

Political Psychology: Concepts, Meaning, Significance and History

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ABSTRACT

Indian democracy is considered to be the largest democracy in the world. This study is done keeping in mind the intellectual boundaries between Political science and Psychology. Political psychology is an advanced scientific study of traits of human nature underlying political actions, and of the processes that in reality constitute government. It encompasses the behaviors like terrorism, act of voting, raise voice anti human well beings, in force to government to make policies for human development. Historical background: Although some men, such as Harold Lasswell, were studying the modern influence of psychology on politics before the 1920s, political psychology courses did not appear at any university until the early 1970s. An attempt has been made in this research paper to present briefly what is the importance of political psychology today.

Keywords: *Psychology, Political Science, Human Nature, Study, Indian democracy*

Elections are the foundation of a democratic system of government. People's representatives are elected through elections. Elected representatives work for the people of that nation. This picture of democracy can be seen in countries that have adopted democratic systems of government. In some countries, there are only two political parties, one ruling party and another opposition. In some countries, various big and small political parties are involved in politics. The aim of every political party is to run the country by coming to power. For this, they are looking for mistakes made by the ruling political party. Opposition parties force the ruling parties to take decisions for the welfare of the people. They also oppose the unconstitutional decision of the parliament and force it to be withdrawn. They are raising awareness among the people about the corruption committed by the ruling party. They use meetings, rallies, print media, electronic media, social media to create awareness. They also file lawsuits in court if necessary.

We know that many environmental factors influence human behavior. As individuals we are constantly changing in many ways. "Political behavior changes a person's personal nature. Political events have an effect on a person's attitude, goals, personality and motivations. These human characteristics are influenced by political stability and continuity. The simple process of learning by experience explains how our political actions can affect us" (Stone &

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Schaffner, 1988). Decisions made in Parliament have a direct and indirect effect on the social and mental health of the people of that country.

Psychology is the science of human behavior due to the fact that politicians and their political behavior can be studied in psychology. Political psychology explores the border that runs between the intellectual notions of Political science and Psychology. This study is done keeping in mind the intellectual boundaries between Political science and Psychology. It is because of these intellectual boundaries that political psychology has special significance. There are many such theories in psychology; They are used to help people understand politics, the personalities of politicians, their political games and political struggles. Therefore, the main purpose of this research paper is to understand the theoretical background of political psychology.

Objectives:

- To understand the definition and meaning of political psychology.
- To know about political behavior and significance of political psychology.
- To know the world history of political psychology.
- To know the contribution of scholars in the field of political psychology.

Significance of the Study

Political science discusses the number of elected candidates, the victories and defeats of candidates of various political parties, influential leaders and their followers, voters and power. Whereas psychology studies the mind and behavior of human beings.

1. The study of the combination of political science and psychology has special significance. Today the political leaders of every country are heavily corrupt; why do these leaders behave like this; why voters elected such corrupt leadership; why voters vote for a particular candidate and political party. Matters such as how leaders and parties win the hearts of voters; it can be better understood from a psychological point of view than political science (Mohamad et al., 2020).
2. Personality is widely studied in psychology. The study of political psychology can be a great guide for young people who want to enter politics for the first time. Young people will become aware of what qualities they need to develop for entry in politics. Similarly, the politicians who succeeded in politics to a large extent; the study of their personality can also inspire the younger generation (Julie Blais et al., 2021).
3. Politicians formulate policies on a wide range of issues such as education, jobs, various taxes, road transport, water transport, air transport, environment, villages, cities and employment too. All these policies have a positive and negative effect on the mentality of the citizens of that country. It has become imperative for every country to measure happiness index in the same way that GDP, development rate, and literacy rate is measured in the world (Laura Musikanski et al., 2017). This is because the voters fall prey to different temptations while voting and spend the next five years in misery. The task of measuring the happiness index of the people of a country can be done better through political psychology.
4. The politics of any country determine the future of its children, students and citizens as a whole. Therefore, citizens of any country should pay close attention to their government and its activities. Only then can true democracy flourish in that country. Therefore, along with the media in the country, the citizens also need to be vigilant. Political psychology can play an important role in educating the people. In a democratic country, the objective of political education is to prepare people to

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actively participate in the political process in order to understand and act on their civil rights, responsibilities. People should acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to various forms of political participation; they should be attentive to politics and able to make use of political information (Reichert & Nasroen, n.d.).

METHODOLOGY

In this research paper the researcher has used a descriptive research method. Therefore, the conclusions have been drawn on the basis of previous dissertations, books and research papers on the topic of political psychology. To fulfill the above-mentioned objectives, the researcher has reviewed the previous research. So, this research paper is descriptive research.

Definition and Meaning

Stone W.F.; Schaffner P.E. (1988) defines political psychology as follows: "If psychology is the science of experience, behavior and the interaction of individuals and groups, then political psychology is the science of political experience, political behavior, and the political interaction of individuals and groups." Political psychology seeks to understand the factors that influence who become a political leader; it also focuses on what qualities a person needs to have in order to become an effective political leader and under what circumstances the personalities and which experiences of political leaders are likely to shape their political careers, it is explored.

There are definitely some intellectual boundaries between the two sciences, political science and psychology. But there is a similarity between the two sciences that is human behavior. "Political psychology explores the border that runs between the intellectual nations of political science and psychology. It is a dynamic subfield that addresses the ways in which political institutions both affect and are affected by human behavior" (Jost & Sidanius,

Political psychology is an interdisciplinary branch of psychology formed from a combination of political science and psychology. Sociology, anthropology, international relations, philosophy, media, journalism and history play important roles in its establishment. Both subjects have a common interest in explaining human thought and behavior, but there are significant differences in the approach and features of the study of these two sciences. Political science adopts a collective approach to the study of human behavior. How political institutions and cultures are formed by focusing on political science monarchy; Focuses on this. In contrast, psychology studies behavior by adopting a more individualistic approach. Psychology focuses on political experience, emotion and motivation (Rosenberg, 2014).

Political psychology is a discipline that contributes to the understanding of the political behavior of both the upper-class ruling class and the common citizen. In every country there is a ruling class which is rich, highly educated, superior by race and caste. As this class uses all kinds of maneuvers to keep power intact, ordinary citizens are more likely to be exploited. Political psychology is the study of an influence of personality on leadership styles, the development of prejudices that distort political decisions, the root causes of racial prejudices, voting behavior, election campaigning and the causes and consequences of violent ethnic conflicts; there is science that studies central issues like this (Huddy L. & Jervis R., 2003).

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In politics each party has a specific political ideology. Political ideology gives shape to the party's activists emotions. The thoughts and emotions of political activists transferring into their political action. Political psychology is an advanced scientific study of traits of human nature underlying political actions, and of the processes that in reality constitute government (Mohamad et al., 2020).

Political psychology is an interdisciplinary academic field dedicated to the relationship between psychology and political science, with the focus on the role of human thought, emotion and behavior in politics (Dizon & Galvez, 2015).

Political Behavior

Any type of activity designed to meet some political end is called political behavior. It encompasses the behaviors like terrorism, act of voting, raise voice anti human well beings, in force to government to make policies for human development. Political behavior includes the study of decision-making both by voters and by elites in governing class people. It also encompasses various questions as diverse as why does casteism occur? Which influences people's voting behavior? Whether the members of parliament (MP) really work for the public or their self? What is the role of politicians in abolishing social and moral values? Why not see internal democracy in political parties?

All these questions are considered in political psychology. Today, such questions are the central part of research in political psychology. Within political psychology some psychologists are interested in mass behavior such as how people vote and the impact of public opinion on government policies. On another side some psychologists are interested in studying the explanations of political behavior influenced by social psychology, which emphasize the impact of social situations on behavior, and those influenced by cognitive psychology and the older tradition of abnormal psychology, which shows the importance of individual characteristics in shaping the way we behave.

Historical background

Although some men, such as Harold Lasswell, were studying the modern influence of psychology on politics before the 1920s, political psychology courses did not appear at any university until the early 1970s. Political psychology seems to have emerged as an interdisciplinary branch in the 1970s. The *International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP)* was started in 1977, their annual meeting in 1978 and the research journal were published in 1979 (Ginneken, n.d.). At the same time, a professional atmosphere began to form around the subject.

Many of the pioneers who conceptualized the academic field of study called "political psychology" came from Europe. In a deeper sense, the subject of political psychology is arguably as old as politics itself. When psychologists began to ponder the subject of politics, they asked themselves a psychological question, 'why do humans act under the influence of others?' Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau each developed concept such as the "state of nature." A real or hypothetical state in which the true nature of man is revealed without government.

In France, conservative thinkers such as Hippolyte Ten and Gustave Le Bon began to develop "scientific" explanations of human political psychology in the 1800s. In England - Political psychology was neglected in UK universities. But as early as 1908, Graham Wallace of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) published the book

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'*Human Nature in Politics*'. That book qualified him as the father of political psychology. In *Human Nature in Politics*, Wallace issued a warning to those who view every human decision and action as the result of a rational, intellectual process. Wallace says, 'When people become aware of their own mental processes, then they not only guard against the exploitation of those processes in themselves and in others, but also become more able to control them from within it.' (Houghton D. P., 2009).

Many theories found in political science operate at the level of the individual. In other words, they give more importance to the importance of context or the nature of time than to the nature of individuals. For example, you can take the theory of neorealists, which appears to attribute state behavior to a large extent to a nation's position in the international system. Marxism seems to give more importance to the role of individuals. Many theories emerging from Marxism, such as dependency theory and world-system theory, make much the same assumption.

McGuire identifies three important and broad stages in the development of political psychology as follows:

1. The era of personality studies in the 1940's and 1950's dominated by psychoanalysis.
2. The 1960's and 1970's era of political attitude and voting behavior studies characterized by the popularity of the "rational man" hypothesis.
3. The 1980's and 1990's ushered in an era in which political beliefs, information processing, and decision-making have a special focus. It is related to international politics.

Study Topics of Political Psychology

Study elements in political psychology can be very useful for educating students, teachers, political parties and society. Political psychology encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including political socialization, public opinion, voter behavior, collective political action, ideology, prejudice, political campaigns, policy making, ideological conflict resolution, terrorism, and genocide (Sloan, n.d.). Today is an essential study of these topics like racial prejudice, voter temptations, political violence, racism and sexism in politics, the use of religion in politics, the role of the media in elections, inequality in elections, electoral malpractice, distrust of voting machines, nationalism and patriotism. Psychology is such a field which not only touches but it will study well regarding all these topics.

CONCLUSION

1. "Political psychology is the study of an influence of personality on leadership styles, the development of prejudices that distort political decisions, the root causes of racial prejudices, voting behavior, election campaigning and the causes and consequences of violent ethnic conflicts; there is science that studies central issues like this". This definition of political psychology is found to be deeper and broader by considering different definitions.
2. Any type of activity designed to meet some political end is called political behavior. It encompasses the behaviors like terrorism, act of voting, raise voice anti human well beings, in force to government to make policies for human development.
3. In France, conservative thinkers such as Hippolyte Ten and Gustave Le Bon began to develop 'scientific explanations' of human political psychology in the 1800s. But as early as 1908, Graham Wallace of the London School of Economics and Political Science published the book '*Human Nature in Politics*'. McGuire identifies three

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important and broad stages in the development of political psychology as follows: 1940's and 1950's; 1960's and 1970's; 1980's and 1990's.

4. Many of the pioneers who conceptualized the academic field of study called 'political psychology' came from Europe. In France, conservative thinkers such as Hippolyte Ten and Gustave Le Bon began to develop 'scientific explanations' of human political psychology in the 1800s. Graham Wallace of the London School of Economics and Political Science published the book 'Human Nature in Politics' in 1908. Thus, we can see the contribution of various psychologists in the development of political psychology.

Limitations and Suggestions

1. As the paper tried to understand the basic concepts of political psychology, other concepts could not be understood in depth. A separate study can be done on definitions or history of political psychology.
2. Since the said research paper is of fundamental nature, contribution of Indian scholars could not be included. A separate research paper can be done on the contribution of Indian scholars in political psychology.
3. An attempt has been made in this research paper to present briefly what is the importance of political psychology today. But a separate research paper can also be done on this in depth review.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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