
UNIT 5 STATE IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES: ASIAN, AFRICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

The state has been and continues to be one of the major concerns of political theory. However, as shown in the last unit, despite the wealth of detail on the state, the nature of the state has proved to be almost impossible to grasp. The very visibility and centrality of the state makes it elusive. It is more so when the political theorists make an effort to analyse the actually existing states.

No doubt, then, state has been a significant subject of theorisation in the political theory and comparative politics in the recent decades. The continued interest in political theory about the nature of State is manifest in the form of sophisticated and complex theorisation that can be explained by the importance of the state in all aspects of the contemporary society be it capitalist, socialist or developing. The state, without exception emerges as the foremost actor in political, cultural, social and economic spheres of societies. As a consequence, it is nearly impossible to understand and analyse any phenomena-whether it is feminism, the family, religion, ecology, law, rights, political processes, culture or development without the state. This is truer in case of the developing societies as the state here continues to play a pivotal role in securing economic development, social security and justice, group and individual rights despite the processes of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation that insist on the withdrawal of the state from the civil society.

5.2 STATE IN THE CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

It was in the aftermath of the Second World War that the state returned with a vengeance in the political theory. In the earlier part of the century it was the study of constitutions, legal institutions and political systems and not the state that received foremost concern of the political theory. It was more so with the Marxist theory than the liberal theory as under the influence

of the American Political Science Association the emphasis on liberalism was put on the need to evolve political science as an exact, objective and value free science. In the liberal structural functionalists' bid to approximate study of politics to the natural sciences the state as a contentious concept with normative concern was discarded and in its place the 'scientific and value free' concept of the political system was privileged under behavioural revolution.

However as the euphoria of the victory of capitalism in the Second World War evaporated and the intellectual leadership of the USA in social sciences came under scathing attack and as the disillusionment with the nationalist project of nation building in the third world set in, there emerged a need to analyse the social and political phenomena from the vantage point of the state. The dismal experience of authoritarianism both in the Communist societies as well as in the post-colonial societies also underlined the need to have an adequate explanation of the way states as codified structure of power, articulated and exercised political power. Thus in the decades of 1960's and 1970's the state emerged as a hegemonic concept in both liberal and Marxist political theory. In the last two decades, the focus has shifted to the study of state in its relation to civil society.

5.2.1 The Liberal Perception

Since the 1960's the liberals have sought to explain the growing centrality of the state to the modern society by focusing upon the administrative, coercive and ideological functions of the state. In the pluralist theory of state the state has come to be viewed increasingly by the liberals as a political association distinct from the government that encompasses all public bodies and exercises impersonal authority on the basis of the assumption that it represents the permanent interests of the society, rising above the partisan interests. The liberal thinkers argue that the state is a neutral arbiter amongst competing groups and individuals in the society; it acts as an umpire or referee, capable of protecting each citizen from the encroachment of the fellow citizens. The pluralists have viewed the state as a neutral entity, acting in the interests of all and representing what can be called the common good or public interest. *The central argument of the Pluralism is that political power is dispersed amongst a wide variety of social groups rather than an elite or ruling class. Under such an institutional understanding of the state its foremost function is considered to uphold order and provide social stability.*

The neo-pluralists such as Charles Lindblom and JK Galbraith have, however, argued that the advanced industrialised states are both more complex and less responsive to popular pressures than what the classical pluralists had assumed. While still holding the state as the custodian of common good or public interest they argue that it is impossible to portray all organisations as equally powerful since in a capitalist society business enjoys advantages which other groups clearly cannot rival. Pertinently although, the neo-pluralists do not view business as an 'elite group', capable of dictating to government in all areas. still less a ruling class', they do concede that a liberal democracy is a "deformed polyarchy" in which business usually exerts pre-eminent influence, especially over the economic agenda.

New right ideas and theories have become increasingly influential in the last three decades. Despite drawing their theoretical fundamentals, like pluralists, from the classical liberalism, as initially expounded by Hobbes and Locke, the neo-liberals or libertarians express strong antipathy towards government intervention in economic and social life. emanating from the belief that the state is a parasitic growth which threatens both individual liberty and economic security. For them the state is no longer an impartial referee but has become a self-serving monster, a nanny

or leviathan state, interfering in every aspect of life. New rights theorists have made an attempt to identify the forces that have led to the growth of state intervention and which, in their view, must be countered.

the effect liberals increasingly treat the state as governance. Such an institutional understanding of the state, however, does not allow us to explain the dissimilarity among the states in terms of their accumulation, articulation and exercise of political power.

5.2.2 The Marxist Perception

The return of the state to political theory has been a marked feature of Marxist political theory. Most rigorous and sophisticated debates concerning the nature of the state took place in the decades of 1970's and 1980's before the decline of Marxism as a philosophical position in the aftermath of collapse of communism and rise of neo-liberalism as the 'mainstream' political theory. Most of these debates have revolved round the interpretations of the views of Marx and Engels. The presence of wide range of the Marxist theories can be related to the discontinuities and disjunction in their works on state resulting in the lack of coherence among the different Marxist interpretations. Neither Marx nor Engels presented a comprehensive, systematic and complete theory of state. As a result the Marxists have been forced to theorise state through Marx and Engels' fragmented and unsystematic series of philosophical reflections, contemporary history, and journalism and incidental remarks. These themes have been capable of independent theoretical interpretation and development.

The lack of a grand theory of state in the writings of Marx and Engels also resulted in the emergence of different approaches in the Marxist theory regarding the nature of the state. Though they are often combined with varying degrees of consistency and mutual qualification, they are based on different assumptions, principles of exploitation and political implications.

Thus we have a theoretical position which argues that state should be analysed as Lenin analysed it i.e. based upon Marxian political and economic analysis. There are others who emphasise the autonomous character of state to be found in the historical works of Marx and Engels.

The classical theory of state as an instrument of class domination is crucially linked with the Marxist explanation of the materialist conception of history. In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels saw the state as the epiphenomenon i.e. simple surface reflection of the system of property relations and resulting economic class struggles. Marx and Engels argued that the state develops within the social division of labour and is the form in which the ruling class asserts its common interest. The state remains the reflection of the economic base and also reflects the needs of the economy as well as the balance of economic class forces. Marx presented similar ideas in his work *The Poverty of Philosophy* while discussing the tenets of political economy. He argued that the relations of production are the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

The above trend of thought on the nature of the state and the correlation between economic substructure and political formations finds its most explicit expression in the famous formulation of the *Communist Manifesto*. Marx and Engels argued that 'political power, properly so called is merely the organising power of one class for oppressing another'. Further, 'the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affair of the whole affair of the

whole bourgeoisie.' This version of the Marxian theory of the state leads to its conceptualisation as being in origin and nature, in purpose and function, a class organ, an organisation for oppression of one class by another. Besides the official Marxism under the patronage of the erstwhile Soviet Union the contemporary western Marxists like William Domhoff and Fred Block, among others concurred with such a position.

Significantly Marx in his historical works concerned with the concrete structure of the political conditions in France, Germany, Austria and Russia had put forward a conception of state that had life of its own, separated from civil society, with a bureaucracy that did not act in society's interest, but in the private interests of the state itself. Such a situation arose either when there was a balance of class forces i.e. Bonapartist France and Bismarckian Germany or there was an absence of a dominant class i.e. Maternich State in Austria and Czarist State in Russia.

The contemporary Marxists like Nicos Poulantzas, Hal Draper and Ralph Miliband have held that the relative autonomy of state, even if it is of high order, does not reduce its class character. The relative autonomy of state makes it possible for the state to play its class role in an appropriately flexible manner. If it really were the simple instrument of the ruling class it would be fatally inhibited in the performance of its role. State elite needs a measure of freedom in deciding how best to serve the existing social order.

Very briefly, the fundamentals of the Marxian formulation of the state can be succinctly put in the words of Miliband, 'while the state does act, in Marxist terms, on behalf of the ruling class it does not for the most part act at its behest. The state is indeed a class state, the state of the ruling class, but it indeed must have that high degree of autonomy and independence, if it is to act as a class state.' It follows that the notion of state merely as an instrument does reveal the crucial property of the state, namely its relative autonomy from the ruling propertied class and from civil society at large.

5.3 TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORICAL SPECIFICITY OF THE DEVELOPING STATE

It follows that despite the intense debate on the nature of state as a theoretical object and the skepticism about the concept of state as muted by the Marxist theorists, there is an almost complete acceptance of the centrality of state to any social analysis in political theory. The problem arises when the theorists try to analyse the actually existing states.

In their theoretical discourse on state, not all theorists have addressed to the same historical states: the kind of the capitalist state in the Nineteenth century Europe, for instance theorised by Marx and Engels was different from the advanced capitalist state in the late twentieth century about whose nature contemporary Marxists have been engaged with. Similarly the post-colonial developing state is historically and structurally different from the state in the advanced capitalist and post-communist societies. Moreover, there are marked differences among states within these broad categories.

The advanced capitalist states, no doubt, have different histories, traditions, cultures, and institutions. However they share two common characteristics: first, they are all highly industrialised countries; and second, the largest part of their means of economic activity remains under private ownership and control. These two characteristics make them distinctive from underdeveloped states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. There are other significant differences between the developed

states and the developing countries. The historical factors like colonialism, the experience of the anti-colonial nationalist movements, historical-cultural context in which these post-colonial developing societies have emerged. has led to a profound impact over the nature of the developing state.

It follows that the categories used for the analysis of the state in the advanced capitalist societies cannot be transposed to the developing societies. All the academic endeavours to such nature have been criticised as being mechanical, deterministic and reductionist in their nature.

The neo-Marxists, for instance, openly put a question mark over the adequacy of traditional Marxism primarily fashioned in and for a Bourgeois/ capitalist context to explicate the social realities of the third world societies. They contended that Marxism needed to be adapted to the very different circumstances subsumed under the notion of under-development. It follows that while applying the Marxist analytical tools in theorising the nature of the developing state, the use of Marxist concepts should be treated with caution.

The liberals also in a similar vein have increasingly emphasised over the need to study the cultural specificity of these 'new' states in a concrete manner at the micro level rather than making an attempt to generalise about the nature of state and politics as was the case with the grand theory of modernisation and development in the 1950's and 60's.

5.4 THEORISING STATE IN THE DEVELOPING STATE: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

When the Asian, African and Latin American countries became independent, there was tremendous confidence in the capacity of the state in bringing about much needed social, economic and political transformation. This can be explained on the following grounds:

First, this notion of an Interventionist State was in line with the colonial statist tradition. The claims of the anti-colonial movements were to state power, the take over of the state. For that purpose, the nationalist leadership attempted to bridge the space between civil society and the state, to ground the state in the internal power structures of the society i.e. civil society. The aspirations for state power on the part of the nationalist leadership accounted legitimacy and acceptability to the post-colonial state.

Second, since the civil society was under- developed as a result of the colonial intervention so the post-colonial state assumed centrality to the social formations.

Third, it was widely agreed that the post-colonial state was to reverse the colonial legacy by playing an interventionist role in bringing about social engineering, ethnic homogeneity, economic modernisation as well as nation building.

Fourth, the debate on the post-colonial state was also subordinated to the Western liberal discourse on modernisation and development. Three notions of development revolved around this debate: (a) that it was the imperative of the time, and that the form of the state was subsidiary to that of development (b) development was seen as a value free social process and an end [that it could give birth to its own patterns of social oppression was not recognised]. Consequently, development was perceived as something that could be imposed from above (c) and lastly a

strong belief that the developing societies suffering from traditional features would be unable to achieve reforms essential for modernisation because of being incapable of regulating themselves.

Thus the dominant belief among the liberals was that the developing state with an independent source of rationality and its ability to stand outside and above society could initiate and pursue programmes of development for the benefit of the whole society with the help of the modernising elite.

The above view of the developing state and its modernising elite was put to test in the sixties itself. It was widely felt that the development model- put forward primarily by the Princeton School theorists, i.e. Powell, Verba, Coleman, Pye, Eisenstadt and Binder among others to be followed by liberal institutionalists like Huntington, Weiner and Sanjay Lall- was ethno-centric/ Euro-centric and was very much an ideological cover to conceal the neo-colonial mechanism of exploitation. The critique from the periphery has perceived the notion of modernising state as being undemocratic as it had to impart preferential treatment to the modern sector against the traditional one. The neo-Marxists, activists as well as the feminists have forcefully argued that the people, whose livelihood depended on the traditional sector or whose culture and society, were ones not to be supported by the 'developmental state'. The claim that this was in national interest was deemed as highly questionable as there was considerable evidence that those who run the state apparatus- the elite in modernisation terms- derived a great deal of personal gains from that involvement, often in ways that could not be seen as to the general national interest.

The delegitimation of the state as an agent of social transformation or economic reforms or political change led to a paradigm shift in the theorisation about the developing states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Now the focus was on the state as theoretical subject in its own right.

5.5 THEORISING THE PERIPHERAL STATE: A NEO-MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

In the subsequent neo-Marxist theory that emerged to analyse the state in the developing societies, external determinants were given much more and sometimes complete importance. In the process, as discussed above, the history of their relationship to colonialism and imperialism was stressed to explain the peripheral state's complementary and subsidiary attachment to world capitalism.

A.G. Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, Arighiri Emmanuel and Ruy Marini were among the first to propound the dependency theory theorising about the political economy of state in Latin America. Subsequently Samir Amin, Issa Shivji, Colin Leys, Joel Samoff, Mehmood Mamdani, Michaela Von Freyhold and others theorised in the context of the post-colonial African State while taking up concrete case studies. These neo-Marxists theorists' contribution lies in underlining the specificity of political that was missing in the liberal political development theory.

While emphasising the class nature of the state based on the thesis presented by Engels who wrote that 'that the state is first and foremost an instrument of the bourgeoisie or labour' these underdevelopment / world systems theorists have viewed the Asian, African and Latin American states as instruments for the administration of the dependent role of these peripheral economies in the international division of labour and the process of capitalist accumulation. *The Dependency*

theorists have argued that capitalism is an international system characterised by exchange between technically advanced and backward states through a world market. The technological and military superiority of Metropolitan states resulted in the domination, exploitation and distortion [i.e. underdevelopment] of the satellite states and regions of the world economy. Through the process of unequal exchange, economic surplus is extracted from the periphery. The unequal exchange is manifest in the form of repatriation of super profits, deteriorating terms of trade, monopoly rents for the utilisation of the metropole technologies, as well as trade and traffic policies that deny the periphery control over their own or the global market.

The peripheral states experienced denial of the economic surplus necessary for autonomous development, and by extension, an autonomous national bourgeoisie, as the economic surplus was appropriated by and invested in the advanced capitalist states. Obviously, then, the decolonisation brought little change to the economy of the post-colonial states. The indirect political dominance of metropolitan bourgeoisie has continued.

Thus the peripheral states of Asia, Africa and Latin America, according to the dependency theorists, were simply new forms, political freedom for the indigenous classes merely a new cloak, under which the basic mechanisms of reproduction continued to sustain imperialist hegemony. In the words of AG Frank, 'the third world state mediates between its national capital- and labour- and international capital, and as a dependent state, it does so substantially to the benefit of international capital and at the absolute sacrifice of local labour. The exigencies of the process of capital accumulation and the international division of labour, world wide and in the under-developed countries themselves, thus becoming the principle determinants of the role of the form of the state in the third world.' [AG Frank, *Crisis in the Third World*, Heinemann, London, 1961].

Is the dependent state a weak state or a strong state? *The dependency theorists would argue that the local bourgeoisie in the peripheral state is weak but the dependent state is relatively strong.* As the principle variable in the dependent societies is the relation of the state to the imperialist bourgeoisie so the third world state may be strong in relation to the local bourgeoisie but remains largely as an instrument or in many cases as creation of the imperialist bourgeoisie of the metropolis.

The dependency theorists in Latin America have explained the non-democratic authoritarian nature of third world by using two different models. The first is state capitalist model. In this model the impact of the state apparatus on social classes in periods of both populism and authoritarianism receives more attention than the role of the state in the industrialisation process. In the dependent economic context, the existence of a weak bourgeoisie creates even more necessary conditions than in the capitalist's context for states expansion into production. State capitalist analysts hold that role of the state is characteristic of particular stage of the accumulation process. A process that has been in crisis, because of the relation of dependent economies to the metropole centres. Thus the peripheral state is not only involved in the distribution and production but also interacting with the Metropolis State and their bourgeoisie.

It is with the above purpose that the dependent state seeks to create a state bourgeoisie- a new class whose interests are connected with power over resources rather than direct ownership.

This state bourgeoisie serves the state itself rather than as bureaucratic representative of class interest in civil society.

The second model dealing with the authoritarian dependent state has its roots in the class struggle views of **Cardoso**, Falleto and **O'Donnell**. While adopting historical structural approach, these later dependency theorists have situated states in Latin America in the context of class struggle –conditioned by crises and developments in the world system. They describe the nature of the **bureaucratic** authoritarian state as being one of guarantor and organiser of the domination exercised through the upper faction of a highly **oligopolistic** and transnationalised bourgeoisie. This class has carried out the task of depoliticisation of the civil society by economically excluding the people. The economic exclusion of the people has been achieved by shifting the governmental spending in the social sector to a **particular** nature of infrastructure that eventually has promoted foreign investment and profited state bureaucracy [i.e. the military build-up, the state's capital investment etc.].

Furthermore, capital accumulation benefits the large national and foreign units of private capital and state corporations. This bureaucratic-authoritarian dependent state strictly controls the labour unions and mass organisations. Due to the stress on depoliticisation, political access to the state through the political parties is ~~made~~ impossible. Whatever access is left is limited to individual contacts between persons outside and inside the bureaucracy.

Thus the bureaucratic authoritarian state is separated from civil society and the state's legitimacy depends on economic growth and increasing **material** consumption-a legitimacy of technocratic efficiency- while the working and peasant classes are kept acquiescent through the coercive apparatus.

We can **sum up** the differing theoretical contentions of the dependency theorists by making the following observations: *The dependent state compared with the nature of advanced state emerges as quite distinct in nature due to the role of foreign capital in it; The dependent states show distinct trend towards authoritarian forms; The dominance of the world system has historically kept local bourgeoisie weak; the weak local bourgeoisie cannot establish its hegemony, hence cannot maintain power [and guarantee access to its economy for the foreign capital] through democratic forms of the state; The strength of foreign capital and metropole states and their unwillingness to allow popular anti-imperialist control of democratic states pushes and helps the local bourgeoisie to back the military in establishing bureaucratic authoritarian regimes that are much more beholden to the real power of foreign and to local capital.*

The **form** of the dependent state, according to the dependency theorists, is essentially a function of external capital and its need to extract surplus from the peripheral societies. As Guillermo **O'Donnell** argues that the Latin American states have passed through three phases: an oligarchic state dominated by the elite that was based on the export sectors; a populist period during which the indigenous bourgeoisie relied on import substitution, domestic demand, and a tactical alliance with the urban masses; and a bureaucratic-authoritarian stage, in which import substitution was dropped and military and civilian technocrats collaborated with the metropolitan capital, and representatives for various associations among the ruling groups joined in a kind of authoritarian elite corporatism.

The major contentions of dependency theory have been subjected to the following criticisms in the recent years. First, the dependency theorists have failed to note that independence constituted a significant change in power relations between the ex-colonies and the metropolitan capitalists. Second, the rise of indigenous bourgeoisie within the third world countries has been another factor that has been ignored by the dependency theorists. Third, even if one agrees with the idea that the metropolitan capital retains economic dominance, one must concede some sort of leverage to the indigenous classes. Within structural limits placed by the over domineering presence of the metropolitan capital, the indigenous capitalist classes do have 'free choice' of policy albeit in a limited manner. Fourth, the dependency theorists have failed to situate the third world states in the context of indigenous class struggles. The third world states have been erroneously dubbed as being mere agents for transfer of surplus, which is not the case. Fifth, the classical dependency theorists took little account of the differences in the policies and actual paths of development followed by the different peripheral states. The view that the ubiquitous peripheral capitalist relations of production blocked virtually all development in the third world also needed to be qualified in the context of the East Asian development experiences. Marxist Scholars like Bill Warren and Sanjay Lall in fact went to the extent to argue that, with colonialism at an end, and with several developing countries in a stronger position, international capitalism was no longer parasitic but rather progressive as Marx once had argued in the context of the Asiatic states.

It has been correctly pointed out that *the developing state was singularly neither an instrument of neo-colonial domination nor a tool of the capitalist classes as the dependency theorists make us believe*. 'Though it was impacted by them, it had become a power structure in itself performing neither the functions of capitalist accumulation as the classical theory of Marxism posed, nor was it purely functional for metropolitan capital except in transparent societies where the notion of gatekeepers was peculiarly applicable to the classes. Alignment with metropolitan capital was one of the facts of the state, as was response to the indigenous capitalist classes where they had developed. However the state itself had emerged as an explicit power structure.' [Neera Chandhoke, Limits of Comparative political Analysis, Economic and political Weekly, January 27, 1995, p.66]. Moreover, by putting an overemphasis on the unequal exchange relationship between the core and peripheral countries the dependency theorists erroneously equated social classes with geographical entities and the third world problem of inequality and deprivation, thus making the prospect of any useful class analysis of the peripheral states extremely unlikely. It was more so as the macro- perspective of the dependency theorists made it difficult to distinguish nuances at the concrete level.

5.6 RELATING CLASS TO STATE IN THE POST-COLONIAL SOCIETIES

As the dependency theory as a paradigm of explanation suffered a decline in the seventies, there emerged more adequate opportunity for those who favoured examining the relationship between class and the state in the developing societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Hamza Alavi, writing in the concrete context of South Asia did the pioneer work in this regard. Alavi grounded his state theory on the historical specificity of the post-colonial societies. He attributed this as emanating from the structural changes brought about by the colonial domination as well as distant history, culture and tradition of these societies. His theorisation of the nature of post-colonial state under peripheral capitalism was complimented by the African neo-Marxists like Issa Shivji, John Saul and Colin Leys.

The major contention of Alavi is that the post-colonial state dominates the politics as well as the civil society because of its over-developed superstructure. The ideological as well as the coercive apparatuses of the post-colonial state, being overdeveloped in nature [as compared to their counterparts in the advanced capitalist countries] dominates all the indigenous social forces. Alavi attributes this to the historical process of colonial capitalist development taking place in the colonies. The colonial state, equipped with the powerful military bureaucratic apparatus, mechanisms of powers and institutionalised practices regulated and controlled the indigenous social classes.

Alavi traces a historical symmetry between the nature of the colonial and the post-colonial state in this regard as due to the absence of a properly developed capitalist class the bureaucratic military oligarchy have become all too common a phenomenon in the post-colonial states.

It follows that the post-colonial state is not the instrument of a single class. It is relatively autonomous because of the overdeveloped nature of state apparatus as well as because it mediates as well as act on behalf of the three dominant proprietary classes- the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie, and the landed classes having competing interests. Thus the post-colonial state is entrusted with the task of preserving a social order in which the ruling classes' interests are embedded.

A second complementary point also can be drawn from Alavi that explains the centrality of the state in the post-colonial societies. At the time of decolonisation the post-colonial state assumed a new and relatively autonomous economic role that was not paralleled in the classical bourgeois state because the state in the post-colonial society directly approaches a very large part of the economic surplus and deploys it in bureaucratically directed economic activity. The massive scale of public expenditure established an independent economic base for the state and enabled it to enjoy an autonomous economic role.

According to Alavi and Saul, there has been yet another factor that defines the crucial significance of the state in the post-colonial societies. They refer to the special ideological function of the state to create territorial unity, legitimacy and a sense of nationhood. Saul, in particular, argues that state's function of providing ideological cement for the advanced capitalist system has evolved along with their economic transformation. However, in the post-colonial societies, given the artificial nature of the territorial boundaries, such a hegemonic position had to be created once the powerful force of direct colonial fiat was gone.

The above three factors, taken together, according to Alavi and other postcolonial state theorists illuminate the centrality of the state to the post-colonial social formations. In such a situation of high relative autonomy, the bureaucracy figures as an important component in its own right in the determination of the state policies.

Naturally, then, the focus of a number of Marxist analyses has been on the special role of the bureaucracy in the post-colonial societies. This part of the debate is complex and questionable on two accounts. First, the bureaucracy or oligarchy is often regarded as a special category or a special class. Now, in the later case it is not clear whether the members constitute a class by virtue of their class origin, or because they belong to the bureaucracy. Second, the distinction between the state apparatus and state power is not always clear. State power in such formulations

is considered to belong to the bureaucratic class. The **question** arises can bureaucracy be considered as a class?

In the above context we can refer to the views of Nicos Poulantzas who argues that the bureaucracy does not constitute a social class, it **remains** a social category that can be defined as social ensemble, whose main feature is based on its specific relationship to the political structures other than economic ones. However, **Poulantzas** concedes that in the societies where the relations of production have not acquired the capitalist form, the state bourgeois is able to establish a specific place for itself. But even in this case, it does not constitute a class by virtue of being ~~the~~ bureaucracy, but by virtue of being an effective class.

In Alavi's analysis it is not quite clear whether he regards the military-bureaucratic oligarchy as a category concerning the state apparatus [governing] or state power [ruling]. As discussed above he does refer to ~~the~~ historically specific role of the military and the bureaucracy, who constitute the state apparatus in post-colonial societies. The oligarchy, however, he observes, **prefers** to rule through politicians so long as it could retain its own relative autonomy and power.

Writing in the context of East Africa, Saul argued that the indigenous classes were in a state of **formation** and as ~~such~~ unlike the Asian societies, did not have fixed class interest. This was due to the repressive policies of the colonial state. Thus Saul argues that there is little possibility of state bureaucracy subservient to the interests of the indigenous classes. **In** fact, in the post-colonial societies like Africa, the state bureaucracy becomes decisive in the formulation of state policies in the face of the apparent inability of indigenous bourgeoisie to emerge as a dominant ruling class, which allows the state bureaucracy to enjoy the status of governing class.

The central role given to the state bureaucracy in the post-colonial societies **has been** also endorsed by the neo-Marxists namely Ziemann and Lanzendorfer, Joel **Samoff**, Peter Evans and Szentes. Ziemann and Lanzendorfer have argued that having its entrenched interest the state bureaucracy [read administrative bureaucracy] gets involved as a social entity in constant battles over the distribution of state income. The absence of developed political institutions present a situation in which the state bureaucracy with its vacillating class interest acts in an **intermediary** position along with transnational capital and interest groups trying to fill up the political gap. The state bureaucracy, as Evans argues, acquires the power to determine as well as regulate not only the general orientation of ~~the~~ economy but also the distributive mechanism of state's surplus. Its vacillating class interest enables it to enter into either an alliance with trans-national capital or with the local bourgeoisie with popular base.

As for the **composition** of the state bourgeoisie, Szentes argues that the state elite comprises of civil servants, managers, administrators, bureaucrats, certain intellectuals, armed forces **officers** etc.

The variation of the notion that the bureaucracy constitutes a distinct separate class is to be found in the writings of Shivji, **Meillassoux** and Mamdani. Writing in the context of post-colonial Africa they argued that where the indigenous bourgeoisie was unusually weak and the state relatively strong, it was the strong state bureaucracy that appropriated and accumulated the economic surplus. This bureaucracy had its class origin in the petty bourgeoisie and acted in its

interests. On the other hand, this bureaucratic bourgeoisie also appropriated state organs and resources.

It follows that we can discern a general theory of the post-colonial state. While three classes, namely metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed peasantry may be regarded as economically dominant and therefore exercising directly or indirectly political dominance or control., state personnel/ bureaucratic bourgeoisie1 petty bourgeoisie may be judged to be the ruling or governing element being most active in the political process and indeed holding the rein of government.

Here it needs to be emphasised that in the writings of the neo-Marxist theorists the economically dominant classes are generally perceived as a class whose reproductive needs ultimately determine the overall economic structure of social formation. Political dominance is however to be judged in terms of the output of the state and also in the determination of specific policy within limits set by the general reproductive needs of the economically dominant classes.

In the earlier sections we had discussed the Marxian theory of the state. To reiterate Marx and Engels, it is argued that in the normal situation state acts as an instrument of the economically and therefore politically dominant social class. However, they also argued that in certain historical conjunctures state does enjoy relative autonomy. First, being where the generation of the social classes has been weak as a result of the unique development of a particular mode of production. This has been more or less the case with the pre-colonial Asiatic State and the colonial state. The second, being where the state acquires relative autonomy by playing off one class against other.

The above brings us to the post-colonial social formations where, as discussed above, it has been argued by the post-colonial state theorists that the above mentioned three ruling classes have different structural basis and competing class interests. It is in this context of a complex class structure where no particular class is hegemonic that the state and its personnel have extensive space for manoeuvring within the inherited state apparatus. However, the role of the state elite is only relatively autonomous because it is not determined outside the matrix of the class society but within it, with a distinct purpose to preserve the social order based on the institution of private property.

Post- colonial state theorists, despite its theoretical sophistication combined with its ability to underline the significance of historical understanding, failed like the dependency theorists to take in to consideration the distinctive colonial experiences of the different countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As Neera Chandhoke puts it; 'Different countries had witnessed different kinds of anti-colonial struggles, based on their specific experiences of colonialism, their own histories of myths and traditions of protest, distinctive political ideologies, intellectual contributions and stemming out of all of them, differing vision of future. And after independence, various countries embarked on different paths of building institutions, creating legitimizing ideologies, patterns of political mobilization, and nation state projects'. [Neera Chandhoke, Limits of Comparative Political Analysis, *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 27, 1996, PE-5].

Naturally then in the last two decades any attempt to articulate a general theory of state in the developing societies based on global frames of analysis has been discouraged. The universal and

abstract categories of comparative political analysis as attempted by the modernisation/development and the dependency and then the postcolonial state theorists have been increasingly replaced by the study of the local, the specific and the particular evidenced in the political and cultural practices. Thus what is being attempted is to introduce a **much** more nuanced and rigorous historical understanding of the particular societies before analysing the nature of state.

5.7 SUMMARY

The liberal modernisation and political development theorists assumed that the developing societies were on **their** way towards an ideal model of development visible in the advanced capitalist democracies of the West. They **then** proceeded to analyse the stages through which this happened with the help of the western aid at the personal/psychological, technological/financial and the institutional levels of North America. Narrowly conceived in an economistic fashion development theorists portrayed the state as an impersonal vehicle of social, economic, cultural and political change. This process needed the guidance by modernising elite. Development theorists devalued the social forces that opposed such elitist notions in their pursuit of stability, order as prerequisite of statist model of development. Ironically, however state per se was precluded from any discussion about the political system.

The neo-Marxist dependency theorists, on the other hand, assumed that imperialism prevented the emergence of an ideal-type European or self-centered model of development. Presenting an economistic and deterministic analysis they attributed the peripheral nature of dependency to the historical constraints of colonialism as well as the **emergence** of unequal world capitalist systems in the post-colonial era. The development of the advanced capitalist states and the metropolitan zones of the developing states took place at the price of the underdevelopment of the third world. It followed that the space for policy making was severely circumscribed by unequal relations of dependency and the national sovereignty was undermined. The only way the underdeveloped states could emancipate from the enduring structures of dependency was to break away from the global structures of power. Until then the dependent state in the third world had to remain as an instrument of the metropolitan capital and its domestic underlings. The authoritarian forms of political regime became most likely in the face of marginalised and poor majority.

With extremely rapid development taking place in a number of outward-oriented East Asian states who followed the capitalist model, the central thesis of the classical dependency theorists-~~that~~ the capitalist expansion in the third world generated underdevelopment and made 'real' development impossible- came increasingly under question mark.

What resulted was the rise of much more sophisticated Marxist theorisation that shifted from general-level economic models and external factors to detailed analyses of internal class relations. These theorists argued that the state in the third world society exhibited an unusually high degree of autonomy. The complex class structure meant that there was no single dominant ruling class and the state **had** to carry out the task of mediation. At the same time politicians and the bureaucracy could use the overdeveloped state institutions and organisations left behind as a part of the colonial legacy.

5.8 EXERCISES

- 1) Explain the significance of state theory in the contemporary political theory?
- 2) Analyse the **Marxian** notion of state.
- 3) Analyse ~~the~~ **main** tenets of the pluralist liberal theory of the state.
- 4) "The states in the developing societies are structurally unique in nature." comment.
- 5) Explain the theoretical tenets of the state theories in both the liberal and Marxist traditions.
- 6) What do you understand by neo-Marxism?
- 7) Analyse the nature of dependent state.

