

# Classical Political Philosophy PYQ 2022

## Q1. Critically evaluate the various approaches to the study of political philosophy.

**Ans.** The study of political philosophy has a long and complex history, with a wide range of approaches and methodologies. Some of the major approaches include classical political theory, liberal political philosophy, Marxist political theory, feminist political theory, postmodern political theory, and critical race theory.

**Classical political theory** is concerned with the ideal forms of political organization, as exemplified by the works of Plato and Aristotle. These philosophers sought to establish the foundations of a just and stable political system, based on principles such as the rule of law, democracy, and social justice.

**Liberal political philosophy**, on the other hand, is characterized by a focus on individual freedom and the protection of individual rights. This approach emphasizes the importance of limited government, the rule of law, and the protection of property rights.

**Marxist political theory** is concerned with the critique of capitalist society and the struggle for social and economic justice. This approach emphasizes the importance of class struggle and collective action, as well as the need for a socialist transformation of society.

**Feminist political theory** focuses on the ways in which gender shapes political power relations and the construction of political systems. This approach seeks to challenge patriarchy and promote gender equality, often through the recognition of women's perspectives and experiences.

**Postmodern political theory** emphasizes the importance of language, discourse, and cultural practices in shaping political power relations. This approach seeks to challenge dominant political narratives and power structures, often through the use of deconstruction and critical analysis.

Critical race theory is concerned with the ways in which race shapes political power relations and the construction of political systems. This approach emphasizes the importance of racial justice and the recognition of systemic racism, often through the recognition of the experiences and perspectives of marginalized communities.

**Each of these approaches has its own strengths and weaknesses**, and scholars continue to debate the most effective ways to study political philosophy. Some argue that a more interdisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from multiple disciplines, is necessary to fully understand the complexities of political power relations and the construction of political systems. Ultimately, the study of political philosophy is a vital aspect of understanding the structures and dynamics of political power in society.

## Q2. Philosophers are most suitable to rule', in the light of this statement, discuss Plato's views on Philosopher Ruler.

**Ans.** Plato, in his work "The Republic," presents the idea that the ideal form of government is one ruled by philosopher-kings or philosopher-rulers. Plato believed that philosophers were uniquely

suited to govern because they possess knowledge of the Forms, or eternal, unchanging truths, which enables them to understand what is truly good for society.

**According to Plato**, a philosopher-ruler is someone who has achieved a high level of philosophical understanding and has the ability to see beyond the surface-level of things to discern the true nature of reality. He believed that only those who have attained this level of knowledge and understanding can effectively govern a society.

Plato argued that philosopher-rulers should be chosen through a rigorous process of education and training, in which potential rulers would be tested and evaluated based on their ability to understand the Forms and apply that knowledge to governing. He also believed that philosopher-rulers should live a simple, austere life, focused solely on the pursuit of wisdom and the good of the society they govern.

Critics of Plato's idea of philosopher-rulers argue that it is elitist and undemocratic, as it assumes that only a select few are capable of governing. Moreover, they argue that the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom does not necessarily translate into effective governance, as there are other important skills and qualities, such as empathy and practical experience, that are necessary for governing a society.

**Overall**, while Plato's idea of philosopher-rulers may seem idealistic and impractical, it highlights the importance of education and knowledge in governance and raises important questions about the qualifications and qualities necessary for effective leadership.

### **Q3. What does Aristotle mean by saying that "The State is a Natural Institution"?**

**Ans. Aristotle's statement** "The State is a Natural Institution" reflects his belief that humans are naturally inclined to live in communities, and that the state is a necessary and natural institution that arises from this inclination. Aristotle believed that the state exists to promote the common good and that it is the most effective means of achieving the end of human flourishing, or eudaimonia.

Aristotle also believed that the state is a natural institution because it arises out of the natural social inclinations of human beings. He argued that humans are social creatures and that they naturally seek to associate with others and form communities. The state, therefore, is an extension of this natural tendency towards socialization and community formation.

Aristotle's view of the state as a natural institution has significant implications for his political philosophy. He believed that the state should be organized to promote the common good and that its laws and policies should be designed to promote human flourishing. He also believed that the state should be organized in a way that ensures that all members of society have a share in its benefits and that no one is excluded from its protection.

**Overall**, Aristotle's statement that "The State is a Natural Institution" reflects his belief that the state is an essential and natural part of human society, and that it has a crucial role to play in promoting the common good and ensuring human flourishing.

### **Q4. Discuss Aristotle's views on Citizenship.**

**Ans.** Aristotle's views on citizenship were shaped by his belief that the city-state or the polis was the highest form of human association. According to him, human beings were by nature social and political animals and therefore the city-state was a natural institution for them. In his view, citizenship was an essential component of the city-state and he believed that every citizen had a responsibility to participate in the political life of the city.

**For Aristotle,** a citizen was someone who was entitled to participate in the political life of the city-state. He believed that citizenship was based on a combination of two factors: birth and participation in the political life of the city. Thus, a person born of citizen parents was automatically a citizen. However, citizenship was not merely a matter of birth but also required active participation in the political life of the city.

Aristotle believed that the ultimate goal of citizenship was the common good of the city-state. In his view, the individual good could only be achieved through the good of the community as a whole. He believed that citizens had a duty to participate in the political life of the city-state in order to contribute to the common good. In his view, political participation was not just a right, but also a duty.

Aristotle's views on citizenship were closely linked to his ideas on the nature of the state. He believed that the state was an organic entity, and that its citizens were like the organs of a body. Each citizen had a specific function or role to play in the political life of the city-state. The state was responsible for providing the necessary conditions for citizens to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.

**In conclusion,** Aristotle's views on citizenship were closely linked to his belief in the importance of the city-state as the highest form of human association. He believed that citizenship was based on a combination of birth and participation in the political life of the city-state, and that citizens had a duty to participate in the political life of the city-state in order to contribute to the common good.

**Q5. Machiavelli is sometimes called as the first modern political philosopher". Do you agree? Give arguments in support of your answer.**

**Ans.** Yes, I agree that Machiavelli can be considered the first modern political philosopher. Here are some arguments to support this viewpoint:

**Secularization of political thought:** Machiavelli's political philosophy marks a departure from the medieval tradition of political thought, which was heavily influenced by religious and theological considerations. Machiavelli was one of the first political thinkers to develop a secular, pragmatic, and empirical approach to politics, which focused on the attainment and maintenance of power and the preservation of the state.

**Humanistic perspective:** Machiavelli's emphasis on the importance of human nature, human agency, and human interests in political affairs can be seen as a precursor to modern humanistic and individualistic political thought. Machiavelli believed that political action should be based on a realistic assessment of human nature and human behavior, rather than on abstract moral or theological principles.

**Realism in international relations:** Machiavelli's analysis of international relations is based on a realistic and pragmatic approach to statecraft, which is still relevant today. His writings on the

importance of military strength, diplomacy, and alliances are still studied by scholars of international relations.

**Focus on practical politics:** Machiavelli's focus on practical politics and the exercise of power is a key feature of modern political thought. His emphasis on the importance of the state, the ruler, and the citizenry in the exercise of power, as well as his advocacy of a strong and centralized state, can be seen as an important precursor to modern conceptions of the state and the role of government.

**Influence on later thinkers:** Machiavelli's ideas and writings have had a profound influence on later political philosophers, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, who are considered to be the founders of modern political thought. Machiavelli's political philosophy paved the way for the development of modern political thought, which is characterized by a focus on the state, individual rights, and democracy.

#### **Q6. Critically examine the Hobbes concept of Sovereignty.**

**Ans.** Thomas Hobbes was one of the most influential political philosophers of the seventeenth century. His concept of sovereignty, as laid out in his seminal work "Leviathan," has had a significant impact on political theory and practice. According to Hobbes, sovereignty is the absolute and indivisible power vested in the state, which is necessary to maintain order and prevent chaos.

Hobbes argued that individuals in a state of nature are driven by self-interest and are in constant competition with each other. This results in a state of war, where life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." The only way to escape this state of nature, according to Hobbes, is to enter into a social contract where individuals surrender their individual sovereignty to the state in exchange for protection and security. The state, then, becomes the ultimate authority, and its sovereignty is absolute and non-negotiable.

Hobbes' concept of sovereignty has been the subject of much debate and criticism. One criticism is that Hobbes' theory of the state is too authoritarian, as it places too much power in the hands of the sovereign. Critics argue that this undermines individual freedom and can lead to tyranny.

Another criticism is that Hobbes' concept of sovereignty does not account for the role of civil society and the importance of intermediary institutions such as the church, family, and local communities. These institutions, according to critics, play an important role in maintaining social order and promoting civic virtues.

**Moreover,** critics argue that Hobbes' theory is based on a flawed understanding of human nature. Hobbes' view that individuals are inherently selfish and competitive has been challenged by other political philosophers who argue that humans are capable of cooperation and altruism.

In conclusion, while Hobbes' concept of sovereignty has had a significant impact on political theory and practice, it has also been the subject of much criticism and debate. While some argue that Hobbes was the first modern political philosopher, others see his theory as overly authoritarian and based on a flawed understanding of human nature.

#### **Q7. Examine Locke's Theory of Property.**

**Ans.** John Locke's theory of property is one of the most influential and controversial concepts in political philosophy. In his seminal work "Two Treatises of Government," Locke argues that individuals have a natural right to property that precedes and exists independently of government. This right is based on the individual's labor and the mixing of that labor with natural resources.

Locke begins his theory by stating that in the state of nature, all individuals are free and equal and possess natural rights to life, liberty, and property. In this state, individuals are free to appropriate natural resources for their use, as long as they leave enough and as good for others. However, as the population increases, conflicts arise over the ownership of resources, leading to the establishment of civil society and the creation of government.

**According to Locke,** the purpose of government is to protect individual rights, including the right to property. He argues that individuals give up some of their natural rights to the government in exchange for protection and security. In this social contract, the government's legitimacy is based on its ability to protect individual rights, and if it fails to do so, the people have the right to overthrow it.

Locke's theory of property is based on the labor theory of value. He asserts that individuals have a natural right to the products of their labor, including the resources they have appropriated from nature. This means that if an individual works to transform a piece of land or a natural resource into something useful, they have a right to the ownership of that property.

**However,** Locke also imposes limitations on the right to property. He argues that individuals should only appropriate what they need and can use without waste. Additionally, individuals should not take more than they need to avoid depriving others of their natural right to resources.

**In conclusion,** Locke's theory of property is a significant contribution to political philosophy, emphasizing the individual's natural right to property and the government's role in protecting that right. However, it is also a controversial theory, as it imposes limitations on the right to property, and its application in modern society remains a topic of debate.

**Q8 Write short notes on any two of following:**

**a) Feminist approach to the study of Political Philosophy**

**Ans.** Feminist political philosophy is a perspective that focuses on the gendered dimensions of power and how they are reflected in political structures, institutions, and ideologies. Feminist scholars argue that traditional approaches to political philosophy have ignored or marginalized women's experiences and perspectives, and have failed to address the ways in which gender shapes political power and authority.

Feminist political philosophers explore a range of issues, including the nature of power, the role of the state, and the meaning of justice and equality. They also examine the intersection of gender with other forms of oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality.

One of the key contributions of feminist political philosophy is the recognition of the importance of the personal and the private in politics. Feminist theorists argue that traditional political theory has focused primarily on public institutions and processes, neglecting the impact of the family, the household, and other private spheres on the distribution of power and resources.

Feminist political philosophers have also challenged traditional conceptions of citizenship, which have historically been defined in terms of male norms and experiences. They argue that citizenship should be redefined to include the perspectives and experiences of women and other marginalized groups.

**In addition**, feminist political philosophy has sought to expand the scope of political analysis to include issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, which have historically been seen as outside the realm of politics.

**Overall**, feminist political philosophy provides a critical perspective on traditional approaches to political theory, and seeks to expand the scope of political analysis to include issues that have historically been marginalized or ignored.

### **Q8 b) Plato's theory of forms**

**Ans.** Plato's Theory of Forms, also known as the Theory of Ideas, is a central concept in his philosophy. According to Plato, there exists a realm of Forms, or Ideas, which are perfect and unchanging, and from which all material things in the visible world derive their existence and properties.

Plato believed that the Forms are objective and universal, existing independently of the human mind, and that they are more real than the things we see in the physical world. He argued that knowledge of the Forms is the only true knowledge, and that the pursuit of this knowledge is the highest goal of human life.

Plato's theory of Forms also has implications for his views on ethics and politics. He believed that there is an objective standard of goodness, which is embodied in the Form of the Good, and that this standard should be the basis for ethical and political decision-making. He also argued that the ideal society should be ruled by philosopher-kings who have knowledge of the Forms, and who can use this knowledge to govern justly and wisely.

Critics of Plato's theory of Forms have pointed out that it is difficult to prove the existence of a separate realm of Forms, and that the theory is too abstract and detached from the concrete realities of human life. However, many philosophers have found the theory to be a valuable tool for understanding the nature of reality and the role of knowledge and understanding in human life.

### **Q8 c) Machiavelli's view on human nature**

**Ans.** Machiavelli's view on human nature is a central theme in his political philosophy. He believed that human beings are inherently selfish and seek power and dominance over others. According to him, humans are motivated by fear and self-interest, and they will do whatever it takes to achieve their goals, including resorting to violence and deceit.

Machiavelli's view of human nature is evident in his most famous work, "The Prince," where he argues that rulers must be willing to act ruthlessly and without moral constraints to maintain their power. He believed that it is better for a prince to be feared than loved, as fear is a more reliable means of maintaining control over the population. In "The Discourses," Machiavelli also argues that

human beings are naturally inclined to dominate and subjugate others, and that this tendency is not limited to individuals, but also extends to entire nations.

**However**, it is important to note that Machiavelli's views on human nature are not entirely pessimistic. He also believed that human beings are capable of reason and can use it to overcome their base instincts. In "The Discourses," he argues that a well-governed state can channel the natural human desire for power and turn it into a force for the greater good.

**Overall**, Machiavelli's view of human nature is complex and nuanced. While he acknowledges the darker aspects of human behavior, he also recognizes the potential for rationality and positive change.

#### **Q8 d) Hobbes view on state of nature**

**Ans.** Thomas Hobbes was an English philosopher who lived in the 17th century. He is best known for his works on political philosophy, particularly his book "Leviathan," in which he presents his views on the state of nature.

Hobbes believed that in the state of nature, life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." In other words, without the rule of law and government, people would be in a constant state of war with one another, and life would be miserable.

Hobbes saw human beings as fundamentally self-interested, and motivated by a desire to avoid pain and seek pleasure. He believed that this drive for self-preservation would lead people to act in ways that are harmful to others, and that without a strong central authority to keep them in check, the state of nature would be a chaotic and violent place.

In order to avoid this state of nature, Hobbes argued that people must come together to form a social contract, in which they agree to give up some of their individual rights in exchange for protection and security provided by the government. This government, according to Hobbes, must be an absolute monarchy, with the power to enforce its laws and punish those who break them.

Hobbes' views on the state of nature and the need for a strong, centralized government have been controversial, and have been debated by philosophers and political theorists for centuries. However, his ideas have had a lasting impact on political thought, and have contributed to the development of modern political theory.