

## **PERSPECTIVES ON THE DECLINE AND REVIVAL OF THE POLITICAL THEORY: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS FROM VARIOUS POLITICAL SCIENTISTS IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

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### **Abstract:**

This thorough analysis explores the evolving political theory paradigms over the 20th century, characterized by its early fall and later resurgence. Early in the century, there was a noticeable move away from classical political theory and toward a more behavioral, empirical approach that placed an emphasis on statistics and actual political activity. This change in direction, which was primarily brought about by behavioralism's ascent, was seen to be detrimental to conventional political theory since it ignored the normative and philosophical elements of politics.

This research paper looks at how, in the later half of the century, global ideas were incorporated into political theory, taking cultural variety and globalization into account. It draws attention to the profound effects of social and technical developments on the development of political theory, including the introduction of mass media and the internet as well as social movements. This examination highlights the political theory's continued applicability and importance in tackling modern problems, such as multiculturalism, identity politics, and the intricacies of democracy in an international setting. The article offers a sophisticated interpretation of the peaks and valleys of political theory during the 20th century, highlighting the field's dynamic character and vital importance in understanding and resolving the complex nature of political occurrences.

**Keywords:** Paradigms, 20th Century, Political Theory, Behavioralism, Multiculturalism

### **Introduction:**

There was a time in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when many observers and political scientists took a dug at political theory and claimed its decline some even proclaimed it's death. Such views arose particularly because the classical tradition in political theory is by and large loaded with value judgements beyond the control of empirical testing. The Challenges to Normative Political Theory were mainly from Logical Positivists and Behaviourism subsequently.

The objective of 20th-century political theory is to elucidate the intricate elements that led to the theory's seeming downfall at several junctures over the century, as well as to shed light on the circumstances and intellectuals that enabled its resurgence. It is an investigation that goes beyond scholarly curiosity, exploring how developments in political theory mirror larger alterations in international politics, social movements, and ideological tendencies. Offering a thorough and sophisticated study, it invites readers to comprehend the tenacity of political thought. In addition to reporting historical occurrences and scholarly discussions, it also serves as an invitation to recognize the dynamic character of political theory and its continuing influence on our understanding of and interaction with the political realm.

### **Decline of Political Theory:**

David Easton contended that since political theory is concerned with some kind of history form and lost its constructive role. Easton even blamed Willing Dunning, Charles H Mellwain and George M. Sabine for their approach 'Historicism'.

David Easton Identified Following reasons that led to the claim that Political Theory is Dead in 1950s-60s.

- **Historicism:** Easton wrote "Political Theory today is interested primarily in history of Ideas". Further David Easton criticized association of Political Theory with notions of values. He could not accept the position of political theory with values , principles and history attached hence argued these things led to political insignificance
- **Eclipse of Liberalism:** The Historical Data related to the study of Political Science exposed the bare fact that from 1920s Liberal Political Thought was passing through a number of crisis. For example, Bolshevik Rule in Russia laid basis for collectivism and curtailment of Individual Freedom. Again in 1930s American Capitalism had to bear Crisis and The White House took up initiatives against liberalism.
- **Hyper –Factualism:** Hyper Factualism which generally means excessive dependence on facts and failures to relate it to the theory. According to Easton Research of Political Science characterized is generally characterized Hyper -Factualism and failure to connect empiricism with theory
- **Domination of Moral Theory:** Another cause that was identified was domination of Moral Theory and premises of the west. According to Easton the tendency towards moral conformity couldn't give political theory a chance to establish its own identity. It prevented the constructive approach and necessary inquiry required for knowing role of values underlying research.
- **Ideological Reductionism:** The decline of Political Theory can be traced to 'Ideological reductionism'. "An ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis for organised to politics." Reductionism is the practice of analysing and describing a complex phenomenon in terms of it's simple or fundamental constituents especially when it is said to provide a sufficient explanation. According to Dante Germino (Beyond Ideology: The Removal of Political Theory) one of the major causes of the decline of Political Theory is colorful emergence of ideology or ideological reductionism.

Easton was not of course the only critic of 'normative' or 'traditional political theory '. There were other critics as well. To their voices were added those celebrating the "end of ideology " at least in the west .It was argued that major social problems had been resolved or were at any rate will on the way to being resolved.It was in this climate that Peter Laslett said " For the moment anyway, political philosophy is dead."

**Revival of Political Theory:** As opposed to decline or dead perspective commentators like Isaiah Berlin and John Plamentaz held that political theory could not die atleast when it parents politics loved. In 1960 Plamantaz wrote that political theory is still alive and as likely to remain so as any other subject as long as man continues to be a speculative enterprising animal. At

about same time Isaiah Berlin in a similar in spirit began an influential essay on the state of political theory and went on to deny that political theory was dead or even moribund.

Terrance Ball in his article 'Wither Political Theory?' asserted that political theory was in some quarters dead or dying yet it could not die. According to him decline of Political Theory debate can be better understood by drawing a provisional distinction between First and Second Order Theorising.

**First Order Theorising:** arises in connection with the activity of attending to the arrangements of one's society. So long as people live together in communities, fundamental questions will inevitably arise. Questions about justice and fairness, in distribution of duties and resources, what is due to whom and in what order, questions about offices and authority, questions about conceptual cum political demarcation, criteria to distinguish between matters that are political or public and those that are political or public and those that are non political or private etc. Plamentaz and Berlin said Political Theory understood as First Order Theorising could not die.

**Second Order Theorising:** consists of the activity of studying teaching and commenting on the 'classics' of political theory. Second order Theorising was mortal and almost discounted and ignored during the heyday of behaviouralism. Many who practiced Second Order Theorising were made to feel unwelcome. The death of political theory as claimed by many political scientists was related to academic discipline or Second Order Theorising. However in 1970s even this claim was proved to be premature and Political Theory even revived as an academic discipline.

#### **Decline of Behaviouralism corresponding to declining fortunes of Philosophical Positivism:**

Philosophical Positivism served as the foundation for behavioralism, which became well-known in the early 20th century. The Behavioral method was heavily inspired by positivism, a theory that holds that the only information that can be considered legitimate is that which is grounded in real sense experience and positive verification. This political science methodology focused on observable, quantifiable behaviors and phenomena and stressed empirical, data-driven study. It aimed to imitate techniques from the natural sciences in order to make the study of politics more objective and scientific.

However, behavioralism and philosophical positivism both started to lose ground and draw heavy criticism by the middle to late 20th century. The difficulties in applying positivism's rigorous empirical methodologies to the study of intricate human behaviors and social systems led scientists to realize the limitations of this paradigm. Opponents contended that because positivism relied so heavily on observable occurrences, it overlooked the significance of values, subjective experiences, and the interpretive component of social interaction in humans.

Political science behavioralism came under fire at the same time for its restricted attention to measurable facts, which frequently ignored the subtleties of political occurrences. Opponents argued that factual evidence alone is insufficient to completely understand politics since it is intricately entwined with historical, cultural, and ideological circumstances. A more comprehensive strategy incorporating theoretical, qualitative, and normative assessments was needed.

Therefore, A change towards a more pluralistic and inclusive approach in the social sciences may be observed in the collapse of both movements. The recognition of the complexity of social systems and human behavior, as well as the necessity for a variety of approaches to comprehend them, was signaled by this shift. New political science paradigms, such as the resurgence of political theory, critical theories, and interpretative techniques, which aimed to overcome the shortcomings of their forebears, were therefore made possible by the demise of behavioralism and philosophical positivism.

**End of the End of Ideology Debate:** Another factor is what Alasdair MacIntyre termed: the end of the end of ideology. From mid 1960s it became abundantly clear that ideology had not ended. On the contrary new political movements among students, blacks, women anti war activists were raising new questions and setting new agendas. **The war in Vietnam** raised and brought to forefront exactly the sorts of normative questions that political theory was supposed to address, questions about the rights and duties of citizens, about one's obligation to fight the state and about Just and Unjust wars , about active and passive resistance and related matters.

**John Rawl's A Theory of Justice (1971):** Political Theory received a notable boost in the early 1970s with publication of John Rawl's A Theory Of Justice '. His thinking about justice had a special importance and appeal for those who had lived through, thought about about and Participated in the civil rights anti war movements. The ' Original Position ' ' The Veil of Ignorance ' and the rest of Rawl's theory was nevertheless closely connected with real world politics mbIt dealt with pressing questions of rights, duties and obligations with justification of Civil Disobedience with his wholly original enquiry into intergenerational justice. Rawl's book proved to be an important factor in the revival of Political Theory within the academy.

Further the historical enquiries of Peter Laslett, John Pocock, Quentin Skinner, John Dunn and others among the new historian of Political Thought, the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas and the revived Frankfurt school. The Role of Ronald Dworkin and others in renewing interest of philosophy of law and to Michel Foucault important studies of the institutions ( prisons, civics, asylums) and other means by which modern men and women are constituted and disciplined.

### **Conclusion:**

After the above analysis, it is quite clear to us that political theory's flexibility and tenacity are demonstrated by its renaissance in the later half of the century. A major factor in revitalizing the subject at this time was the contributions made by a number of political scientists, who emphasized theoretical frameworks, critical analysis, and the significance of historical and cultural contexts for comprehending political processes. By incorporating ideas from other disciplines and adjusting to the changing complexity of the political realm, this renaissance not only brought political theory back to its previous status but also enhanced it.

This analysis has emphasized how political theory continues to be relevant and useful for gaining profound understanding of politics. It has demonstrated that political theory is a dynamic field that is sensitive to the shifting circumstances of the outside world rather than being static. As we enter the twenty-first century, it is evident that political theory has to keep developing,

questioning itself, and addressing the complicated and diverse character of politics in a world that is becoming more linked by the day.

At the end, we can say that the evolution of political theory throughout the course of the 20th century, with its ups and downs, is indicative of the ongoing effort to comprehend the political dimensions of human existence. For understanding historical events, negotiating the present, and imagining the foreseeable future of political life, this discipline is still essential.

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