

Political Transition: Are States Evolutionary?

Exordium:

A transition (change) is an interval between two regimes (governments). Many political systems enter into a transition because their old regime, that is, their rules, procedures, and institutions, has become untenable (remain not suitable anymore), and they remain in the transition because no new regime succeeds in becoming consolidated (remain stronger).

In the early twenty-first century political scientists became especially interested in the different patterns, forms, and outcomes of transitions from totalitarian (dictatorship) and authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes. However, the various transitions do not always result in democratic regimes. Quite often a transition proceeds from one type of authoritarian regime to a different type of authoritarianism (enforcement through more strict authority). When a transition is heading toward the inauguration (start) of a democratic regime, the overall process is defined as democratization.

The Origin of The State:

Political thinkers have attempted to explain the origin of the state in various ways. When, where and how the state came into existence have not been recorded anywhere in history. Among many theories which are concerned with the origin of the states the following are explained below.

- The Theory of Divine origin
- Social Contract Theory.
- Matriarchal and Patriarchal Theory.
- Force Theory.
- Evolutionary Theory.

Divine origin Theory

The oldest theory about the origin of the state is the divine origin theory. It is also known as the theory of divine right of Kings. It was universal belief with the ancient people that the King is the representative of God on earth and the state is a bliss (joy) of God. Thus, the King had both political and religious entity (organizations). In the religious books also, the state is said to be created by God. In some religions this conception is explicit (clear), but in others it is implicit (unsaid).

The king was given the divine power and he was to be responsible to the God alone for his deeds and was not responsible to the people for any of his works. The king was given the supreme power to rule over the people through God. This theory has made the king above law and no subjects will have the right to question his authority or his action.

The theory prevailed in the old age where religion has dominated the minds of the people. The subjects believed that as the king is the agent of God so they have to obey the king and to go against the king will be a sinful (evil) act. But in the twentieth century, this theory has been criticized or we may say it came under a criticism being an incorrect explanation of the origin of the state.

There are many causes for the decline of the theory. In the first place it was the rise of the social contract theory as a more acceptable theory, the divine origin theory was dashed (ruined) into the ground as this social contract theory has suggested that the state is the handiwork of man and not the creation by the grace of God. Second, was the separation of the church and the state. Thus, the secular outlook made the divine origin theory totally unacceptable. Third, is the emergence

(rise) of democracy because democracy glorified (praised) the individual and not the king who was considered as the agent of God.

Social Contract Theory

The most famous theory with regard to the origin of the state is the social contract theory. The theory goes to tell that the state came into existence out of a contract between the people and the sovereign at some point of time.

There were three exponents of this theory. They were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau who differed about the life in the state of nature.

The next result of this changeover was that the people gained security of life and property and social security, but lost the natural liberty which they had been enjoying in the state of nature.

The crux of the social contract theory is that men create government for the purpose of securing their pre-existing natural rights – that the right come first, that the government is created to protect these rights. These ideas were based on the concepts of a state of nature, natural law and natural rights.

Thomas Hobbes theory of Social Contract appeared for the first time in **Leviathan** published in the year 1651 during the Civil War in Britain. According to Thomas Hobbes nature of individual of earliest time was poor, solitary, nasty, brutish, and short. Ultimate thinking of a man was selfishness, only think of himself it's a type of anarchy. The two types of emotions were present one was Love and other was Hate.

John Locke theory of Social Contract is different than that of Hobbes. According to him, man lived in the State of Nature, but his concept of the State of Nature is different as expected by Hobbesian theory. Locke's view about the state of nature is not as miserable (unhappy) as that of Hobbes. It was reasonably good and enjoyable, but the property was not secure. He considered State of Nature as a Golden Age. It was a state of peace, goodwill, mutual assistance, and preservation. Locke justifies this by saying that in the State of Nature, the natural condition of mankind was a state of perfect and complete liberty to conduct one's life as one best sees fit. It was free from the interference of others.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was a French philosopher who gave a new interpretation to the theory of Social Contract in his work the life in the State of Nature was happy and there was equality among men. As time passed, however, humanity faced certain changes. As the overall population increased, the means by which people could satisfy their needs had to change. People slowly began to live together in small families, and then in small communities. Divisions of labor were introduced, both within and between families, and discoveries and inventions made life easier, giving rise to leisure (rest) time. Such leisure (relaxation) time certainly led people to make comparisons between themselves and others, resulting in public values, leading to shame and envy (jealousy), pride and contempt.

The Patriarchal Theory

The principal exponent of this theory is **Sir Henry Maine**. According to him, the city is a conglomeration (collection) of several families which developed under the control and authority of the eldest male member of the family. The head or father of the patriarchal family wielded (exercised) great power and influence upon the other members of the family. His writ (order) was carried out in the household. This patriarchal family was the most ancient organized social institution in the primitive (ancient) society.

Through the process of marriage, the families began to expand and they gave birth to gen (general) which stands for a household. Several gens made one clan (group of people). A group of clans constituted (established) a tribe. A confederation (union) of various tribes based on blood relations for the purpose of defending themselves against the attackers formed one commonwealth (nation) which is called the state.

Edward Jenks who is the other advocate of the patriarchal theory is of the view that the foundation of the state was caused by three factors, namely male kinship (relationships), permanent marriages and paternal (father) authority. Thus, the salient feature of the patriarchal theory is that the families grew through the descendants (children) of the father, not the mother. The male child carried on the population through marriages with one or several women and the eldest male child had a prominent role in the house.

Another important supporter of this theory was **Aristotle**. According to him- **“Just as men and women unite to form families, so many families unite to form villages and the union of many villages forms the state which is a self-supporting unit”**.

The Matriarchal Theory

The chief exponents of the matriarchal theory are **Morgan, Meclennan and Edward Jenks**. According to them, there was never any patriarchal family in the primitive society and that the patriarchal family came into existence only when the institution of permanent marriage was in trend. But among the primitive society, instead of permanent marriage there was a sort of sex anarchy. Under that condition, the mother rather than the father was the head of the family. The kinship was established through the mother.

Edward Jenks who made a thorough (detailed) study of the tribes of Australia came to the conclusion that the Australian tribes were organized in some sort of tribes known as **totem groups**. Their affinity (kinship) was not on the basis of blood relationship but through some symbols like tree or animal. One totem group, men were to marry all the women of another totem group.

The Force Theory

Another early theory of the origin of the state is the theory of force. The exponents of this theory hold that wars and aggressions by some powerful tribes were the principal factors in the creation of the state. They rely on the oft-quoted (often quoted) saying “war begot the King” (which means the powerful conquered the weak state) as the historical explanation of the origin of the state.

The force or might prevailed over the right in the primitive society. A man physically stronger established his authority over the less strong persons. The strongest person in a tribe is, therefore, made the chief or leader of that tribe.

After establishing the state by subjugating the other people in that place the chief used his authority in maintaining law and order and defending the state from the aggression from outside. Thus, force was responsible not only for the origin of the state but for development of the state also.

Evolutionary Theory

Five theories in explanation of the origin of the state, but no single theory offers an adequate (enough) explanation. The theory which explains and is now accepted as a convincing origin of the state, is the Historical or Evolutionary theory. It explains the state is the product of growth, a slow and steady evolution extending over a long period of time and ultimately shaping itself into the complex structure of a modern state. This theory is more scientific.

The state is neither the handiwork of God, nor the result of superior physical force, nor the creation of evolution or convention, nor a mere expansion of the family. The state is not a mere artificial mechanical creation but an institution of natural growth or historical evolution says professor Garner.

There were a number of factors which helped the evolution of the state. They were kinship, religion, war, migration economic activities and political consciousness. The important factors which contributed to the growth of the state are

- Kinship
- Religion
- Property and defense
- Force
- Political Consciousness

Kinship

Kinship is the most important and was based upon blood relationship and kinship was the first strongest bond of unity. Family constituted the first link in the process of the evolution of the state with the expansion of the family arose new families and the multiplication of families led to the formation of clans and tribes. Kinship was the only factor which bound the people together.

According to Professor Mac Iver, the magic of names 'Reinforced the sense of kinship, as the course of generations enlarged the group. The blood bond of sonship changed imperceptibly into the social bond of the wider brotherhood. The authority of the father passes into the power of the chief once more under the aegis of kinship new forms arise which transcend it. Kinship creates society and society at length creates the state'.

Religion

Religion provided the bond of unity in early society. It also affected all walks of life. The worship of a common ancestor and common goods created a sense of social solidarity. There was fear in the hearts of men as far as religion was concerned. Even today we see religious practices, affairs and faith in uniting people. In the early days a number of races are united by religion and unity was essential for the creation of state.

Force

Force also played an important part in the evolution of the state. It was the use of physical force that was responsible for the growth of kingdoms and empires.

Property and Defense

Property and defense played a vital role in the evolution of state in ancient times particularly among the people who were nomads and vagabonds and tribals. Prof. Laski has referred to the necessity of acquiring property by the members of society and protecting the property acquired with reference to the population mentioned above.

This led to making adjustments in the social system and relationship between the members of different groups. The need to protect property ultimately compelled the ancient people to establish the state.

Political consciousness

The last is political consciousness arising from the fundamental needs of life for protection and order. When the people settle down on a definite territory in pursuit of their, subsistence and a desire to secure it from

encroachment by others. The need for regulating things and persons is felt imminently and this is the essence of political consciousness.

Conclusion

It follows that many factors helped the growth of the state. No single factor alone was responsible for its origin. Sometimes all and sometimes many of them help the process by which uncivilized society was transformed into a state.

Of all the theories which seek to explain the origin of the states, the evolutionary theory is the most satisfactory. It should be noted that no theory pin-points the time at which the state originated as a consequence of many factors working in union at different times.