efficiency: As Robert Michels noted, the masses are too numerous to handle the day-to-day complexities of governance. The elite provide the technical expertise and organizational structure required to run a state.

B-Interest aggregation: Political elites (especially in parties) act as filters. They take the various, often conflicting demands of the masses and "aggregate" them into coherent policy platforms.1

2- Modes of interaction[84]

The nature of the relationship changes depending on whether the political system is Democratic, Authoritarian, or Hybrid.2

A-The democratic model (Accountability)

In a healthy democracy, the relationship is a Principal-Agent dynamic. The masses (the Principal) delegate power to the elite (the Agent).

B-The social contract: The masses consent to be governed only if the elite protect their rights and interests.3

C-Circulation: democracy ensures the "Circulation of Elites" through regular elections, preventing a single group from becoming a permanent caste.

3- **The authoritarian model (Domination)**

The relationship is top-down. The elite maintain power through:

A-Co-optation: Bringing influential members of the masses (e.g., business leaders or religious figures) into the elite circle to neutralize opposition.4

1Easton, David (1965). A Systems Analysis of Political Life. John Wiley & Sons. P32.
2Sartori, Giovanni (1987). The Theory of Democracy Revisited. Chatham House,pp152-153.
3Acemoglu, Daron & Robinson, James A. (2006). Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Cambridge University Press ;p118.
4Manin, Bernard (1997). The Principles of Representative Government. Cambridge University Press,p140.

B-Clientelism: The elite provide specific benefits (jobs, resources) to segments of the masses in exchange for political loyalty.

3- The Gap: Political alienation and populism[85]

When the "distance" between the elite and the masses becomes too great, the political system faces a crisis of legitimacy.1

A-Elite capture: This occurs when the political elite are seen as serving only their own interests or those of a "shadow elite" (e.g., lobbyists or oligarchs), rather than the public good.

B-Populist response: Populism arises as a claim that the "true people" (the masses) are being betrayed by a "corrupt elite." This often leads to a demand for direct democracy or a "strongman" leader who bypasses traditional institutions.2

1Easton, David (1965). A Systems Analysis of Political Life. John Wiley & Sons. P32
2Acemoglu, Daron & Robinson, James A. (2006). Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Cambridge University Press ;p118.

Conclusion

In an era of rapid social and political change, understanding the dynamics of political sociology is more crucial than ever. The growing polarization of societies, the rise of populism, and the influence of technology on politics are reshaping how individuals and groups interact with political systems.

Political sociology provides a lens through which we can analyze these changes, helping us understand their causes and consequences. By examining the social foundations of politics, it offers insights into how to build more inclusive and equitable systems. It also encourages critical thinking about the relationship between power and society.

Through the study of political sociology, we gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of society and politics.

For that, political sociology provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the social foundations, expressions, and consequences of power. It goes beyond formal political institutions to examine how power is produced, distributed, contested, and experienced across different domains of life. Whether analyzing voter behavior, elite domination, revolutionary movements, or the intersection of race and politics, political sociology reveals the embeddedness of the political in all aspects of society. It uncovers how structures of class, gender, race, religion, and culture shape political dynamics and how, in turn, politics structures opportunities,

identities, and inequalities. As the global political landscape continues to evolve—shaped by crises, movements, technologies, and ideologies— political sociology remains an indispensable tool for critical analysis and engaged citizenship. It challenges us to not only understand the world but to consider how it might be transformed.

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Table of contents :

Chapter one: A conceptual and historical introduction to political sociology

The first section : Definition of political sociology, its origins, and its scientific importance.

The first requirement : Definition of political sociology

The second requirement : Historical roots of political sociology

The second section : Origins and Theories

The first requirement : The origins and evolution of political sociology

The second requirement Classical theories of power and authority

The third section : Pillars of political sociology: approches, nature, scope, and importance

The first requirement : Nature of political sociology

The second requirement : The Importance of political sociology

The third requirement : Approaches to the study of political sociology

-Approaches

-Theories

Chapter two: Central concepts in political and social analysis

The first section: The Trilogy of Power (Authority, Legitimacy, and Sovereignty).

1-1-Power

1-2- Authority

1-3- Legitimacy

1-4- Sovereignty

Section Two: The State and Society (relationship and roles).

2-1-State

2-2-Society

2-3-Nation

The third section : Political identity and social affiliation

3-1- Political identity

3-2- social affiliation

Chapter three: Social and political determinants of behavior

The first section: Social class and its impact on political behavior.

The second section: The impact of race and ethnicity on political interactions.

The third section: Gender ; Religion and women's representation in politics

The first requirement : Gender

The second requirement : Religion and its role in shaping political systems

Chapter four: Social change and political organizations

The first section : Social movements and political change

The first requirement : contextual framework of social movements

1-1- Defenition

1-2- Types of social movements

The second requirement : Movement process and dynamics

2-1-The dynamics of social movements

2-2- The causes of social movements

The second section: Political parties and their role in representing social interests.

The first requirement : contextual framework of Political parties

1-Defenitions

2- Historical roots of political parties

The second requirement : Parties and democracy: not a straightforward relationship

The third requirement : The effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies

The third section : Political elites (decision-making, and analysis of the relationship between the elite and the masses).

The first requirement : Theoretical rooting of political elites

1-1-defenition

1-2-Classical elite theory: the founding trio

1-3-Main and crucial issues addressed by each theorist

The second requirement : Elites decision-making.

The third requirement : the relationship between the elite and the masses

A-Comparative theoretical perspectives on elite-mass relations

B- The structural dynamics and evolution of elite-mass interactions in political systems.