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POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY: ITS MEANING, EVOLUTION AND SCOPE

L. S. RATHORE

In recent years an increasing attention has been paid to the growing importance of political sociology. Political sociology is an emerging and burgeoning sub-field within contemporary sociology and political science. Though it still lacks precise contours, more and more scholars have come to recognise its crucial significance in the study of politics. The existence of International Committee on Political Sociology (1970) indicated the significance of the new theme. Despite the flurry of interest and exuberance of social scientists, the precincts of political sociology are still vaguely defined, and its sub-themes flow out in all directions, having an endlessly varying form. Political sociology is a mixture of sweet-scented material, borrowed from the disciplines of political science and sociology. Since it is a marriage of sociology and political science, its scholarly threads are mostly composed of disjointed and unconnected parts. Perhaps the amorphous and variable nature of political sociology could be a factor of immense preciousness for political scientists and sociologists to take up the challenge and discover the trends and tangents that lie unfolded in the texture of political sociology. The term 'political sociology' is amoebic and fluid and its nature criss-cross, for it lacks exactness and precision. Its protean and inconstant nature could be testified from the fact that it has the power of changing itself into an endless variety of forms from continent to continent. In France, the terms 'political sociology' and 'political science' are almost synonymous and they have acquired a legitimacy to designate a particular branch of sociology, one of the social sciences. In certain countries the distinction is purely administrative or pedagogical. In the U.S.A. where sociology and political science are usually two

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separate departments, they speak of 'political sociology' when a professor from sociology department is dealing with the phenomenon of power; and of 'political science' when the same subject is taught by a professor from the political science department. In Europe, the term 'political science' (which is not yet widely used) often serves to indicate the field of research of a scholar whose training is grounded in history or law. The term 'sociologist' more often refers to professional philosophers or less frequently, to people trained in the purely sociological disciplines. In some Continental countries, the term 'political science' may reflect a certain tendency toward isolating the study of political phenomenon by limiting its contacts with other branches of the social sciences. The term 'political sociology', on the other hand, may indicate a desire to restore political phenomenon to its proper place within the broad spectrum of social phenomenon, to remove barriers between disciplines, and to emphasize the essential unity of all the social sciences. In this sense, the term 'political sociology' is preferable. It also suggests a firm intention to use empirical and experimental methods of research instead of philosophical reasoning. This background of the term 'political sociology' may be helpful in locating its asymmetrical boundaries. To understand properly the meaning, evolution and scope of political sociology, it is essential to know the distinction between sociology and political science; and the distinction and relationship between the sociology of politics and political sociology.

Sociology and Political Science

The terms 'sociology' and 'political science' are closely related. They both lack clearly defined meaning. The origin of the term 'political science' is rather old, as it is associated with the Greek word *polis* whereas the term 'sociology' was coined by Auguste Comte in 1839 to designate the science of society. Comte had earlier used the term 'social physics' in the same sense, but later replaced it with 'sociology' because the Belgian mathematician Quetelet had applied the term 'social physics' to the statistical study of moral phenomenon (1836), which Comte called "a vicious attempt at appropriation" of this term. Since Comte's time, the use of the word 'sociology' has changed little.

It is rather difficult and perplexing to draw a neat dividing line between sociology and political science. If, as Smelser suggests, "the

focus of a scientific discipline ... can be specified by listing the dependent and independent variables that pre-occupy its investigators", then sociology is defined as the discipline that "tends to opt for social-structural conditions as explanatory variables". Political Science is the discipline that opts for political-structural conditions as explanatory variables. It could be said that the independent variables — causes, determinants, or factors — of the sociologist are, basically, social structures; while the independent variables — causes, determinants, or factors — of the political scientist are, basically, political structures. This demarcation looks neat and precise in principle, but it is an extremely arduous task to apply it in practice. The contemporary invasion of political science by sociologists, and the recognition of sociology as a core social science discipline, has put political science in a serious plight, and has even created the crisis of identity. Political Science today is in a state of predicament, unrivalled in its entire period of evolution. On the contrary, sociology is increasingly becoming the infrastructure or the basis of social sciences, and its techniques and concepts are being increasingly transplanted in political science. Nevertheless, the broad distinction between sociology and political science as stated above, would help us in understanding the scope of political sociology.

The Sociology of Politics and Political Sociology

The sociology of politics unmistakably indicates a sub-field, a subdivision of the overall field of sociology. By saying sociology of politics, we make clear that the framework, the approach, or the focus of the inquiry is sociological; whereas the scope of political sociology is much wider; it is intended to bridge the gap between political science and sociology — the problem of building inter-disciplinary bridges. Political sociology is "an inter-disciplinary hybrid" attempting to combine social and political explanatory variables, i.e., the inputs suggested by the political scientist. The sociology of politics is instead "a sociological reduction of politics".

Giovanni Sartori makes an interesting analysis of the distinction between the sociology of politics and political sociology. He says that the sociology of politics deals with the consumer and ignores the producer. This is like explaining an economic system as if there could be buyers without sellers. Political sociology is required, instead, to follow

all the cycle from both ends, from the producer's no less than from the consumer's end. In principle, the producer's market does not matter less than the consumer's market. Hence, in the perspective of political sociology, a party system is not only a response to consumer's demands, but is equally feedback of producer's options. In practice, moreover, the political entrepreneur exerts a greater persuasive influence on the voter than does the economic entrepreneur on the buyer. This indicates that the scope of political sociology is broader than the sociology of politics. The vision of sociology of politics is narrow; it views only one part of the phenomenon and ignores the rest.

The sociology of politics is clearly a sub-field of sociology. It is a sociological appraisal of politics. It treats political phenomenon as dependent variable and accepts the underlying social phenomenon as the explanatory variable. Whereas, the political sociology is an attempt to understand the political phenomenon by necessarily relating it to the social determinants. It is the examination of the links between politics and society, between social structures and political structures, and between social behaviour and political behaviour. Political sociology is, thus, born when the sociological and politico-logical approaches are combined at their point of intersection. If the sociology of politics deals with the non-political reasons why the people act the way they do in political life, political sociology includes the political reasons why people act the way they do. Political sociology, therefore, is a cross-disciplinary breakthrough seeking enlarged models which reintroduce variables as the 'givens' of each component source.

Lipset and Rokkan's introductory chapter in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives* (1967) is significant in this connection. They answer a fundamental question: How are conflicts and cleavages translated into a party system? In this chapter Lipset-Rokkan refused to reduce politics to an epiphenomenon. Here, politics emerges as a major independent factor. These conclusions of Lipset-Rokkan run contrary to Lipset-Bendix model (*Essay and Bibliography*, 1957). What cannot be explained by social and economic status merely is "the competing strategies of the political struggle"; the peculiar essence of politics is reduced to the 'strategy' of conflict management. This version of Lipset-Bendix (1967) is opposite to Lipset-Rokkan approach. It could be said that Lipset-Rokkan approach represents

a momentous re-balancing of the discipline. They inaugurate the new dimensions, by discarding the old style sociology of politics. These new dimensions are seminal for understanding the realm of political sociology.

Political sociology is a connecting bridge between sociology and political science. It believes in a two-way relationship between sociology and political science, giving equal emphasis on social and political variables. Take for example the party system. Here, political sociology does not explain the working of party system only in terms of its response to and reflection of the socio-economic scene, but also investigates how the society is as much conditioned by the party system. Or, to give an Indian illustration, while sociology of politics analyses Indian politics in terms of its caste-ridden society, political sociology adds to that enquiry how politics in India has affected the Indian caste system, giving rise to what is called 'politicisation of caste'. This distinction between the sociology of politics and political sociology would help us in understanding the meaning of political sociology.

The Meaning of Political Sociology

The specialists do not agree on the precise meaning of political sociology. Political sociology abounds in conflicting notions. One notion considers political sociology as the science of the state. To define political sociology as the science of the state is to place it in a classification of the social sciences, which is based on the nature of the societies studied. It is a political concept. Here, a state may be nation-state or government-state. A nation-state designates national society. A government-state designates the rulers and leaders of this national society. To make political sociology, the science of state means to isolate the study of national society. Hence this meaning of political sociology is rather narrow and limited.

The definition as given by Greer and Orleans is more akin to this notion. They wrote of political sociology as being mainly concerned with 'explanation of the peculiar social structure called the states'. The other adherents to this notion have been mainly Jellinck (German sociologist) and Marcel Prelot (French historian). To connect political sociology with the science of state is perhaps, obsolete having

little or no relevance in the contemporary society. Despite its narrow focus, this school has found a few adherents, like Jellinck and Prelot.

The second notion of political sociology is the interaction process between society and politics. The views of Bendix and Lipset fit in more appropriately here. They say "political science starts with the state and examines how it affects society while political sociology starts with society and examines how it affects the state". Although an improvement upon the first notion, still it does not convey the total dimensions of political sociology. Critics style it as of a reductionist nature, for it is more akin to the sociology of politics rather than political sociology.

The third notion or conception about political sociology as advocated by Maurice Duverger is more modern. It holds that political sociology is the science of power, of government, of authority of command, in all human societies (including the national society). This conception derives its inspiration from Leon Duguit. He made a distinction between the governors and the governed. He believed that in every human group, from the smallest to the largest, there are those who command and those who obey, those who give orders and those who comply with them, those who make decisions and those who abide by them. Many contemporary writers accept this definition of political sociology with perhaps a few modifications; notably among them are Max Weber, Raymond Aron, Georges Vedel, Georges Burdeau and Maurice Duverger. For us Maurice Duverger is significant, as we are elaborating upon his theme. He equates political sociology with the science of power. Although it is a preferable interpretation, we cannot say that it is closer to reality. The difficulties in Maurice Duverger's definition arise from two angles:

- (i) The concept of power is broad and vague. The size and complexity of groups add to the bewilderment.
- (ii) The concept of the science of power creates confusion about the universal societies; and private societies and authority in elementary groups and complex groups.

However, Maurice Duverger's interpretation of political sociology is more useful, because through this basic premises can be identified.

Power, for Duverger, comprises of the entire range of social institutions connected with authority. It excludes simple, unequal relationships that have no institutional character and that do not derive from an institution. Power is always regarded as something legitimate, to a greater or lesser degree, meaning thereby, that we find it more or less natural to obey it. Power is obeyed because we think that we ought to do so, because we believe that it is legitimate to obey it. As long as there is cohesiveness, physical stability, and adherence to structural model, it is this sense of legitimacy that distinguishes power from authority relationships. Duverger says, "The notion that politics is both a conflict between individuals and groups for the acquisition of power, which the victors use to their advantage at the expense of the vanquished, and an attempt to establish a social order beneficial to all constitutes the basis of our theory of political sociology". Although this theory of Duverger is not accepted by all, nevertheless, it is useful in understanding the meaning of political sociology, i.e., political sociology is the science of power.

And the fourth notion about political sociology is that it is integration of sociology and political science, which presupposes specialization. Political sociology, thus, could be styled as the interdisciplinary progeny of the more established parent disciplines—sociology and political science—and specializes in the interactions and linkages that exist between these two fields. This is a fruitful notion, because it destroys barriers between sociology and political science, without cancelling their boundaries, i.e., without entailing loss of identity. It is more systematic for it is intended to build connecting bridges, i.e., interdisciplinary hybrids, across the various boundaries. Although the term 'political sociology' has still not acquired a clearly defined meaning, the above four notions, taken cumulatively, would broadly indicate the meaning of political sociology.

The Evolution of Political Sociology

At least four periods can be said to characterize the history and development of political sociology. The first, or the classical period, existed during Greek and Roman times when man was viewed as primarily a political animal. Later, during the Holy Roman Empire, he was redefined in purely ecclesiastical terms and considered an extension of God. The second historical stage occurred during the Enlightenment

when the great ideological debate raged over two opposing principles : whether man was intended to serve the state or whether the state was designed to serve man and society. The third period, which grew out of the previous debate and flourished during the nineteenth century, focused on the role of elites in modern society. Once again a dialogue developed between the traditional elitist school, which viewed governments as closed, self-perpetuating political systems, and the democratic elitist, who espoused a more open-ended and humanitarian view of government and politics. The fourth stage, or current period of political sociology, can be characterized as more empirical, analytic, and eclectic in its depth and scope. Modern political sociologists are principally concerned with developing empirically verifiable generalizations linking society and politics, with theory building as the central focus of development.

(i) *The Classical Period:*

Political philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas are representatives of the classical period of political sociology. These philosophers were concerned with the significance of social differentiation in society and how this related to politics and the political process. Both Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle were deeply interested in the social origins of the state. Plato, in *The Republic*, viewed the state as arising out of the unique needs of mankind. The state was seen as founded on the ideal principles of justice and order, with a primary purpose of providing for the common good. Plato's conception of the ideal state was stratified along three lines : the workers who produce, the warriors who guard, and the philosophers who rule. In *Politics*, Aristotle conceived of the state primarily in terms of a political community whose origins related directly to the family. The family supplied its members with their everyday needs which sustained them individually, while the village became the first socio-political community which sustained its members collectively. When several villages joined together, they formed what Aristotle called the state. Both Aristotle and Plato viewed politics as the natural creation of man, thus relegating him to the status of *homo-politicus*.

Unlike his Greek predecessors who focused their attention upon the city-states, the Roman philosopher Cicero extended his vision of

society to that "universal city where gods and men composed one vast association." In *The Laws*, Cicero argued that society was based on a universal set of norms — the natural law equivalent to "right reason." Since natural law presumably transcended all customs throughout history, it therefore should become the foundation for a more lasting political order. Building upon this premise, the medieval philosophers, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas visualized society as guided by divine principles. St. Augustine in *The City of God*, wrote that the eternal city was not of this earth but was where the glory of man was permanent and assured. St. Thomas Aquinas, argued that there were four kinds of laws — divine, eternal, natural and human — with the divine order of the universe, the most fundamental. These classical writers believed that human identity and destiny were tied directly to the State or Church rather than to the evolutionary process of society. This assumption was questioned and rigorously debated during the next stage in the development of political sociology — the period extending roughly from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

(ii) *The Great Debate*

The next landmark in the evolution of political sociology consisted of a great debate between the political philosophers of two distinct schools. The first school consisted of Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, later followed by Saint-Simon, Comte, and Karl Marx. They all made an important distinction between society and the state. The other school consisted of philosophers like Machiavelli, Hobbes, Burke, Hegel, Bonald and Maistre, who did not differentiate between society and politics and favoured the hegemony and legitimacy of the traditional monarchy or Church. In addition, the contributions of Max Weber, MacIver and others towards the evolution of political sociology have been unique.

Locke (1632-1704) was among the first to argue that men lived in a state of nature and possessed certain inalienable rights — the rights of life, liberty, and property. Only man, and not the state, is unique in this fashion. Government was necessary to maintain law and guarantee order in so far as it reflected the expression of man's natural rights. An agreement or bilateral social contract was entered into whereby the sovereign was granted certain powers to govern and enforce the laws of nature, and although social groups might surrender some of

their rights to government, they never relinquished their basic natural rights. The doctrine of limited sovereignty existed where people had the obligation to overthrow the ruler when they felt that their rights and privileges were not being represented properly or were being abridged.

Unlike Locke, Montesquieu (1689-1755) was not worried about the basic natural rights. He was more interested in facts than in abstract generalizations; his intent was to describe and analyze governments and then demonstrate how political systems reflected the environment in which they existed. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu argued that governments conform to certain natural and social conditions (such as geography, economics, family structure), which vary from society to society, and that the actual administration of government depended on its relationship to these social factors. There was no best form of government that was universally suitable, according to Montesquieu; the character of the state merely reflected the unique structure of society. Montesquieu observed that social and political change was determined by demographic and sociological variables. The growth in population and the expansion of society's geographic limits were the key variables in Montesquieu's thinking, through which change is initiated in all other areas of society and politics. It is because of this analysis that Raymond Aron has styled Montesquieu as the first sociologist.

Rousseau (1712-1778), in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among Men*, admonished government for its protection of private property. Rousseau rejected the *ancien regime* and idealized man as the noble savage. In *The Social Contract*, he developed a theory of government that attempted to reconcile the conflicting demands between individual liberty and political organization. Employing Locke's basic principles of the social contract and natural law, Rousseau espoused the doctrine of popular sovereignty. He argued against absolute monarchies and favoured the general will theory of power whereby members of society would voluntarily form a custodial government that would conform to their needs. If government failed to respond to the needs of its people, they had the right and responsibility to change or replace that government.

Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Comte (1797-1857) both believed in extending the principle of positivism (empirical reasoning) to political theory through the law of three stages — theological, metaphysical and scientific. Positivism implied the assertion of generalised patterns in society, the employment of empirical methodology, with its emphasis upon observation and classification of social data. Through the application of scientific principles, political leaders and government could plan or guide social development. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), more controversial than any other political sociologist, stressed the structural nature of society, and in his *Principles of Sociology* went into great detail in giving a historical description of social institutions, and made the role of social structures stand out distinctly in the social and political analysis.

Emile Durkheim (1850-1917), like the positivists, rejected speculative theory and the metaphysical approach; penetrated beneath the surface of current social interaction and examined the structure and functions of societal life, past and present, and evolved an observational social-political theory, dealing mainly with empirical data and avoiding value judgments. Karl Marx's (1818-1883) contribution to the sociology of politics had been massive and varied. He along with Engels (1829-1895) in *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto*, rejected the idea of the political state in favour of permanent social revolution in order to ensure the creative existence of mankind. Man could only realise his full potentialities in society and not through the state. The state, according to Marx and Engels, was nothing more than an economic fiction, or false consciousness, which enslaved rather than liberated man. Marx and Engels' political sociology was rooted in the theory of political action called praxis whereby "true" human consciousness and will (motivation) were united in social revolution. Marxism is a prime example of an approach to politics which located the primary source of political behaviour in sociological factors, i.e., level of technological development and class structure.

In opposition to the master trend of the Enlightenment, Machiavelli (1469-1527) offered an expose of the ruthlessness of state craftsmanship. Reflecting a rather cynical attitude toward politics and the basic nature of man, he contended that the ends always justified the means when it came to protecting the state. A liberated society

inevitably would destroy the state, according to Machiavelli, and political order was effectively maintained through what people universally understood — the tactics of cruelty, intimidation and fear. Similarly, Hobbes (1588-1679) viewed man's natural state as basically chaotic, relegating him to the status of an aggressive, warlike animal — a fact history had demonstrated time and again. Unlike Locke who considered human nature hopeful and optimistic, Hobbes viewed man as fundamentally selfish, cruel, lawless, and lacking in both authority and discipline. In the *Leviathan*, he suggested that absolute authority was essential in order to rule effectively and that if society was to survive, people would have to surrender all their rights and power to the monarch. The social contract was an important pre-condition in politics, but it was an irreversible contract.

Burke's (1729-1797) in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, gave an eloquent defence of conservatism. Rejecting the ideas of the Enlightenment, especially the social contract, he argued that human rights did not exist abstractly or naturally. Rights and privileges existed in a given community only when they were allowed to evolve slowly and organically. Communities did not exist merely in the present but were endless chains of institutions and generations; and revolutionaries had no right, natural or otherwise, to destroy these sacred customs and traditions. Burke claimed that the basic responsibility of the community was to link the past with the future, and this was accomplished through the present. Taking a more extreme view, Hegel (1770-1831), in *The Philosophy of History*, glorified the state as a world spirit — romantic cosmic force that worked its will on history. The state was the highest order, embodying all historical forms (rights and laws), and the Prussian state in particular was considered the best example of this spiritual organism. Hegel exalted the state as the center of civilization and disregarded individual rights and social morality. The state, through its historical unfolding process (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), was predetermined by God and should never be obstructed or tampered with by man.

Finally, the Catholic traditionalists, Bonald (1754-1850) and Maistre (1754-1821), each carried on a polemic against the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolution. They rejected the optimism of individual freedom, natural rights, and the social contract.

They accepted authority as divinely established and preordained. The state should be subservient to the Church, not the reverse, and God's law allowed to reign supreme.

Thus this great debate between the philosophers of different schools unleashed seminal ideas of great importance in the evolution of the sociology of politics, which despite its limitations, provide the bed-rock upon which the whole fabric of political sociology has been built in recent times.

(iii) *The Role of Elites in Society*

The third period in the evolution of political sociology relates to the role of elites in society. The term elite was introduced in the seventeenth century to describe standards of excellence; it was later extended to refer to superior social groups, such as highly successful military units and upper ranks of the aristocracy. The term was not widely circulated in social and political writings until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when it was used extensively by two Italian sociologists, Pareto and Mosca. Generally, elite theorists argued that history was not created by ideas, or by the masses, or by silently working forces but by small groups of individuals who exerted themselves from time to time. Elite theorists maintained that throughout history there always had been a distinguishable stratum of rulers who comprised a small portion of society and, due to their monopoly over critical resources, were able to maximize effective organization and control. The resources they commanded — military force, ecclesiastical rule, economic domination, or political power — varied from society to society and from one period to another.

Pareto, Mosca, and Michels were representative of the conservative elitist school. Pareto (1848-1923), in *The Mind and Society*, justified elitist theory on the basis of his conception of man: "Whether certain theorists like it or not, the fact is that human society is not a homogeneous thing, that individuals are physically, morally, and intellectually different." Pareto classified those who possess the highest qualities and abilities in any given social area as elites. A further subdivision included the governing elite, with the remainder of society falling into the realm of the non-elites. The governing elite was in a state of slow but continuous transformation and Pareto built up a remarkable theory of the 'circulation of elites.'

For Mosca (1858-1941), the elites in society were nothing other than a ruling class. In his *Ruling Class*, such a stratum represented the dominant social, economic and political interests of a particular period in time, and as these various interests changed with history, the recruitment base of the elites shifted as well. As a result of the perpetual struggle over status and prestige in society, certain individuals rose to positions of power and pre-eminence while others did not. The more successful tended to consolidate and perpetuate their positions of power through advantages in education, inherited resources, political opportunities and organizational skills. All societies were governed by this select group of rulers who constituted the organized minority among the unorganized majority. Mosca, like Pareto, endowed the elite with superior-qualities of ambition, drive, intellect, hard work, strength of will and self-confidence. Both theorists argued that the ascribed characteristics of elites rendered them the most capable contenders for power in society.

Michels (1876-1936) argued that a conservative ruling oligarchy existed within every organization. He wrote: "...leadership represents always the past rather than the present. Leadership is indefinitely retained, not because it is the tangible expression of the relationship between the forces existing in the party at any given moment, but simply because it is already constituted." For this reason, leaders remained at the top of the power pyramid: "nominated by indirect suffrage, prolong throughout their lives the powers with which they have once been invested. The re-election demanded by the rulers becomes a pure formality. The temporary commission becomes a permanent one, and the tenure of an office an established right." Similar to Mosca and Pareto, Michels argued that all formal organizational systems were contrary to the democratic principles of majority rule, for organization was synonymous with oligarchy. Political parties in particular, whether democratic or socialist, were vulnerable to this "iron law of oligarchy." Parties competed for power, but once power was obtained the party structure itself became a conservative force, concerned primarily with maintaining order and stability rather than with its original objectives. Democratic or egalitarian principles were no longer regarded as essential, since the prevailing ideology of oligarchy centered around justifying the *status quo*.

These three theorists presented a dismal picture for the future of democratic society. Their views were countered by the second school who were more optimistic. The philosophers like Tocqueville and Durkheim belonged to this school. Tocqueville (1805-1859), in his classic *Democracy in America*, conceded the need for elites in society but cautioned that the state leviathan, if left unchecked, would destroy individual dignity and freedom. Consensus was important in constitutional democracy, as was the principle of the separation of powers. The best guarantee against a growing, centralized mass society — the result of increasing industrialization, bureaucratization, and zealous nationalism — was strong local government supported by a sense of personal independence, civic consciousness, and numerous voluntary associations. Consistent with this line of thinking, Durkheim (1858-1917), in one of his lesser-known works, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, described the state as a super-group representing the inner order of numerous interdependent sub-groups in society. Durkheim viewed the state not as a leviathan, but as a collective representation reflecting the emergent needs of its citizenry. Occupational associations and political parties were considered mediating institutions in society, established for the purpose of representing and linking constituencies to the growing political division of labour. Both Durkheim and Tocqueville regarded the state as being in perpetual tension due to the dispersed nature of power. However, tension in the form of conflicting group factions was held to be beneficial since it helped mitigate the threat of tyrannical rule.

Representing the middle group or a more objective position between the conservative and democratic elitist theorists were Weber and Mannheim. Max Weber (1864-1920), in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, argued that bureaucratic organization was fundamental for all political development. Modern state elites could be classified as having evolved through at least three historical phases: (1) the authoritarian leadership phase, which was rooted in personal or familial charisma; (2) the patrimonial and feudal phase, where the elite structure was either the extension of the ruler's household or based on filial obedience and knightly militarism; and finally (3) the phase of modern nation-states founded on more formal or rational-legal methods of adjudication and the professionalization of law and justice. State elites ranged in history from substantively rational forms of authority

(charisma and tradition) to formal authority structures (rational-legal), such as political bureaucracies. The danger in formal rationality, according to Weber, rested in its technical adherence to bureaucratic rules and standards at the expense of moral reasoning or personal feelings.

Karl Mannheim (1893 - 1947), in *Ideology and Utopia*, envisioned elitist theory as fascist in nature. In his later years, however, Mannheim amended his thinking on formal institutional control. In *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, he viewed industrial society as a movement from class systems to elite systems; that is, hierarchically arranged societies based not entirely on blood or property, as was the case in the past (aristocratic and bourgeois control), but on individual merit and achievement. Later in *Essays on the Sociology of Culture*, he addressed himself to the problem of the co-existence of elites and democracy: "... the actual shaping of policy is in the hands of elites; but this does not mean to say that the society is not democratic. For it is sufficient for democracy that the individual citizen, though prevented from taking a direct part in government all the time, have at least the possibility of making their aspirations felt at certain intervals." The elitist approach to society proved to be a significant landmark in the evolution of political sociology.

In recent years, the contributions of Ostrogorski, James Burnham, C. Wright Mills and Rose have added new dimensions to political sociology. Ostrogorski held that an elite owed its power predominantly to its organizational abilities. James Burnham has attempted a marriage between elitism and Marxism, and saw the power of the elite as a consequence of its control of economic resources. C. Wright Mills explained the elite's dominance not as a product of the personal qualities of its members but of the positions they occupy in a number of key institutions within the society. Rose has demonstrated the inadequacy of the 'economic-elite-dominance hypothesis' and indicated the greater theoretical and empirical viability of the 'multi-influence hypothesis' as an explanation of political power and political process in the American society. Thus Mosca's 'political class', Michel's 'iron law of oligarchy', Ostrogorski's 'caucus politics', Pareto's 'circulation of elites', C. Wright Mill's 'economic-elite-dominance hypothesis', and Rose's 'multi-influence hypothesis' remain even today, the central concerns of political sociology.

(iv) The Contemporary Period

The fourth stage in the evolution of political sociology is the cotemporary period. This period is more empirical and analytical. It lays emphasis on developing empirically verifiable generalizations linking society and politics, with theory-building as the central focus of development. The nature of political sociology in the current period can be better understood, if we study in detail the scope and parameters of political sociology, as it exists today. The remarkable growth of political sociology during the past forty years has offered political analysis with new questions, concepts, findings and theories. Many of the most prominent practitioners of contemporary political theory are leading political sociologists like Lipset, Greer, Inkeles, Moore, Kornhauser, Mills, Hunter, Janowitz, Lazarsfeld, Eisenstadt, Selznick, Rokkan, Gusfield, and Macrae. These political sociologists have been creatively concerned with clarifying the conditions and requisites by which political understanding can be advanced into a more rigorous and mature social-scientific discipline.

The Scope of Political Sociology

Neither the political scientists nor the sociologists, despite the vast richness and long-lived literature, have still been able to define precisely the scope of their disciplines. Political sociology is, therefore, no exception. Its recent emergence and diverse array of writings available, have made it difficult for us to delineate its scope exactly. The blurred and overlapping nature of the various themes and sub-themes in political sociology make it extremely hazardous for us to indicate its scope neatly. Despite this limitation, an attempt can be made to locate the main threads that often compose the rubric of political sociology.

Greer and Orleans claim that political sociology has been mainly concerned with: (1) the structure of the state; (2) the nature and conditions of legitimacy; (3) the nature of the monopoly of force and its use by the state; (4) the nature of the sub-units and their contention with the state. This agenda of research and theory is subsequently translated by the authors as consensus and legitimacy, participation and representation, and the relationships between economic development and political change. These three surveys or accounts of the concerns of political sociology seem highly interesting and exhaustive.

Lipset argues that political sociology consists of whatever political sociologists do or claim they are doing. He states, "If the stability of society is a central issue for sociology as a whole, the stability of a specific institutional structure or political regime — the social conditions of democracy — is the prime concern of political sociology." Elsewhere, Lipset and Bendix have asserted that political sociology studies (1) voting behaviour in communities and in the nation (attitude and opinion research); (2) concentration of economic power and political decision-making (documentary evidence and mathematical models); (3) ideologies of political movements and interest groups (documentary evidence, content and analysis); (4) political parties, voluntary associations, the problems of oligarchy and psychological correlates of political behaviour (documentary evidence; attitude and opinion research, psychological testing, etc.); and (5) government and the problem of bureaucracy (documentary evidence, attitude and opinion research, etc.). Lipset again indicates five substantive areas of political sociology. They are (i) electoral behaviour; (ii) extremist political movements; (iii) politics of bureaucracy; (iv) internal government of voluntary organizations; and (v) the concept of power. To these, he also adds, the concept of legitimacy and effectiveness. Legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the best that could possibly be devised. While the effectiveness aspect of the relationship is primarily instrumental in character and is measured by individuals and groups in terms of self-interest, the legitimacy component is much more evaluative. The study of legitimacy and effectiveness is the key component of political sociology. These areas may be accepted as the most authoritative description of the scope of political sociology.

Another well-known authority has indicated nine sub-divisions of political sociology which in some way or the other affect the dynamic relationship between society and politics. The nine sub-divisions of political sociology are (1) the field of political sociology; (2) social and political development; (3) political elites and systems; (4) macro socio-political systems; (5) society and power; (6) community power; (7) mass society; (8) social structure and politics; and (9) social and political change. This broad categorisation of the sub-themes may be useful for us while framing the schemes of courses and curricula in

political sociology. These areas of specialisation provide the foundations upon which much of contemporary political sociology rests. They can be explicitly reduced to three broad areas: the historical scope and development of the field, the relationship between society and politics, and the connection between socio-political organization and change. These general themes address the fundamental question of the causes and sources of power, the power structure and process, and the general consequence of power in society.

Equating political sociology with the science of power or authority relationship, Maurice Duverger indicates that its scope centers around the two facets of power or authority — that is, both oppressor and integrator. As such, its scope consists of (1) political structures in which the dialectic of antagonisms and integration unfolds, that is to say, the context of political phenomena; (2) dialectic itself in its primary manifestation, the existence of antagonisms. Since integration represents an attempt to suppress or reduce these antagonisms, it is appropriate to study their underlying causes; and (3) how antagonisms are resolved and integrated, as well as the apparent limits to this procedure. To put it simply, Maurice Duverger states that: (i) political sociology is the study of power in every human grouping, not just in the nation-state. Each of these groups, therefore, serves as a structure, a framework, for the enactment of conflicts and integration. Political structures include physical structures (geographical and demographic), and social structures (technical skills, institutions and cultures). (ii) Political sociology analyses the causes of political antagonisms. The causes of political antagonisms may occur between individuals as well as between groups. (iii) Political sociology is also the study of conflict and integration. Conflict naturally tends to lead to integration, and antagonisms tend, by their very development, to self-elimination and the subsequent bringing about of social harmony. So the scope of political sociology includes political structures, the causes of political antagonisms and the flow from antagonism to integration.

The syllabus of the Graduate Studies in Politics (1980—81) of the London School of Economics and Political Science is useful in understanding the scope of political sociology. It indicates its scope as follows:

(i) *Theories and Concepts of Political Sociology:*

Theories and concepts of political sociology from Marx to the present, with particular reference to explanations and views of the main factors which affect the character and role of the State and nature of political life in different types of society.

Power and authority, theories of the state, pluralism, corporatism, ideology, oligarchy, hegemony, Marxist dialectics, theories of convergence.

(ii) *Revolutions and Social Movements:*

Theories and concepts associated with political stability and change, mass movements, and revolutions in different types of society. Nation-building, the origin and development of cleavage systems (class religion, ethnicity, etc.) and their translation into politics.

Historical-functionalist and Marxist theories of revolution, nation-building and state formation processes, theories of imperialism, dependency and underdevelopment, millenarian movements, the roles of the peasantry and the working class in the Russian, Chinese, Mexican, Cuban, Turkish and other revolutions.

(iii) *The Study of Political Behaviour:*

An examination of the principal studies of political behaviour with particular reference to political socialisation, participation, public opinion, electoral choice, political culture and the role of the mass media. Behaviouralism, theories of political culture and socialisation, the media and politics, class, religion and ethnicity in voting behaviour, mass society, working class conservatism, and electoral volatility.

Political sociology is thus not scopeless. Despite its rugged and vignette frontiers, the political sociologists are making frantic efforts to indicate its scope in a skilful and adroit manner. The syllabus of the Graduate Studies in Politics of the London School of Economics and Political Science contains guidelines for us to frame courses in political sociology, perhaps with suitable modifications to suit Third World countries.

The Impact of Political Sociology on Political Theory

The political sociology has led to the growth of a spirit of scientific inquiry and research in political studies, attempting to solve the practical problems that arise in the struggle for political life. It is in this background that one can appreciate what Kant said: "To yield to every whim of curiosity, and to allow our passion for inquiry to be restrained by nothing but the limits of our ability, this shows an eagerness of mind not unbecoming to scholarship. But it is wisdom that has the merit of selecting, from among the innumerable problems which present themselves, those whose solution is important to mankind". The application of this to biological and more to social sciences is clear. Pasteur's reform of the biological sciences was carried out under the stimulus of highly practical problems, which were in part industrial and agricultural. And social research nowadays has a practical urgency surpassing even that of cancer research. As Professor Hayek says, "economic analysis has never been the product of detached intellectual curiosity about the why of social phenomena but of an intense urge to reconstruct a world which gives rise to profound dissatisfaction;" and some of the social sciences (political science being one of them which has lately adopted it), that have not yet adopted this outlook, show by the barrenness of their results how urgently their speculations are in need of practical checks. Thanks to the sociological invasion of political studies, the political theories are today more relevant to the study of political problems. This has been the main advantage of the impact of political sociology on political theory.

The impact of political sociology on political theory has raised several questions:

(i) The inter-relationship of political theory with political sociology has complicated the task of scholars and students in the field. Much of contemporary political theory is replete with references to works, concepts, and methods which come from political sociology. Political sociologists seeking to apply sociological generalizations to the analysis of political institutions, have made the field of political theory as heterogeneous as ever and has accelerated a process of theoretical ferment;

(ii) Political theory, under the influence of political sociology, faces the issues of 'departmentalization', 'integration', 'specialization',

'sterility', and 'rationalization'. Whether political science can or should attempt to formulate an analytically distinct theoretical system remains an open question;

(iii) The logical relation between a (more or less empirical) proposition in political sociology and a (more or less prescriptive) proposition in traditional political theory is a complicated and intractable problem;

(iv) The multitude of empirically oriented theories, that political sociology has encouraged in political science arouses little interest from scholars with more humanistic and philosophical inclinations; and

(v) The empirically oriented political theory has also resulted in a heightened awareness of the problems of values, of the importance of normative theory, and of the relationship of philosophical premises to the study of politics.

It is time now that the political scientists ought to study and evaluate the dimensions of political sociology in an objective manner. Whatever may be its limitations, the study of political sociology has added new dimensions to the study of politics. It would perhaps be wrong to style political sociology as a naive or a wild turnip, for its emerging contours are inventive and rich in fertilising resources. Its fast emerging boundaries have excited commendable interest among the sociologists and political scientists. Political sociology is extensive in scope; its formidable flow based on the gains of specializations attained in sociology and political science would, in future, enhance its power of procreation and virility and ensure a vouchsafe voyage. The political sociologists belonging to the Third World countries should seriously engage themselves in its study and research and formulate vivacious theorems and paradigms relevant to their society. That could perhaps in the long run help in explicitly exploring the inexhaustible and productive terrains of political sociology.