

# MODELS OF THE STATE

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## PLURLISM MODEL

*Unit of Analysis:* GROUPS, whose preferences (motives, grievances, etc.) and values (accepted norms, personal commitments) must be ultimately referred.

### Assumptions:

- 1) Individuals take actions through groups compatible with their preferences/values.
- 2) Groups represent aggregate of individuals.
- 3) Group cooperation and compromise lead to societal consensus through:
  - a) communication of preferences to others,
  - b) Formation of public opinion,
  - c) Responsive actions of group elites.

*Public policy* is a result of interest group bargaining and compromise.

- 4) The State is a negotiator/referee of disputes.
- 5) The state mirrors public and group preferences-it conforms to public opinion.
- 6) Interest groups compete-they do not overlap.
- 7) Group competition compromise will lead to virtual self-regulation of society-counter –balance effect.
- 8) Toleration of diverse ideas/groups/

## Elitism Model

*Unit of Analysis:* 'PUBLIC' and PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONAL ELITES – the organizational base and activities of elites are the focus of analysis.

### Assumptions:

- 1) The state is made up of a variety of organizations and structures that have different resources for domination of society and the state (unlike the class-conflict model which focuses upon capital ownership). In other words, some groups, some groups win in the policy-making process.
- 2) The state is first and foremost the dominant organization in society- a monopoly of power.
- 3) Organizations are tools or instruments of elites, not collections of individuals (masses).
- 4) Major organizational goals = survival of the organization. So monopolies/mergers are encouraged over competition.
- 5) Elite conflicts are managed by elite negotiations, legal orders0some elites do not survive if the organizational basis is not strong.
- 6) Individuals (masses) must be induced or coerced into the appropriate beliefs/behavior that will lead to conformity with elite rules.

The lists of assumptions are not exhaustive, and each model is more complex than indicated.

- 7) New organizations are allowed to emerge as long as they do not effectively challenge the status-quo. Token opposition is fine (and may be encouraged to increase legitimate authority of the state- “free to choose” and “freedom of opinion/organization”).
- 8) Manipulation of masses by elites. Elites are highly educated and knowledgeable; masses are apathetic and less educated.

## **CLASS-CONFLICT MODEL**

*Unit of Analysis:* SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES existing in a particular stage of development. The productive base of society (e.g., capitalistic, feudalistic, etc.) leads to certain class dominating the state through its economic resources (property?).

### **Assumptions:**

- 1) Individual actions and organizational interests must be understood in the context of class relations within a certain ‘mode of production’ (e.g., manufacturing, service, etc.).
- 2) The stage of economic development provides the conditions under which certain types of organizations emerge and flourish while others die or do not even appear (e.g., you don’t see Green Peace in Ethiopia).
- 3) Conflict theories focuses on three aspects of society as important:
  - a. Individuals must sell their labor as a commodity to others who own the means of production,
  - b. The dominant economic organization (e.g., business) depend upon capital accumulation (profit, investment), and
  - c. The economy is dominated by privately controlled production for commodity markets.
- 4) The ruling classes (capital?) rule over the boundaries of the state- The states main function is to protect the capital class interests in general. Certain individual capitalists and industries are allowed to go under, but not the whole classes.
- 5) No such thing as the ‘public interest’ exists; only ‘class interest’ do-thus different classes have different interests-class conflict. Capital accumulation vs. social welfare needs.
- 6) 6) The state only reform or changes to preserve/maintain the power structure.
- 7) Disputes or group competition in society is ultimately class based.

## **PARTICIPATORY MODEL**

*Unit of Analysis:* INDIVIDUALS, not groups, classes, elites, etc.

### **Assumptions:**

- 1) Individuals (voters) participate in political life spontaneously; they are not elite-directed.
- 2) The majority of eligible voters participate in the policy process.

The lists of assumptions are not exhaustive, and each model is more complex than indicated.

- 3) Individuals are informed and knowledgeable about political/policy affairs; they are not manipulated by elites.
- 4) There are fair, honest, and egalitarian means for citizens to express their political desires - e.g., elections, town hall meetings, public meetings, etc.
- 5) Policy is the product of majority preferences, not group, class, or elite preferences.

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