

**ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES AND POLITICAL CONFLICT :
A STUDY OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES AND POLITICAL CONFLICT: A STUDY OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**, submitted by Miss Sarabjit Kaur in fulfilment of nine credits for the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M. Phil)** of this University is her original work according to the best of my knowledge and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or of any other University.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The main theme of this work is to examine the relationship between the two variables - economic inequalities and political conflict, on the basis of the review of available literature, which has provided a theoretical perspective for understanding the nexus between them. But before examining the relationship between the two variables; the various economic determinants of political conflict; the outcomes that follow in contexts where there exists a direct link between economic inequalities and political conflict; and suggest measures to overcome inequalities in order to prevent the emergence of a conflict situation, it is pertinent to examine the two important concepts - (i) economic inequality and (ii) political conflict to facilitate a conceptual understanding of this study.

A. **Economic inequality**

The concept of economic inequality is a matter of great deal of disagreement amongst scholars.¹ This is further complicated by

1. Despite the profound implications of economic inequality; the subject has not occupied important position in the scholarly writings. This idea has been supported by economists like A.B. Atkinson. According to him in economics more importance is given to economic efficiency and macroeconomic problems than to the idea of economic inequality. The idea of distribution though given importance by classical economists like David Ricardo was however not adequate as they laid more emphasis on distribution among factors of production (land, labour and capital) and neglected the idea of distribution among persons engaged in economic activities. Thus, the information regarding inequality in terms of wealth, income and other resources is very limited. See, A.B. Atkinson, The Economics of Inequality (Oxford, 1983), edn. 2, p.1 and p.2.

the fact that the very concept has undergone changes over a period of time. According to Amartya Sen, the concept of inequity (or economic inequality) depends on the tolerance (or intolerance) of the people of the stratification and differentiation in the society. Thus, the Athenian intellectuals did not consider the issue of slavery in the discussion on equity; though in present times, the very idea of slavery would be considered obnoxious in any system of economic equality. Though economic inequality is a departure from the "right distribution" of some measure of economic significance amongst people, the agreement or disagreement about what should be considered for this right distribution makes this concept "both very simple and very complex".² But he notes that it is important to recognize that the perception of equity is crucial to relate inequality with the "...possibilities of actual rebellion" in the society.³

For this present study, the comment by A.B. Atkinson is very pertinent. According to him, the concept economic inequality basically refers to inequality that exists in terms of wealth and income.⁴ Either of these criteria has been utilised by theorists whose ideas have been incorporated in this work for understanding the link between inequality and political conflict. Among the

2. Amartya Sen, On Economic Inequality (Delhi, 1989), Preface.

3. Ibid., p. 1.

4. Atkinson, n. 1, p. 3. This idea has been equated by him to the meaning of inequality as given in Oxford English Dictionary where inequality refers to two different meanings-

(a) it stands for "disparity in magnitude or quantity" and

(b) it refers to "the fact of occupying a more or less advantageous position".

scholars who have concentrated on inequality that exists in terms of wealth are Aristotle, Euripides, James Madison, Alexis De Tocqueville and Karl Heinrich Marx. There are other scholars who have focussed on more concrete form of wealth i.e., land. Thus, by using land as a criteria, Samuel P. Huntington, Merle Kling, Bruce M. Russett, Edward J. Mitchell and Jack Nagel, have studied the relationship between economic inequalities and political conflict.

On the other hand, there are theorists like Raymond Tanter, Manus I. Midlarsky, Manoucher Parvin and Edward N. Muller who have studied inequalities in terms of income.⁵

According to Simon Kuznets, income inequality basically refers to the "...difference in income, without regard to their desirability as a system of reward or undesirability as a scheme running counter to some ideal of equality".⁶

The existing inequalities in the above mentioned forms further get aggravated by events like economic development, urbanization, modernisation and social change which are discussed further in Chapter II.

5. R.H. Tawney considers income criteria more important than wealth for according to him income provides the basic purchasing power for maintaining a standard of living. Some of the psychological theories which have been incorporated in this work do not specify the exact form of economic inequality.

6. Atkinson, n. 1, p. 4.

B. Political Conflict

"Political conflict is a contention among collective actors over the structures, incumbents or policies of a political regime and is a ubiquitous of a political regime feature of political life".⁷

Though scholars like Ted Robert Gurr have pointed in his work that there is no exact distinction in the social sciences generally or in conflict research specifically between the political and the non-political forms of conflict;⁸ yet there does exist certain distinguishing characteristics which enables one to differentiate between social conflicts and political conflicts. This differentiation can be brought out clearly in the following diagram. (Figure I)

The main components of the society are the individuals, the organizations, the institutions and the structures. In any society, conflict will arise as individuals or groups having their goals interact with one another; many of these conflicts do not become political, for some of them may be either unimportant and tend to fade away or they can be solved through the nonpolitical channels. This has been indicated in the Figure I by the "Political Channels Bypass". But, only those conflicts which enter the political process are the ones that acquire the form of political conflict.⁹

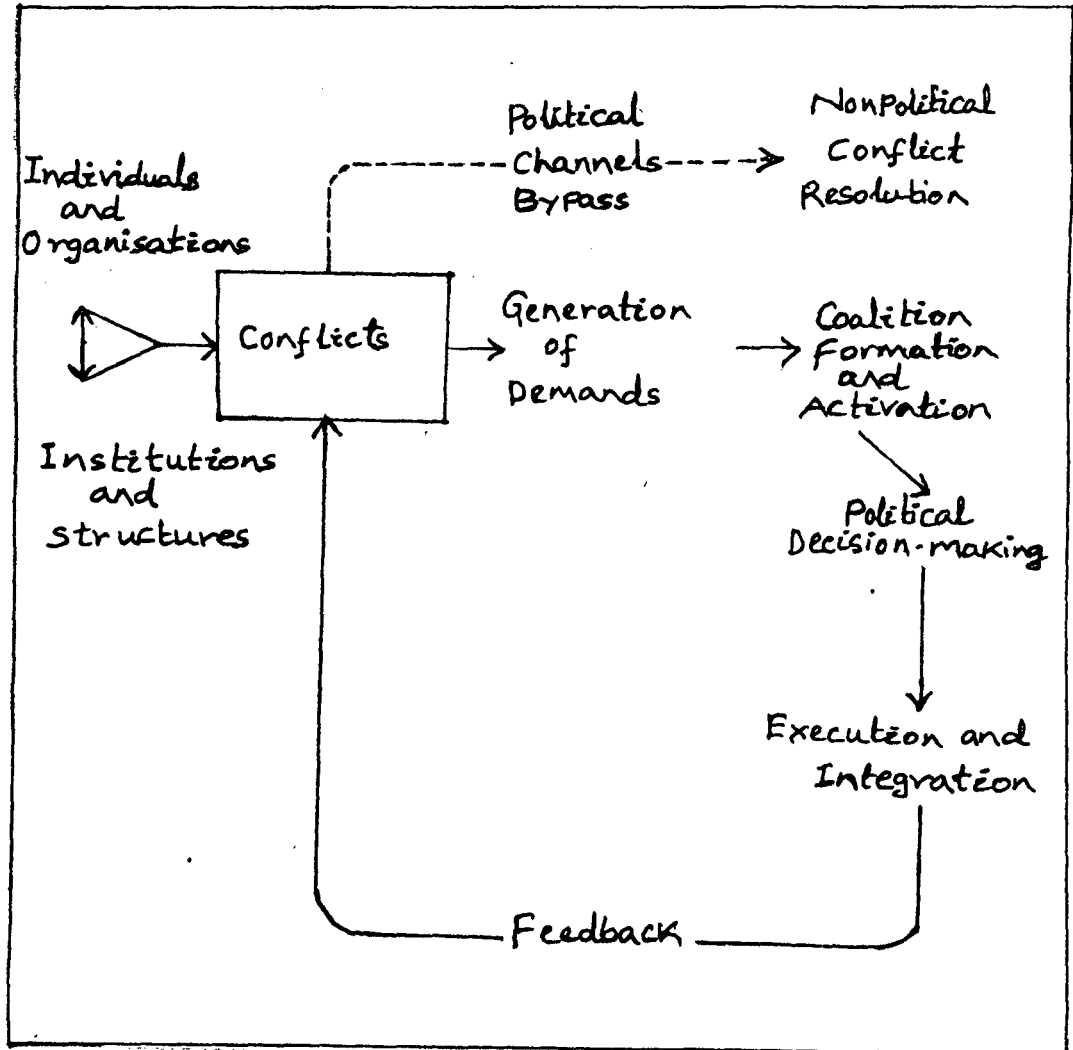
7. Mark Irving Lichbach and Ted Robert Gurr, "The Conflict Process: A Formal Model", Journal of Conflict Resolution (London), vol. 25, no. 1, March 1981, p. 4.

8. Ted Robert Gurr, ed., Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research (New York, 1980), p. 2.

9. Paul H. Conn, Conflict and Decision-Making An Introduction to Political Science (New York, 1971), p. 63.

Figure 1

Conflict Resolution and the Political Process



The phases of political conflict are:

- i. In the first phase, there takes place generation of demands where the participants strive for activation or politicization of their conflict with the hope of winning their case.
- ii. The second phase involves the political decision making where the participants of the conflict will try to put themselves in the most advantageous position.¹⁰ For this, they will have access to the resources, which will enable them to secure action favourable to their cause. In situations, where people will have limited resources in the form of limited time, money and organizational skills; in those situations people will enter into alliances with men who have similar cause. Thus, as a result of coalition formation, the participants are in a position to multiply their resources and strengthen the case for their demands.¹¹

In situations where the coalitions succeed in reaching the "political elites", in those situations some form of decision will be made. The decision taken can be favourable or unfavourable, satisfactory or unsatisfactory, which may be arrived at either as a result of compromise or coercion.¹²

10. Ibid., p. 63.

11. Ibid., p. 65.

12. Ibid., p. 64.

iii. The third phase involves the execution and integration of decisions. In situations where the decision is executed or implemented, the result will be that the conflict will be resolved - but in situations where this does not happen, in those cases, new conflicts will emerge and thus the entire process will begin again.¹³

Thus, political conflicts involve the state either as a party to the conflict or as the object of people's demands and perceptions.¹⁴

The two important levels at which political conflicts can take place are at the national level and at the international level. In this work, the emphasis is being laid on domestic conflicts that occur within nations. This subject is a matter of recent importance for it was only after the outbreak of revolutionary wars in the Third World and riotous protest in Western democracies that gave the major impetus to research on the subject in 1960s.¹⁵

The various forms in which political conflict can occur are - riots and clashes, coup d'etat, clandestine and armed attacks, civil war and revolutions.

Some scholars like Rudolf J. Rummel, Raymond Tanter have on the basis of their empirical studies put forward a typology of civil strife events. The general categories and "sub-categories" are:

13. Ibid., p. 64.

14. Gurr, n. 8, p. 2. A broader idea has been put forward by Harry Eckstein, who has regarded the occurrence of conflicts in all social units i.e., from family to the state as "political" for it involves the idea of authority.

15. Ibid., p. 5.

- i. **Turmoil:** This includes unstructured mass strife which is relatively spontaneous like demonstrations, political strikes, riots, political clashes and localized rebellions.
- ii. **Conspiracy:** This category of civil strife is characterized by high degree of organization and takes place on a small scale. It includes events like political assassinations, coups, mutinies, plots and purges.
- iii. **Internal War:** This form of civil strife is characterized by high degree of organization and by its operation on a large-scale. Under this category are included events which are accompanied by extensive violence like large-scale revolts.¹⁶

C. Nature of the Research Issue

The relationship that exists between economic inequalities and political conflict is of immense importance to the policy makers and of perennial interest to political scientists. However, it must be mentioned at the outset that the nexus that exists between the two variables is not a simple and straightforward one, but is a subject which has generated tremendous controversy. Yet, in this work, an effort has been made to put the existing literature on the relationship between the two variables under three broad categories, which have been identified in the following way:

16. Ted Gurr, "A Casual Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices", The American Political Science Review (Washington, D.C.), vol. LXII, no. 4, December 1968, p. 1107. This idea has also been utilised by scholars like Ted Robert Gurr.

The first category includes the viewpoints of those scholars who consider the occurrence of political conflicts as a function of economic inequalities and thus have established a positive linear relationship between the two variables. Under this category, one can incorporate the ideas of scholars like Aristotle, Euripides, Alexis de Tocqueville, James Madison, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Samuel P. Huntington, Merle Kling, Bruce M. Russett, Mancur Olson, Jr., Arthur Lewis, Betty A. Nesvold, and Wallace R. Conroe.¹⁷ Besides, some of the psychological theories of revolution have also been incorporated for a better understanding of the direct nexus between the two variables.

The second category includes the viewpoints of those theorists who do not consider the existence of economic inequalities as a necessary precondition for the outbreak of political conflicts. Under this category, ideas of scholars like Edward J. Mitchell, Mark Irving Lichbach and conservatives like Edmund Burke, have been analysed.

Under the third category is included the viewpoints of scholars like Jack Nagel who has regarded the occurrence of political conflicts at the intermediate level of economic inequality.¹⁸

17. Amartya Sen has also regarded the existence of a direct nexus between the two variables. According to him inequality leads to conflict and the occurrence of conflict leads to inequality. Refer to Sen, no. 2, p. 1.

18. For details of all three categories, see Chapter II.

Thus, one can say that different scholars have approached the subject in their own way on the basis of their own detailed analysis.

Nevertheless, for a scholar who is attempting to understand the nexus between the two variables, there are certain important things which should be borne in mind.

For understanding the true nature of the relationship between inequality and violence, one should not undermine the role played by certain mediating factors like -- affluence, rate of social mobility and the rate of social change.

The political implications of inequality can vary from impoverished to affluent nations. Thus, low absolute levels of wealth can play an important role in generating frustrations based on inequality, while affluence can offset these frustrations. Hence, one can say that the likelihood of political instability will depend not only on the manner in which wealth is distributed, but also on the amount of wealth available for distribution.

The impact of the rate of social mobility on violence varies from society to society. Thus, in societies, where the impoverished masses in a highly stratified system have chances of improving their lot in the foreseeable future, the chances of emergence of frustration are less and thus the level of violence will also be low.

The rate of social change also mediates between inequality and violence. Thus, those societies which experience rapid social change, the level of violence will be high inspite of a fairly equalitarian distribution.¹⁹

Besides, emphasizing the mediating factors, there are other variables (which have been emphasized by scholars like Doug McAdam in the "political process" model formulated by him) which should be given importance while understanding the link between economic inequality and political conflict which are:

- i. the level of organization that exists within the dissident groups;
- ii. their belief regarding the likelihood of success of collective protest; and
- iii. the structure of political opportunities which is available to them for fulfilling their demands.²⁰

Thus, in societies where the political structure is extremely repressive, the opportunity available for dissident groups to engage in collective action of any kind are very limited.²¹ On the other

19. Lee Sigelman and Miles Simpson, "A Cross-National Test of the Linkage between Economic Inequality and Political Violence", Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 21, no. 1, March 1977, pp. 108-109.

20. Edward N. Mueller, "Income Inequality, Regime Repressiveness and Political Violence", American Sociological Review (Washington D.C.), vol. 50, no. 1, February 1985, p. 48.

21. According to Gurr, the use of coercive potential can inhibit aggression. The existence of a linear relationship between coercive control used by the government and the occurrence of civil violence has also been emphasized by scholars like Neil Smelser and Chalmers Johnson.

hand, in a democratic regime the dissident groups will have more opportunities available to participate in a variety of ways in the political process.²²

Besides this, one should also emphasize the views of scholars like Ted Robert Gurr for understanding the link between the two variables. According to Gurr, the existence of structures in a society perform important functions for they provide men with alternative ways to attain value satisfaction and further they enable the discontented masses to express their dissatisfaction by resorting to non-violent means. Thus, for Gurr, the relationship between the level of institutionalization and strife is a linear one, which basically means that greater the institutionalization, the lower is the magnitude of strife.²³

Thus, one can conclude by saying that for a better understanding and for establishing a link between the two variables, it is essential that one should give importance to the contexts in which the study is being undertaken.²⁴

22. Ibid., p. 48.

23. Ivo K. Feierabend and others, Anger, Violence and Politics: Theories and Research (Englewood Cliffs, 1972), p. 186. Similar kind of viewpoints have also been expressed by scholars like Samuel P. Huntington in his work, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Heaven, 1971). William Kornhauser has emphasized the role played by structures to minimize mass movements.

24. For details, see, the viewpoints of Manus I. Midlarsky in the concluding part of Chapter II.

D. Framework of the Study

In Chapter I, the various economic determinants that play an important role in generating political conflict situation have been analysed. These determinants which are economic in nature have been categorised under four main categories. Of these categories, the fourth category is composed of sub-categories. By adopting such a devise, one can understand clearly the kind of link that exists between the various economic factors and political conflict.

In Chapter II the effort has been directed towards understanding the relationship between economic inequalities and political conflict at the domestic level, on the basis of the survey of the existing literature that is available on the subject.

Chapter III basically deals with the outcomes that takes place in situations where economic inequalities lead to the emergence of political conflict. For studying the consequences that occur as a result of outbreak of political conflict at the domestic level, works of different scholars have been incorporated. These scholars have made an attempt towards providing a theoretical framework for understanding the outcomes that take place.

Apart from providing a theoretical perspective, the consequences that take place when political conflicts occur, have been classified under two broad categories - negative and positive. Under each of these broad headings the viewpoints of various scholars have been included.

In conclusion, an effort has been made to reduce economic inequalities for in certain situations it has been regarded by some scholars as important factor that contributes to the outbreak of political violence. The task of curtailing economic inequalities has been assigned to the state. The state thus has to intervene in the economic sphere and has to undertake certain positive steps with the ultimate objective of reducing inequalities existing to the minimum possible and thus contribute towards the emergence of a peaceful political order.

CHAPTER - 1

ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS THAT LEAD TO CONFLICT

CHAPTER - I

ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS THAT LEAD TO CONFLICT

In all societies, some degree of latent political unrest exists. This is transformed into manifest political unrest by the operation of numerous determinants like religious, regional, ethnic, racial, linguistic and other communal or custom-based ties. But, in our thesis the main task is to look into the way important economic variables play a predominant role in the emergence of political conflict situation at the domestic level.

The various economic determinants of political unrest can be classified under the following main headings:¹

- i. Stationary Economic Determinants;
- ii. Temporal Economic Determinants;
- iii. Dependent Variables; and
- iv. Independent Variables

Let us now consider each determinant in detail.

i. Stationary Economic Determinants

The commodities and services which are essential for human existence can be broadly divided into necessities and needs. "A category of material and service necessities constitute a primary prerequisite of human biological existence. Furthermore, over

1. Manoucher Parvin, "Economic Determinants of Political Unrest: An Econometric Approach", Journal of Conflict Resolution (London), vol. 17, no. 2, June 1973, pp. 273-86.

and above these biological necessities, certain categories of commodities defined as socio-economic needs comprise the prerequisites of group - specific socio-economic membership".² Both these "... together constitute the commodity flow requirements for the maintenance of an ongoing level of the biosocial consumption process in a national social unit".³

The "biological necessities" and "group-specific economic needs" can play an important role in the emergence of political conflict.⁴ Political conflict situation may be generated when some members of an income class or group within a class experience a decrease in the ongoing commodity flow or expect a threat to the existing situation. Besides this, any unfavourable relative change in income can also generate a situation which will accelerate forces that lead to political conflict.⁵

However, the extent of political conflict will depend on the degree of change, i.e., whether the change is real or imagined, potential or manifest and on the level of consciousness that exists among the individual and groups regarding the change and its implications.

ii. Temporal Economic Determinants:

Besides, biological necessities and economic needs, which

2. Ibid., p.273.

3. Ibid., p. 273.

4. The existence of biological necessities and needs need not follow a sequential pattern for it may so happen that some members of the society may receive one or both and others may receive none of them.

5. Parvin, n.l, pp. 273-74.

are essential for human existence; men also have expectations. These expectations in due course of time take the shape of demands. Demands basically refer to those words uttered and actions undertaken which aim to bring about a change in the existing processes of production or distribution of commodities in either qualitative or quantitative sense, which will enable people to realise their expectations. Demands for change can be of two types - specific interest demand and general interest demand. For our purpose specific interest demand is more important than the general interest demand.

Specific interest demand refers to the demand for change made by an individual or group to realise his or their own private gains. This can be made possible if vertical mobility exists. Thus all those individuals, who possess abilities and yet are not in a position to achieve their goals; the result is that a situation of frustration emerges.⁶ Here, one can bring in the ideas that have been expressed by scholars like J.A. Geschwender. The occurrence of "Negro revolt" that took place as early as in 1964 has been explained in the following way:

the negro in the United States is handicapped by blockage in the circulation of the elite. He is acquiring the education which is normally the key to occupational mobility and economic gain. He is not experiencing as rapid a rate of occupational mobility and economic gain as he feels entitled to. As a result he is becoming increasingly status inconsistent and sees himself falling further and further behind the White. He feels relatively deprived and justly so. Therefore he revolts in

6. Ibid., p. 274.

order to correct the situation.⁷

The above situation refers to the individual demand for change, but besides individual demand for change, specific interest demand for change also includes group demand for change. They make such demand when certain changes that are introduced in the society lead to the emergence of frustration among them. Thus, frustration can emerge among certain groups, when as a result of technological achievements in the sphere of production as well as consumption, there takes place a decline in their relative or absolute economic position. Besides this, legislation or executive order which has an effect on the tax structure, tariffs and allocation of resources for welfare purposes can also lead to the changes in the structure of income distribution and thus contributing to the generation of frustration among groups.⁸ This frustration plays an important role in the emergence of aggression.⁹ Thus, one can agree with Edward N. Muller when he says - "...it is equally simple minded to dismiss psychological variables as being largely irrelevant to the study of aggressive domestic political conflict".¹⁰

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7. Alan Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness (London, 1977), p. 139. Similar ideas have also been expressed by scholar like Frank Parkin. According to him, the tension that emerges as a result of economic inequality can be overcome if the deserving members of the lower rungs of the society are allowed to experience vertical mobility. See, Frank Parkin, Class, Inequality and Political Order - Social stratification in capitalist and communist societies (London, 1971), pp. 50 and 52.
 8. Parvin, n. 1, p. 275.
 9. For the link between frustration and aggression see the second strand psychological theories discussed in detail in Chapter II.
 10. Ted Robert Gurr, ed., Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research (New York, 1980), p. 69.

iii. Dependent Variables:

The dependent variable that has been used by some scholars as a determinant of domestic political conflict is the number of people killed as a result of domestic group violence. Here, one can mention the names of scholars like Rudolf J. Rummel, Bruce M. Russett, Raymond Tanter and Manus I. Midlarsky.

Rudolf J. Rummel in his study undertaken for the period 1955-57, collected data on the number of people killed as a result of internal group violence.¹¹ Bruce M. Russett, in his case study undertaken of forty-seven countries for the period 1950-62, has also made use of this indicator, i.e., he has used the index of deaths per million people in order to know about the political instability situation.¹²

Tanter and Midlarsky in their study undertaken of seventeen countries for the period 1955 and 1960, have also made use of this dependable variable, i.e., they have taken deaths per million of the population in the revolution. Deaths per million of the population has enabled them to know about the extent of violence and also about the objective towards which it was directed. Hence, greater number of deaths was an indicator of the fact that the main objective was to have greater political and social restructuring.¹³

11. J.C. Davies, ed., When Men Revolt-and Why: A Reader in Political Violence and Revolution (London, 1971), p. 209.

12. Ibid., p. 209.

13. Stan Taylor, Social Science and Revolution (London, 1984), p. 81.

Thus, the use of the dependent variable - number of deaths resulting from political conflict is a useful indicator to know about the degree of political instability.

iv. Independent Variables:

(a) The first and most obvious independent variable is the average person's level of economic well-being. The absolute level of existing economic well-being (or deprivation) among the residents of a given country is measured by per capita income.

Per capita income includes not only the ability to acquire or consume goods and services but it also includes "minimum health and decency' standards, economic security, prestige acquired through one's occupation, and the distribution of these factors among the members of the society may also be important".¹⁴

Ronald G. Ridker, has pointed out that a person's feeling of economic well-being is determined not only by what he has in the present but also by what he expects in the future.

Further, Ridker has also emphasized the idea that feeling of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the economic conditions is affected not only by what one has and expects to have, but is also influenced by what one wants to have. This idea, according to Ridker, does not have much importance in the Western world for there rising aspirations are met with an

14. Ronald G. Ridker, "Discontent and Economic Growth", Economic Development and Cultural Change (Chicago), vol. XI, no. 1, October 1962, p. 3.

increase in income. But he says that in those countries where high levels of living have not been experienced by the people and further where alternatives to present conditions and the concept of economic progress itself cannot be taken for granted, in those countries "... the level of aspirations may be more important in explaining unrest than the realized or expected level of living; for, starting out from low levels, the former is more easily influenced than the latter".¹⁵

Aspirations and expectations thus, play an important role in the emergence of a frustration situation. The nexus between frustration and aggression¹⁶ has been very well established by the second strand of psychological theories.¹⁷

However, per capita as an indicator provides very little information regarding the relative percentage of national product devoted to private consumption and regarding the mode of production. Nevertheless, it does provide an explanation regarding the level of political unrest. The relationship between the two variables, i.e., per capita income and political unrest can be shown in the following way -

$$V = f_1(Y) \text{ ceteris paribus}$$

and $\frac{\partial V}{\partial Y} < 0$

where V is the level of violence and Y is the per capita income.

15. Ibid., p.4.

16. The people who resort to aggression take into account the cost of aggression. Thus, those who have little to lose are more inclined to use violent means than those who are better off.

17. For details, refer to Chapter II. pp.49-64.



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Thus, the relationship that exists between the two variables is an inverse one.¹⁸

(b) Income Distribution:

It has been seen in many societies, that the coexistence of extreme affluence and deprivation, are factors in the emergence of unrest situations for any level of income. According to Koichi Mera - "Historically disparity of income distribution has frequently been a cause of social unrest and was an important cause in political revolutions".¹⁹ He says that "Disparity of income levels between geographical areas, for example, between the North-East and the South in Brazil, or between social groups as in the United States or in the classical sense, between classes defined on the basis of ownership of wealth has been a heated political issue".²⁰

The significance of income distribution has been very well demonstrated by Koichi Mera by giving the illustration of events like - Cuban Negro riots that took place in the late 1960s and the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. This idea of income distribution thus holds great deal of importance both to the developed and the developing countries.²¹

Thus, the index of inequality in income distribution, which is a measure of relative well-being or deprivation is denoted

18.. Parvin, n.l, pp.279-80.

19. Koichi Mera, Income Distribution and Regional Development (Tokyo, 1975), Preface, p. V.

20. Ibid,, Preface. P. V.

21. Ibid,, Preface. P. V.

by "A" is regarded as an important factor of "V". The existence of direct relationship between frustration experienced by low-income individuals and income inequality within a given society can be described in the following way:

$$V = f_2(A) \text{ ceteris paribus}$$

and $\frac{\partial V}{\partial A} > 0$

where V stands for violence and A for inequality in income distribution.²²

c. **Income Growth:**

By percentage growth rate of per capita income "G", one can measure the society's ability to meet the growing demands of its members. It is thus a measure of the rate of realization of general as well as group specific interest demands. Income growth from an individual's point of view, is the rate of fulfilment of his long run and short-run expectations. Individuals or groups calculate the cost of violence by the rate of income growth. Thus, higher rate of income growth is associated with greater value of the future income flow and with greater level of employment in the present. In such a situation the cost of violence, from an individual's point of view is higher. Whereas, in situations, where the rate of growth of income is low, the present value of future income is small and thus, the cost of violence is low. In the first situation, the individual or the group has a future to think of and in the second instance the individual or the group has nothing to lose.²³

22. Parvin, n.l, p.281.

23. Ibid., pp. 281-82.

Thus, one can say that the relationship between the two variables, income growth and political conflict is an inverse one.

d. Socio-economic Mobility:

Another very important independent variable that serves as a determinant of political conflict is - socio-economic mobility. It is a measure of the rate of realization of individual specific interest demand.

Among the various factors that enhances socio-economic mobility, one such factor is the level of education. It is generally assumed that the incomes of individuals rise with the level of education they have received; and the more unequally education is distributed, the greater will be the inequality of income. This idea has also been supported by the studies carried out under the World Employment Programme.²⁴

Thus, the level of education is key to socio-economic mobility. But in situations where higher education does not lead to socio-economic mobility the result is a situation for the emergence of political unrest is generated.²⁵ Here one can bring in the ideas expressed by Ekkart Zimmermann, who says:

24. Jacques Lecaillon and others, Income Distribution and Economic Development: An Analytical Survey (Geneva, 1984), p.87. The reasons that have been put forward by Jacques Lecaillon and others for income inequality owing to education are - (a) higher level of education improves the earning capacity of the individuals (b) the quality of education received can also act as an important factor for generating inequality in spite of attaining the same level of education.

25. Similar kind of ideas have been expressed by Geschwender while providing explanation for the occurrence of Negro revolts of 1964.

The expansion in the educational system and the comparatively limited growth in the economy and in the occupational structure (lead to) a vast and nearly uncontrollable increase in the number of unemployed and underemployed school leavers, whose political orientation toward the polity is marked by disaffection and alienation and whose behavioural disposition is basically anomic.²⁶

Apart from lack of mobility which plays a significant role in the emergence of political unrest situation, increased mobility also plays an important role in the emergence of frustration situation which then leads to aggression for in situation of increased mobility the demands of the individuals are not fulfilled.

Thus, by assuming that socio-economic mobility is inversely related to political unrest, we can say:

$$V = f_4 (M) \text{ ceteris paribus}$$

$$\text{and } \frac{\partial V}{\partial M} < 0$$

where V stands for violence and M stands for measure of socio-economic mobility represented by a composite index of education.²⁷

26. Gurr, n.10, p. 181. For details see under Gurr's viewpoint expressed in Chapter II.

27. Lee Sigelman and Miles Simpson, in their cross-national study of 49 nations, have put forward the viewpoint that quantitative data regarding social mobility is difficult to collect. Hence, they have measured socio-economic mobility in terms of educational enrollments. See, Lee Sigelman and Miles Simpson, "A Cross-National Test of the Linkage Between Economic Inequality and Political Violence", Journal of Conflict Resolution vol. 21, no.1, March 1977, pp. 113-14.

e. **Communication**

Technological progress in communication has had an enormous impact on human life. As a result of communication people's awareness of the world has increased. This increase in awareness has played an important role in bringing them in contact with the living habits of others and thus overcoming the barriers imposed by natural boundaries.²⁸ As a result, people's expectations show an increase. In order to meet the rising expectations, demands are made on the political system. When these demands are not fulfilled, the result is that there emerges dissatisfaction which finally culminates into political unrest situation. The level of political unrest is accelerated when the rate of rising expectations is greater than the ability to fulfil the demands made by individual or groups.²⁹

Furthermore, communication media enables individual or groups to know about conflicts and inconsistencies within a government.

Thus, one can agree with the views expressed by Irma Adelman and C.T. Morris that "... modern media systems are an important mechanism both for diffusing thought patterns and demands for industrial products and for inducing greater participation in national political systems".³⁰

28. Paul H. Conn, Conflict and Decision Making: An Introduction to Political Science (New York, 1971), p.121.

29. Parvin, n.l, p.284.

30. Irma Adelman and Cynthia Taft Morris, Economic Growth and Social Equity in Developing Countries (California, 1973), p.29.

Thus, one can say the communication media accelerates the process of emergence of political conflict situation. This idea has been supported by scholars like Samuel P. Huntington. According to him, factors like urbanization, education and media contribute towards increasing people's expectations and aspirations which when unfulfilled generate a situation of political unrest.³¹

f. Urbanization:

According to Joan Nelson, irrespective of the extent of urbanization in the developing world, the cities are growing at the rates of 5 to 8 per cent annually.³²

Such a rapid growth, according to Joan Nelson has far-reaching social, economic and political consequences. As the process of urbanization continues, natural growth and migration between cities come to dominate the process.

Few years back, some scholars like Arthur Lewis and Richard Jolly, regarded the process of rural-urban migration as an important factor that contributed towards the process of economic development. For it was thought that as a result of rural-urban migration, surplus labour from the rural areas, where their marginal productivity was often zero could be withdrawn to provide manpower for urban industrial growth.

31. Gurr, n. 10, p. 181. However, Gurr et al. have in their report accepted a negligible or negative relationship between expansion of the mass media and measures of political violence.

32. Joan Nelson, "The Urban Poor: Disruption or Political Integration in Third World Cities?" World Politics (Princeton), vol. XXII, no. 3, April 1970, p. 393.

However, in due course of time, the above idea has lost its importance. For it has been seen in most of the developing countries that the rates of rural-urban migration exceeds the rates of urban job creation and it surpasses greatly the absorption capacity of both industry and urban social services. The result of which is that the problem of urban surplus labour emerges which accelerate the already existing problem of ^{urban} unemployment, caused by economic and structural imbalances between urban and rural areas.³³

Migration not only contributes to the problem of urban surplus labour, but it also, as pointed by some scholars like Gunnar Myrdal, leads to the emergence of the problem of income inequality for migration is selective in nature particularly as far as age group to which one belongs is concerned; and proves to be beneficial only for the rapidly growing communities.³⁴ Similar viewpoints have also been expressed by scholars like William Loehr and John P. Powelson.³⁵

Further, as a result of urbanisation there takes place a rapid increase in people's expectations without a simultaneous increase in the means of achieving them, and thus leading to the

33. Michael P. Todaro, Economic Development in the Third World (New Delhi, 1985), p. 253. The problem of urban surplus labour is further increased by the fact that most of the people who migrate from rural to urban areas have little or no education and have few skills.

34. Bernard Okun and Richard W. Richardson, "Regional Income Inequality and Internal Population Migration", Economic Development and Cultural Change, vol. IX, no. 2, January 1961, p. 131.

35. William Loehr and John P. Powelson, eds., Economic Development, Poverty and Income Distribution (Colorado, 1982), Preface, p. xi.

emergence of frustration situations.³⁶

The net result is that discontented groups emerge which include both the new urban migrants and the long-term residents. These groups then play a very important role in the emergence of political conflict situation.³⁷

Apart from the above mentioned factors that serve as economic determinants of political conflict, there are some scholars who have suggested other factors like social change and modernity which for them play a significant role in the occurrence of political conflicts³⁸ and aggravating the already existing conflict situations that are economically determined.

Thus, one can conclude by saying that it is the desire of economic well-being or economic deprivation which acts as an important force for accelerating political action in general and manifest political unrest in particular.

36. According to scholars like James A. Bayton, the feeling of frustration is further aggravated by the "visible signs of affluence" that exists in the rest of the society. See, James A. Bayton, Tension in the Cities: Three Programs for survival (London, 1971), p.10.

37. The link between urbanization and political conflict has very well been established by economists like Mancur Olson, Jr., when he says that migration from rural areas takes place with the aim of earning more income but when the aspiration is not fulfilled then destabilizing mass movements begin taking their shapes. See, Davies, ed., n.11, p.218.

38. For details, refer to Chapter II, pp.46-47.

CHAPTER - II

**ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES AND POLITICAL CONFLICT:
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

**ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES AND POLITICAL CONFLICT:
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The relationship between economic inequality and political conflict is a matter of great deal of debate amongst scholars who have directed their efforts towards providing a theoretical perspective on this subject. Nevertheless, in this work an endeavour has been made to classify the existing available literature under three main categories and thus provide a basis for understanding the link between the two variables. The categories are:

- (A) This deals with those theories which postulate the existence of a direct nexus between economic inequalities and political conflict.
- (B) Under this category are included the works of those scholars who on the basis of their study do not consider the prevalence of economic inequalities as a necessary precondition for the outbreak of political conflicts.
- (C) This category deals with the work of a scholar who on the basis of his study has regarded the occurrence of political violence at the intermediate levels of economic inequalities.

Let us now examine each of the three categories in detail:

- (A) Most of the scholars from Aristotle to Karl Heinrich Marx and Alexis De Tocqueville have regarded the existence of economic ...

inequalities as an important factor for the generation of political conflict.¹

Aristotle in his work, The Politics has regarded the existence of inequality, in terms of inherited virtue and wealth, as an important factor that leads to the emergence of divisions in the society.² According to him, it is the desire to overcome economic inequality that men resort to political conflict.³

Similar kinds of viewpoints have been expressed by Euripides and Alexis De Tocqueville.⁴

The existence of a direct link between economic inequality and political conflict has also been postulated by eminent political philosophers like Karl Heinrich Marx.

The idea of revolution is the keystone of Marx's theoretical work.⁵ It is because of this that Frederick Engels regarded Karl

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1. Manus I. Midlarsky, "Rulers and the Ruled: Patterned Inequality and the Onset of Mass Political Violence", The American Political Science Review (Washington, D.C.), vol. 82, no. 2, June 1988, pp. 491-92.
 2. Aristotle, The Politics (Translated by T.A. Sinclair, Revised and Re-Printed by Trevor J. Saunders) (Middlesex, 1981), p. 297.
 3. Lee Sigelman and Simpson Miles, "A Cross-National Test of the Linkage between **Economic** Inequality and Political Violence", Journal of Conflict Resolution (London), vol. 21, no. 1, March 1977, p. 106 .
 4. J.C. Davies, ed., When men revolt-and why: A Reader in Political Violence and Revolution (London, 1971), p. 206.
 5. The idea of revolution has been expressed by him in the political pamphlets on the 1848 events, the coup d'etat of Louis Bonaparte and the Paris Commune. His major work, Capital alongwith his other economic writings have been regarded essentially dealing with revolution.

Marx "before all else a revolutionist". For Marxism, socialism or communism which stood for a radically new state of the world, and of man in the world could be achieved by adopting revolutionary means. It is because of this that Marxism is different from the main currents of earlier socialist thought and socialist movements.⁶

Marx's ideas on revolution can be well understood by linking it with the existence of economic inequalities prevalent in the society. The chief instrument that has been regarded by him as the basis of economic divisions in the society, is the institution of private property.⁷ Marx, hence put forward a materialistic interpretation of history which provides a framework for his theory of revolution. According to him:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society comes into conflict with the existing relations of production or - this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms - with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of

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6. Robert C. Tucker, The Marxian Revolutionary Idea (London, 1970), p.3, p.4 and p.5.
7. Allen Oakley, Marx's Critique of Political Economy: Intellectual sources and Evolution, vol. I: 1844 to 1860 (London, 1964), p. 80,

the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.⁸

According to Marx, ever since the primitive times, the society of production has been characterized by divisions for there has existed a class of producers on one side and on the other, the class which owned and controlled the means of production and thus appropriated the producer's surplus as private property.⁹ In the Manifesto of the Communist Party he remarks:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.
Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another...."¹⁰

According to Marx, the modern bourgeois society that has emerged after the collapse of the feudal society, has simplified the class divisions in the society for it is composed of two important classes i.e., of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, who stand in opposition to one another.¹¹

8. Ibid., p. 103.

9. Tucker, n. 6, p. 13.

10. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party (Moscow, 1975), pp. 40-41.

11. Ibid., p. 41.

The nature of conflict generated by economic inequalities in the society has undergone changes with the changes in the mode of production, which plays a significant role in determining the character of the society.¹²

Thus, one can say that Marx has regarded the idea of conflict as inherent in societies which are marked by the existence of class divisions. According to Marx, this conflict which has its root in the prevalence of economic inequalities can be brought to an end when the exploited classes become "class for itself".¹³ Thus, in the case of bourgeoisie society, the working class is a mere mass but the generation of consciousness amongst them enables them to become a class.¹⁴ This paves a way for the outbreak of political revolution which leads to the overthrow of the existing state and the capturing of political power by the revolutionary class. However, for Marx, social revolution is more important than the political revolution¹⁵ for the former leads to the creation of a new

12. In the ancient society, the mode of production was the slave labor; in feudal society, it was serf labor and in the modern bourgeoisie society it is the wage labor. See, Tucker, n. 6, p. 15.

13. According to Marx, it is not the material powers of production that revolts against the mode of production but the men that are involved in the production process. Thus, in the Marxist literature, the idea of rebellion is not understood in mechanistic terms. See, Tucker, n. 6, p. 16.

14. Ralph Miliband, Marxism and Politics (Oxford, 1977), p.22 and p. 23.

15. Here, one can distinguish between Marx and V.I. Lenin as far as their viewpoints on political revolution are concerned. Lenin has regarded the political revolution as theoretically as well as practically more important than the social revolution.

society whereas the latter has been regarded by him as merely a momentous incident which occurs at the climax of the process.¹⁶ However, a social revolution is inconceivable without its political aspects and thus includes the idea of a political revolution.¹⁷

The main objective of Marx for carrying on a revolution is to bring to an end the unjust economic divisions prevailing in the society.

Thus, one can say that the idea of revolution which is the central theme of Marxist thought has its roots in the prevalence of economic inequalities existing in the society for it is the rebellion of the productive powers against the existing social relations of production which leads to a class warfare in the economic arena; culminating in the political act of revolutionary overthrow of the state.

According to Marx's pupil, Frederick Engels, political violence takes place at the time when political structures are not synchronized with socioeconomic conditions.¹⁸

Many years later, James Madison in The Federalist No. 10 considered inequality in terms of distribution of property as the

16. Tucker, n. 6, p. 11.

17. Every revolution brings to an end the existence of an old society and thus it is social. A revolution is political to the extent that it leads to an overthrow of the old authority. Thus a revolution becomes a political act when it leads to the overthrow of the existing power and the collapse of the old social relations. See, Paul G. Lewis. The Politics of Revolution (Walton Hall Milton Keynes, 1979), p. 74.

18. Sigelman and Miles, n. 3, p. 106.

"most common and durable" source of political faction.¹⁹

The existence of socioeconomic inequalities being an important factor that leads to conflict has also been emphasized by scholars like Lewis A. Coser.²⁰

Some scholars by making use of land as an indicator, have established a direct link between economic inequality and political conflict.

According to Samuel P. Huntington in situations where land-ownership is equitable and the peasants living conditions are viable, in those situations revolutions are unlikely. But in situations, where the peasant lives in poverty and the land is unequally distributed, chances of occurrence of political violence are likely.²¹

The political instability of Latin America has been linked by scholars like Merle Kling to inequality that exists in the form of large concentration of land in the hands of a few people. Those who possess vast tracts of land are the people who can concentrate wealth. For the rest of the people, the only avenue open is government services; where there exists an open

19. Ibid., p. 106.

20. Ibid., p. 106.

21. Edward N. Muller and Mitchell A. Seligson, "Inequality and Insurgency", The American Political Science Review, Vol. 81, No. 2, June 1987, p. 425.

competition and thus some gains can be made. As far as the have-nots are concerned, they in order to remedy their position, are even willing to risk their lives through coups and rebellions.²²

The use of land as an indicator has also been made use of by scholars like Bruce M. Russett. He has emphasized some of the advantages of using land as an indicator. One such advantage of which he talks is - data regarding land distribution can be easily collected whereas this is not an easy task if one makes use of other economic indicators like income.

In order to measure inequality that exists in terms of land ownership, he has made use of three indicators. The first two indicators relate to relative size of farms and the third one relates to tenancy. The details of these indicators are:

- (i) "The percentage of landholders who collectively occupy one-half of all the agricultural land (starting with the farmers with the smallest plots of land and working towards the largest)"²³
- (ii) "The 'Gini' index of concentration."²⁴ Russett begins by drawing a Lorenz curve, which is drawn by joining the points given in a cumulative distribution. He has ranked the farms

22. Davies, n. 4, p. 206.

23. Ibid., p. 207.

24. Ibid., p. 207.

from the smallest to the largest so as to find out what proportion of the total number of farms accounts for a given proportion of the total area of agricultural land. This has been illustrated by means of a diagram (2.1). The X axis represents cumulated percentage of farm and Y axis represents cumulated percentage of land. The condition of perfect equality has been depicted by drawing a line at forty-five degree angle. According to Russett, one can know about the inequality existing by seeing how far is the curve (showing a particular distribution) from the "line of equality".²⁵ Russett thus makes use of the Lorenz curve for knowing the pattern of distribution. However, he points out that one cannot carry on a comparative study by means of Lorenz curve.

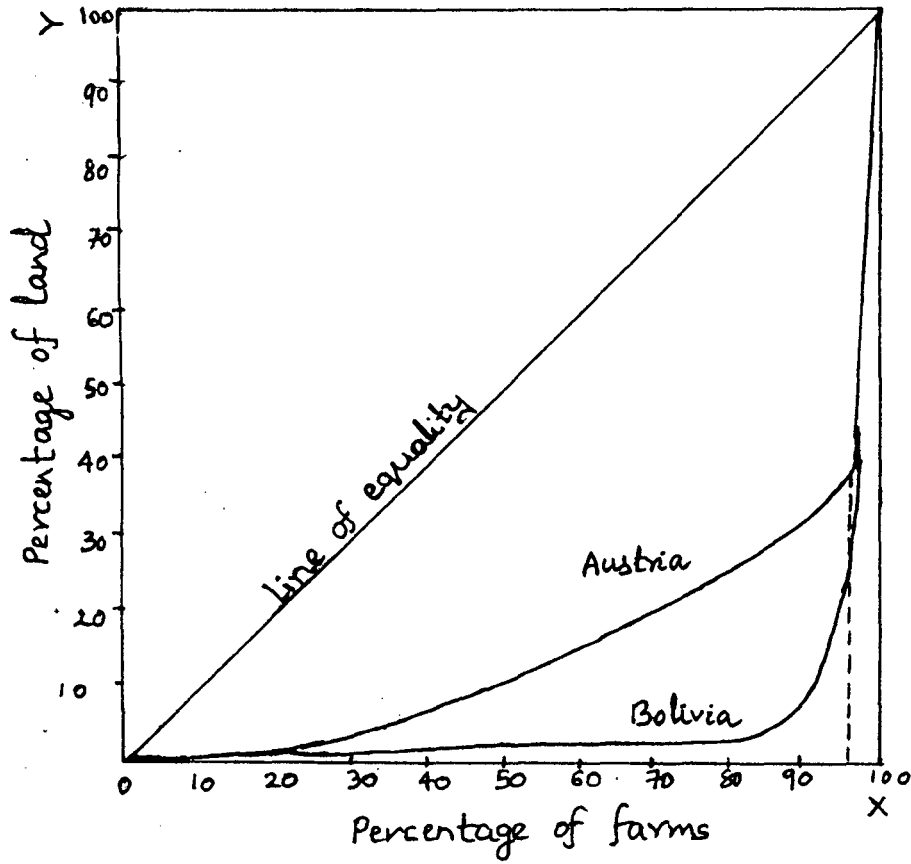
The diagram has been used by him for knowing the Gini index which can be found out by measuring the area between the cumulated distribution and the line of equality. According to Russett, the higher the Gini index, the greater will be the level of inequalities.

These methods have been used by Russett to find out the level of inequality existing in Austria and Bolivia. The conclusion at which Russett arrived is that the top 10% of the Bolivian population owned 95% of the land whereas in the case of Austria, the top 10% of farmers owned only 65% of the land. Thus, the root cause of instability existing in Bolivia has been linked by him to inequality existing in terms of land ownership.

25. Ibid., p. 208.

Diagram 2.1

Lorenz Curves of Land Distribution: Austria and Bolivia



Source: Davies

(iii) Ownership of land: He says that a person may own some land, but it may so happen that major portion of the produce may go away to the landlord by way of revenue. The result will be that the position of the person becomes similar to a person who owns a small plot of land. Russett thus has presented data where the farm households rent all their land as a percentage of the total number of farms.

Russett points out that though problems do exist in measuring inequality in terms of land ownership but it is all the more difficult to find a satisfactory definition for stability. In order to measure stability he has made use of four indicators. The details of these indicators are -

(i) The term of the office of the chief executive: In the index used by Russett, the numerator indicates the number of years from 1945-61, the years during which the country was independent and the denominator indicates the number of individuals who held the post of chief executive during the same period. On the basis of his calculation, Russett came to the conclusion that the index of "personal instability" can vary from 0 to 17. In the sample used by Russett, the highest figure is 16.32, i.e., for France.²⁶

(ii) In order to measure the degree of stability he has collected data on the number of people killed in internal group violence like civil wars, revolutions and riots. The time

26. Ibid., p. 209.

span that has been used by Russett is from 1950-62 and during this period he has calculated the deaths per million people.

(iii) In alternative to the above indicators, Russett has made use of Harry Eckstein's data on internal war for the period 1946-61 where he has included all violent incidents from plots to protracted guerilla warfare.

(iv) This indicator deals with the stability of democracy. Here, he has borrowed ideas from Seymour Martin Lipset who had made a distinction between stable democracies, unstable democracies and dictatorships. This classification has been shown by Russett in the form of a Table. (See, Table: 2.1)

Russett has in his study classified the forty-seven countries into stable democracies, unstable democracies and dictatorships by making use of land as a criteria for measuring the inequality and thus establishing a link between economic inequality and political conflict.

The correlation coefficients for measures of land equality with the measures of political instability for the forty-seven countries has also been shown by Russett in the form of a table. (See, Table: 2.2)

Table: 2.1

**Stable democracies, unstable democracies, and dictatorships
by degree of inequality in land distribution**

Gini Index	Stable Democracies	Unstable Democracies	Dictatorships
Greater than Median Equality	Denmark Canada Switzerland India Philippines Sweden Belgium Ireland Netherlands Luxembourg Norway United States United Kingdom	Japan France Finland West Germany	Yugoslavia Poland Taiwan South Vietnam Libya Panama
Median Equality or Less	New Zealand Uruguay Australia	Austria Greece Italy Brazil Colombia Argentina Costa Rica Chile	Egypt Honduras Nicaragua Spain Cuba Dominican Rep. El Salvador Guatemala Ecuador Peru Iraq Venezuela Bolivia

Source: Davies

Table 2.2

Correlation Coefficients (r) for measures of land equality with
measures of political instability for forty-seven countries

	personnel Instability	violent Political Deaths (per 1,000,000)	Eckstein Internal War Data
Percentage of Farms with $\frac{1}{2}$ land	.24	.45	.35
Gini Index	.33	.46	.29
Percentage of Farms Rented (44 countries only)	.01	.27	.11

Source: Davies

In Table 2.2, Russett has shown the correlation coefficients (r) which indicates the degree of association between each of the three measures of land distribution and each of the first three indices of instability.

According to Russett, there exists a positive relationship between the three indices of inequality and instability. For Russett, the highest correlation exists between violent deaths and Gini index and in the other two instances the correlation is extremely slight. According to Russett, the correlation is quite high with a level of significance of .001. However, Russett points out that what these correlation indicate is that much remains unexplained for even the highest (.46) gives a r^2 of only .21.²⁷

27. Davies, n. 4, p. 212.

Inequality, according to Russett can be best measured by taking into account the Gini index and the percentage of population engaged in agriculture. Nevertheless, Russett does agree to the fact that inequality in terms of land distribution does lead to political instability but the relationship between the two indicators is not a strong one and thus other facts should be taken into account for understanding the link between the two variables. Similar viewpoints have also been expressed by Merle King when he says that the relationship between inequality and instability is direct only in the case of agricultural countries where because of the existence of small plots of land, one has to accept the condition of poverty. He however points out that such is not the condition of the rich countries where agriculture is not the only source of income.²⁸

Thus by saying that it is not possible to maintain stability in a nation if the major source of wealth (like land) is distributed unequally, Russett thus established a direct link between economic inequality and political conflict.²⁹

28. Ibid., p. 212.

29. Ibid., p. 213.

Eminent economists like Mancur Olson, Jr., by using economic growth as an indicator, has established a link between economic inequality and political conflict. According to Olson, when economic growth takes place, the number of people who lose in economic terms is more than those who make economic gains.³⁰ As a result of economic growth, the income of the society gets concentrated in the hands of the few, which leads to an increase in the average income but the medium income falls. Even those who gain from rapid economic growth may attain gains only in absolute and not relative terms.³¹ All this contributes towards political instability.³²

Further, urbanisation that takes place as a result of economic growth has also been regarded as a factor that leads to political instability. Olson has expressed similar viewpoints to that of Norman R.C. Cohn.³³

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30. According to Olson, when economic change in terms of rapid growth takes place, it effects not only the rich but also the poor class. Both of these classes are not the supporters of the status quo. For details see, *Ibid*, pp. 217-218. Also refer, Mark N. Hagopian, The Phenomenon of Revolution (New York, 1975), pp. 176-77.
31. This factor as a potent factor of instability will be emphasized by the psychological theories in the latter part of this Chapter.
32. Edward N. Muller has regarded the existence of income inequality as an important factor that leads to political violence. Refer, John Hartman and Wey Hsiao, "Inequality and Violence: Issues of Theory and Measurement in Muller". American Sociological Review (Washington, D.C.), vol. 53, no. 5, Oct. 1988, p. 794.
33. See, under the viewpoints of Ted Robert Gurr expressed in this Chapter, pp.60-61

The other scholar, who has regarded economic growth as a destabilizing factor in the case of transitional societies is Arthur Lewis. On the basis of his study undertaken in Africa, he came to the conclusion that as a result of economic growth new classes emerged i.e., of the proletariat, the capitalist employees, the urban commercial and professional middle class and thus shaking the existing social pattern. This disequilibrium effects the income patterns and thus creating new wealth and new poverty. Thus, according to Arthur Lewis, the transitional societies are more prone to revolutionary disturbances than the preindustrial and highly industrialized societies, where efforts are made to eliminate inequalities existing in terms of opportunity, income and status.³⁴

Apart from the above mentioned factors which have been regarded by scholars as source of political conflict; scholars like Betty A. Nesvold has regarded the process of modernization as a potent factor that leads to political instability.³⁵

With the process of modernization, the ability of the society to produce and consume increases. People's aspirations show an upward trend but owing to non-realization of these aspirations, a feeling of frustration³⁶ emerges which leads to instability.³⁷

34. Lawrence Stone, "Theories of Revolution", World Politics (Princeton), vol. XVIII, no. 2, Jan 1966, p. 170.

35. According to Nesvold the chances of instability are more in the transitional society.

36. Scholars like Lerner have termed "the revolution of rising expectations" also as "revolution of rising frustration". For more details see Gurr's viewpoint on aspirational deprivation.

37. For understanding the link between frustration and aggression, see the psychological theories, pp.49-64.

Thus, in the words of Betty A. Nesvold - "the higher (lower) the social want formation in any given society and the lower (higher) the social want satisfaction, the greater (the less) the systemic frustration and the greater (the less) the impulse to political instability".³⁸

A direct link between modernization and political instability has also been emphasized by Wallace R. Conroe when he says that the level of instability will be high in a society which experiences rapid change as a result of the modernization process.³⁹

The theories discussed so far have utilised different economic indicators and have established their direct link with political violence. But, for a better understanding of the direct nexus between the two variables, it is essential to highlight the role played by the psychological factors in generating violence.

The psychological theories⁴⁰ which gained significance during the 1960s laid emphasis on "...the explanation of

38. Davies, n. 4, p. 236.

39. Ibid., p. 242.

40. Rod Aya has put the psychological theories under the category of "volcanic model". Under this model, social-psychological tensions that arises among human beings has been compared to lava under the earth's crust or to steam in geyser. Refer, Rod Aya, "Theories of Revolution Reconsidered: Contrasting models of Collective Violence", Theory and Society (Amsterdam), vol. 8, no. 1, July 1979, p. 49.

attitudes and behaviour in terms of the mental processes of individuals."⁴¹ These theories of revolution have borrowed ideas from two different strands of psychology, one which laid emphasis on cognitions⁴² and the other which stressed the idea of transformation of frustration into aggression.

The theory of "cognitive dissonance" which laid emphasis on the emergence of difference between perception or expectations of the past or future situations of individuals as the source of emergence of cognitive dissonance, has been incorporated by scholars like J.A. Geschwender in his work. This kind of situation emerges when the individual develops a feeling that the rewards he is getting are inadequate compared to his educational or ethnic investment or status. They may have some hope in the future but it may so happen that in the future they do not receive any benefits from growth and further their situation can be worsened by a sudden change. All these make them feel that their present situation is worse than the past. The tension can be further aggravated when they see that relevant reference groups make disproportionate gains in the future than their own group.

41. Stan Taylor, Social Science and Revolution (London, 1984), p. 52.

42. Cognitions basically refers to any knowledge or opinion about the environment, oneself or about one's behaviour. Cognitions are of three types - reality based, definitional and normative. The leading exponent of this theory is Leon Festinger, who has put forward the theory of "cognitive dissonance." Ibid., p. 53.

According to Geschwender, this situation leads to the emergence of a discrepancy which would further lead to dissonance between normative and reality based cognitions. All this provide a ground for the emergence of psychological tension, which erupts in the form of protest activities and thus enable people to establish a link between the real world and expectation. He thus established a direct relationship between the level of dissatisfaction experienced and the level of protest.⁴³

The second strand of psychological theory puts forward the idea that aggression is the product of frustration.⁴⁴ This idea is supported by scholars like John Dollard et al. According to him, low levels of frustration lead to low levels of aggression. In situations, where the level of aggression is low, men expressed it through minor ways by say attacking the scapegoat groups or by sublimation into socially modified behaviour whereas in situations where the level of frustration is high, the level of aggression will also be high for men would find the cost less compared to the relief that they would get by attacking the primary cause of frustration. On the basis of frustration - aggression theory he has tried to provide an explanation to the Marxist contentions concerning the growth of proletarian

43. Geschwender utilised the deprivation theory to provide an explanation for the "Negro revolt" that took place as early as 1964, See Chap. 1, pp.17-18.

44. Frustration takes place among individuals when they are prevented from attaining their goals. Thus, in order to relieve themselves of the frustration, they resort to aggression.

revolutionary violence. According to Dollard, frustration that was generated had its roots in exploitation, alienation, crises of capitalism and repression. In the initial stage this frustration is expressed by attacking the instruments of production and not the capitalists. It is only when the frustration reaches high level and the system is not in a position to respond positively that men overcome the fear of punishment by the state and direct their activities to overthrow the capitalists and the state over which the capitalists have their control.⁴⁵

The frustration-aggression theory has also been utilised by sociologists like James Chowning Davies. According to him, political stability and instability are reflective of a state of mind, a mood in a society.⁴⁶ In order to account for stability or instability, he has made use of economic development⁴⁷ as an indicator. In his theory he has tried to assimilate the two

45. Taylor, n. 41, pp. 60-61.

46. Ivo K. Feierabend and others, Anger, Violence and Politics: Theories and Research (Englewood Cliffs, 1972), p. 68.

The "J" curve according to Davies is a psychological and not a sociological explanation.

47. The idea of "development" is much broader than the idea of "growth". The former refers to a general improvement in the material and social well-being of the society as a whole while the latter refers to the expansion in national income or production, mostly measured as Gross National Product or Gross Domestic Product per capita.

opposing ideas of scholars like Marx and Tocqueville.⁴⁸ By putting in his hypothesis Tocqueville's ideas before Marxist ideas, he says -

Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal. The all-important effect on the minds of people in a particular society is to produce, during the former period, an expectation of continued ability to satisfy needs - which continue to rise - and then, during the latter, a mental state of anxiety and frustration when manifest reality breaks away from anticipated reality. The actual state of socio-economic development is such that past progress, now blocked, can and must continue for the future.⁴⁹

The theory of frustration - aggression has been illustrated by Davies with the help of a graph, which takes the shape of "J" curve. (Figure 2.2)

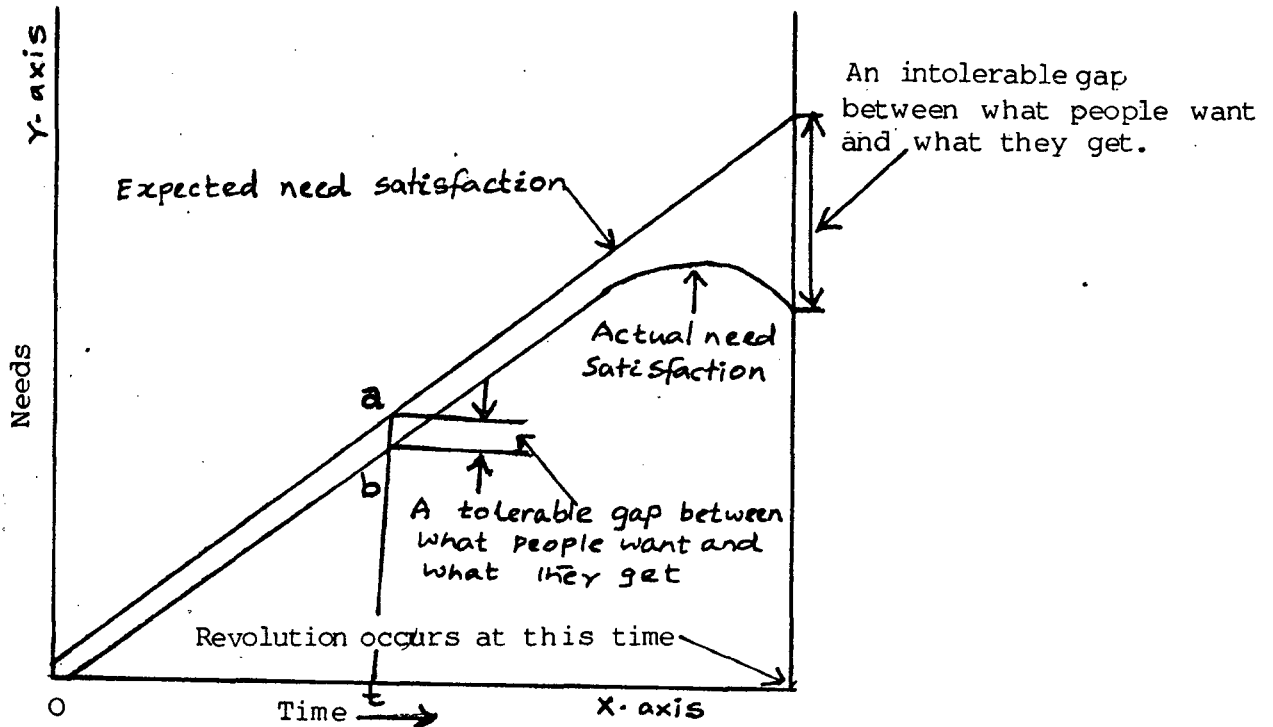
With the help of this theory, he has provided an explanation of the French Revolution.

48. Marx has been generally associated with the idea that political instability occurs in times when the condition of the industrial working class has progressively degraded. He has also expressed another opposing idea in his work "Communist Manifesto" i.e., political unrest occurs when the worker's condition is improving but does not keep pace with the growing welfare of the capitalists. Similar idea has been expressed by Tocqueville in his book L'Ancien Regime, See, William Lutz and Harry Brent, eds., On Revolution (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 68-69.

49. Taylor, n. 41, p. 62.

Figure - 2.2

The "J" curve Theory of Revolutions.



The X axis in the figure represents the "time" and Y axis shows "needs." The straight line shows the expectation which increases linearly over time. The ability of the system to fulfil the need is shown by the quadratic function, which rises over much of its length and then dips sharply. At the time when the gap between expectation and performance is ab , at this level, the frustration is low. But as the gap widens and it can no longer be tolerated, only at that moment people resort to aggression (the cost resorting to aggression is low compared to the level of frustration) (Source: Taylor, n. 41, pp.63-64).

Davies has pointed out that during the eighteenth century, the French economy showed progress which was very rapid before 1750 than after. The benefits of this progress percolated to different sections of the economy. With the growth of industrial cities, the peasantry's food markets increased. This benefited the peasantry for they were in a position to purchase more land and thus move up the social hierarchy. The skilled artisans expected a better return for their labour; the emerging bourgeoisie also had expectation of making high profits; the nobility too looked forward for its share in the new wealth of France. Above all, the regime itself had expectation in foreign conquests and in the creation of a new empire. During the 1760s and 1770s these expectations were realised to a lesser and lesser degree; for the peasantry the existence of feudal practices served as an obstacle on their path of upward mobility; the high taxes on the wages and profits proved of negative value for the skilled artisan and the bourgeoisie. The country suffered a defeat in 1763 and thus watered down the hopes of creating an empire. During this time, however, the gap between expectation and performance did not widen for it was checked by the alliance entered into with the American colonists during the War of Independence between 1778 and 1781. It was only during 1788-89, when a number of events took place like increased taxes, bad harvest, rising bread prices and unemployment and the system was unable to meet the crisis that a point was reached where frustration led to aggression and thus the collapse of the Ancient regime.⁵⁰

50. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

The other events that have been explained by Davies are - Dorr's Rebellion of 1842, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. All these events have been regarded by Davies as "Progressive" revolutions which have taken place for greater equality and liberty.⁵¹

The model formulated by Davies, was a source of inspiration for the study undertaken by Raymond Tanter and Manus I. Midlarsky.⁵² According to them, the intensity and the type of revolution would be determined by the magnitude of the gap between aspiration and expectation. Thus, the level of aggression will be low when the levels of frustration is low and vice versa. The existence of low frustration-aggression relationship has been shown by them in the case of palace revolutions where because of low level of mass participation, the level of violence is also low.

Tanter and Midlarsky have carried on a survey of seventeen countries where successful revolution had taken place between 1955 and 1960. Their examples varied from De Gaulle coup in France in 1958 to the Cuban Revolution.

In their study, the intensity of the revolutionary activity has been taken as a dependent variable, which has been

51. Feierabend and others, n. 46, p. 71.

52. Besides, Tanter and Midlarsky, other scholar who has expressed ideas similar to that of Davies is T. Havrilesky who has put forward the viewpoint that political conflicts will occur either at very low or at very high levels of economic inequality. See, Mark Irving Lichbach, "An Evaluation of 'Does Economic Inequality Breed Political Conflict'? Studies". World Politics, vol. XLI, no. 4, July 1989, p. 438.

determined by them with the help of two indicators i.e., the number of deaths per million of the population in the revolution and the duration of violence. The independent variables that have been used by them are - educational levels, aspirations and expectations. The educational level has been measured by them as the proportion of the population aged between five and fourteen years who have enrolled themselves in primary schools; aspiration has been operationalized by the average rate of growth in GNP per capita over a seven year period prior to the revolution and expectation have been the extent of reversal of an upward growth trend just before the revolution.

According to Tanter and Midlarsky, in the case of Cuba, the GNP per capita increased during the period 1948-51 but during 1952-53 there took place a decline in the GNP and this was taken as a start of Cuban revolution.

The relationship between independent and dependent variables have been examined by them in cases other than Cuba. But the results at which they arrived were not statistically significant and thus they carried on their study regionwise. They came to the conclusion that in the case of Asia and Middle East, there exists a positive link between Gross National Product and death rates and this has been important for the occurrence of revolutions.⁵³

Another eminent scholar, who has made use of psychological factor and thus established a direct link between economic inequalities and political conflict, is Ted Robert Gurr.

53. Taylor, n. 41, pp. 65-68.

Gurr has expressed his ideas in his work Why Men Rebel. According to Gurr, there are two different kinds of feelings; one which provide men satisfaction, love and elation and the other kind which generates anxiety, terror, depression and rage. These feelings determine men's views regarding the world and energizes their action.⁵⁴

According to Gurr, a feeling of frustration develops when men's ability to derive satisfaction from the existing situation undergoes a change. This frustration is released in the form of a conflict when men try to strike the sources of frustration. By doing so, they are in a position to release the tension that has been built by frustration. This principle, says Gurr, operates to determine a variety of individual behaviour including the action of those who rise in rebellion against the political community. Gurr thus regards aggression as a product of frustration and thus puts forward a viewpoint very different from those who regard aggression either as innate or that it is solely learned.⁵⁵

According to Gurr, the necessary precondition for the occurrence of violent civil conflict is "relative deprivation", which implies "actors' perceptions of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities."⁵⁶

54. Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel(Princeton, 1970), p. 22.

55. Scholars like K. Lorenz and S. Freud regard aggression as instinctual whereas some child and social psychologists regard aggression as something learned.

56. Gurr, n. 54, p. 24. The concept of relative deprivation was first used systematically in the 1940s by the authors of The American soliders to denote the feelings of an individual who lacks some status or conditions that he thinks he should have, which is determined by reference to what some other person or groups has. Similar ideas has been used in sociological research.

According to Gurr, value expectations generally stands for the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled to whereas value capabilities refer to those goods and conditions of life which they think they are capable of getting and keeping.⁵⁷

The discrepancy between expectation and capabilities can emerge in relation to any collectively sought value, which can be economic, psychological or political and thus giving rise to the feeling of relative deprivation.⁵⁸

According to Gurr, the deprivation experienced by men can be of three types - decremental, aspirational and progressive. Decremental deprivation arises when a group's value expectations remain relatively constant but value capabilities are perceived to decline; aspirational deprivation is felt when people's capabilities remain static but their expectations show an increase and progressive deprivation is felt when the process of increase in expectations takes place simultaneously along with the process of decrease in capabilities. Let us now examine each of these deprivations in some detail:

57. Similar ideas have also been expressed by Aberle who views relative deprivation as "a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and actuality." Refer Feierabend, n. 46, p. 38.

58. Values according to Gurr, are those desired events, objects and conditions towards which men strive.

(a) Decremental deprivation: The feeling of decremental deprivation comes when men start comparing their present condition with that of their past condition. The decline in the value position of a particular society may take place because of numerous reasons - the production of material goods may decline, the inability of the political elite to provide for order or resolve a crisis situation and the loss in absolute terms in conflict with other groups over scarce values. A segment of society may also experience a decline in the value position because of the decline that takes place in terms of opportunities. This can happen for example when the employment opportunities of an unskilled worker in an industrialised society shows a decline. The violence instigated by decremental deprivation is of greater intensity than any other kind of deprivation like aspirational deprivation. This is mainly because of the fact that men are likely to be more intensely angered when they lose what they have than when they lose hopes of attaining what they do not yet have. This kind of deprivation was very common in the traditional societies and in the traditional segment of transitional societies.⁵⁹

(b) Aspirational deprivation: This can arise under three different situations - when the demand for existing values increases like the desire to have more material goods; when there is a demand for new values which were not held earlier, and when the demand for an existing value takes more concrete shape. This kind of deprivation can also take place when people are exposed to new

59. Political theorists like Aristotle have also regarded decremental deprivation as the main source of political violence. Gurr, no. 54, p. 47.

ideas. For some theorists, political violence can occur when people start comparing themselves with other groups whose position is improving while their own position may remain stagnant. This has been regarded by Aristotle as the source of revolution.

(c) Progressive deprivation: This takes place when the social and political institutions are not in a position to adapt themselves to the changing conditions.⁶⁰

The feeling of relative deprivation thus varies from situation to situation. Gurr has put forward various hypotheses:

(i) The discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities determines the intensity of relative deprivation.⁶¹ From this follows two inferences:

(a) The intensity of relative deprivation increases when value expectations rise without a simultaneous increase in value capabilities.

(b) The intensity of relative deprivation also increases when there takes place a decrease in value capabilities without a simultaneous decrease in value expectation.⁶²

60. This idea has been emphasized by Davies when he talks of the "J" curve. Samuel P. Huntington has also given importance to this idea when he says that the institution should adapt themselves to the changing conditions. For the proper reference refer to note 86 of this Chapter.

61. Gurr, n. 54, p. 60.

62. Ibid, p. 60.

- (ii) Gurr emphasises the idea that the level of violence will be high in situations where people are strongly motivated towards a goal.
- (iii) People can tolerate the loss of moderately important values provided they can attain other classes of values.⁶³
- (iv) The chances of emergence of political unrest decreases in situations where men have greater value opportunities.⁶⁴

Besides, giving emphasis to psychological factors, Gurr has also highlighted the role played by the societal factors in generating a feeling of deprivation.

Gurr points out that when a society is exposed to new ways of living, their desire to acquire new kinds of goods increases.⁶⁵ Some of the means by which people are exposed to new ways of life are - desire to lead urban life and education.

The coming up of urban centres exposes people to new standards of living. How this leads to frustration and thus create a situation of instability can well be understood from what Norman R.C. Cohn says about the people who migrated to medieval European cities. According to Cohn they-

63. Ibid., p. 67.

64. Ibid., p. 73.

65. Similar ideas have been expressed by G. Blanksten when he says that the desire to acquire goods belonging to the higher standard of living arises among the people having lower level of living. See for more details the viewpoints of Betty. A. Nesvold, which has already been discussed in this Chapter.

merely acquired new wants without being able to satisfy them; and in them the spectacle of a wealth undreamt - of in earlier centuries provoked a bitter sense of frustration. In all the overpopulated, highly urbanized and industrialized areas there were multitudes of people living on the margin of society, in a state of chronic insecurity. There industry even at the best of times could never absorb anything like the whole of the surplus population... Many became mercenaries.... And even among artisans in employment many found themselves more defenceless than peasants on the manor.⁶⁶

Education can also lead to raising people's expectations. People go in for higher education with the aim of attaining new goals like that of acquiring money and status. But if they find that jobs are few, pay is low, his political capabilities are low, the result is that a feeling of frustration emerges. This viewpoint of Gurr has been supported by scholar like Fallers. He infact, has regarded the educated under-employed or unemployed in many of the new states as important source of alienation and political disaffection than the industrial workers.⁶⁷

Apart from these sources which play an important role in generating feeling of frustration, other factors of which Gurr talks about are - social mobility, economic growth, and the disequilibrium between economic and political power.

According to Gurr, frustration emerges amongst people when they start comparing themselves with those experiencing rapid

66. Gurr, n. 54, pp. 94-95.

67. Ibid., pp. 95-96.

upward social mobility. The deprived start feeling that they too should possess goods which those experiencing upward mobility have. This generates a feeling of relative deprivation which acquires a more concrete shape when people are exposed to new ways of life. This idea has been supported by Rae Sherwood, who on the basis of his study undertaken in South Africa came to the conclusion that the relationship between job related frustration and exposure to the European society was direct.⁶⁸

As far as economic growth and its role in creating frustration situation is concerned, Gurr has expressed ideas similar to already discussed of Davies.

According to Gurr, frustration can also arise when people have attained one kind of value but they have a desire to attain equally other kinds of values. This can be illustrated with the help of discrepancy that emerges between economic power and political power⁶⁹ Thus, according to Gurr: "...men rebel in order to adjust their power or status position to their rising economic position because the lack of power or status appears to threaten the gains they have struggled for".⁷⁰

68. Ibid., p. 106.

69. Similar ideas have been expressed by Aristotle, R. Heberle, Smelser and Olson.

70. Gurr, n. 54, p. 112.

Gurr thus has regarded the psychological variable - relative deprivation - as the basic precondition for civil strife of any kind.⁷¹ However, Gurr points out that the relationship between discontent and participation in strife is mediated by a number of societal variables like coercive potential, institutionalization, social facilitation and legitimacy of the political regime in which strife occurs.⁷²

Thus, Gurr by making use of the idea of "relative deprivation" has established a direct link between economic inequality and political conflict.

The other scholar who has emphasized the idea of relative deprivation for providing an explanation of political conflict is T.F. Pettigrew. According to him, in the post-war period a feeling of relative deprivation emerged among the black population when the material gains made by white population did not accrue to them. The result of this was generation of frustration which erupted first

71. According to Gurr, in situations where mass deprivation is high but elite deprivation is low, in those situations the form that civil violence will take will be turmoil. But if deprivation is experienced only by elite aspirants, then "conspiracy" is likely to take place. But in situation where discontent is experienced by both masses and elite aspirants, civil war and guerilla war is likely to take place.

72. Ted Gurr, "A causal model of civil strife: A comparative analysis using new indices". The American Political Science Review, vol. LXII, no. 4, 1968, pp. 1104-1105.

in the form of protest and then rioting.⁷³

Thus, for understanding the link between economic inequality and political conflict, it is essential to focus on the idea of relative deprivation. Here, one can mention what Marx says - "our desires and pleasures spring from the society; we measure them, therefore, by society, and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature".⁷⁴

Though the writings of the scholars discussed so far do provide a valuable insight into understanding the link between economic inequality and political conflict; yet some of these theories are not free from criticisms. Let us now examine the criticisms which have been levied against the theories which have made use of economic criteria like property, more concrete form of property - land, economic growth, urbanization and modernization.

The Marxist theory which has used property as the criteria for understanding the link between economic inequalities and political conflict, inspite of its valuable contribution is however not free from criticisms. Some of the criticisms that can be levied against this theory are:

- (i) The idea of mode of production which is central for understanding the Marxist theory has been criticised for

73. Alan Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness (London, 1977), p. 138.

74. Stone, n. 34, p. 173.

its vagueness and confusion.⁷⁵

- (ii) Marx has given emphasis only to three factors of production which he calls as resources, techniques and labour. In economics these factors are put under land, labour and capital respectively. Thus, one can say that he neglected another factor of production which in economics has been termed as entrepreneurship.⁷⁶
- (iii) The relationship that exist in Marxist theory between the mode of production and the property relations has often been regarded as obscure. According to the critics despite the existence of the same modes of production there has existed a difference in the social system. Thus, for instance the prevalence of slave societies is not the same everywhere for the serfdom prevailing in Russia is very different from the serfdom prevailing in Western Europe.⁷⁷
- (iv) The idea of class struggle occupies a prominent position in the Marxist study of revolution. However, it has been pointed out that the idea of class has not been clearly

75. Marxist thought has not provided a clear meaning to the idea of mode of production. The concept of mode of production has undergone changes in Marxian theory in accordance with the change in the circumstances. See Henry B. Mayo, Introduction to Marxist Theory (New York, 1965), p. 68.

76. Ibid., p. 69.

77. Ibid., p. 72.

defined by Marx.⁷⁸

(v) Many social theorists have put forward the idea that the revolutionary class conflict is less the product of economic stratification. According to Marx, the economically weaker members constitute a class only when they develop a consciousness i.e., when they become a "class for itself". This takes place under the impetus of common interests which arises as a result of common struggle against a common enemy. But more precisely, this involves politicization of the proletariat for the struggle of one class against the another class is essentially a political struggle.⁷⁹

(vi) According to Marx, the prevalence of class stratification is very essential for the outbreak of revolution. However, it has been pointed out that in societies like that of United States and Great Britain where class divisions have emerged, have not experienced revolution. Thus, one can say that the economic factors are important in all revolutions but they are not always neatly translated in the form of class struggles.⁸⁰

78. Eminent sociologists like Max Weber have provided a clear idea of the concept of class. According to him, the idea of class exists only when the following three conditions exist:

- (a) a group of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances in so far as
- (b) this component should be represented by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income and
- (c) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. See, Hagopian, n. 30, p. 81.

79. Ibid., p. 82.

80. Ibid., p. 83.

(vii) Even in situations where classes are more pronounced and class-struggle is clearly identified, there does exist certain obstacles as far as the interpretation of class-struggle is concerned. For Marx, the idea of class consciousness is very important for it plays an important role in the creation of a new economic order. This idea, however was unacceptable to V.I. Lenin. According to Lenin "class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers".⁸¹ He emphasized the role of party which would be composed of highly trained elite corps of professional revolutionaries who would undertake the job of 'political attack on the government, training the proletariat for revolution and supervising the political and economic activities. Thus, the party would play an important role for leading the proletariats towards class consciousness and revolution.⁸²

(viii) The main aim of leading a revolution in the Marxist thought is to establish a classless society. This idea, however has been put to criticism by a Polish anarchist, Waclaw Machajski according to whom instead of a "classless" society "a hierarchical system under which all industries were owned by the government, the private capitalists

81. Ibid., p. 84.

82. Ibid., p. 84.

having yielded place to office-holders, managers and engineers, whose salaries would be much higher than the wages paid for manual labour...." would come into existence.⁸³

Land inequality as potent factor for political instability has been criticised by scholars like Theda Skocpol. On the basis of detailed analysis of French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, Skocpol has concluded that it was not maldistribution of landholdings that was responsible for the occurrence of the French, the Russia and the Chinese revolutions but rather the autonomy enjoyed by the peasants from the local landlords that accelerated the process of collective mobilisation and finally the occurrence of revolutions.⁸⁴

Inequality existing in terms of land ownership does not always lead to political conflict for there are some intervening variables. Thus, Barrington Moore on the basis of his case study undertaken of India, has regarded the existence of caste system as a hindering factor for the emergence of revolutionary situation.⁸⁵

Political functionalist like Samuel P. Huntington by emphasizing the role played by political institutions has rejected the link of various indicators like economic growth, urbanisation and modernisation with political instability. According to him, the scope of political institutions should be broad enough so that

83. Ibid., p. 84.

84. Muller and Seligson, n. 21, p. 426.

85. Taylor, n. 41, p. 27.

they are in a position to represent large sections of the population and are in a position to perform large number of functions. These institutions must be in a position to meet new demands and fulfil new functions. He thus says that a situation of political instability will not arise in societies where the process of modernization takes place with the process of political modernization.⁸⁶

Besides the above criticisms which have been levied against the viewpoints of scholars employing various economic criteria, the other theories which are not free from criticisms are the psychological theories.

Stan Taylor in his work has levied criticisms against the scholars who have emphasized the psychological factors for understanding the link between economic inequality and political conflict. Some of these criticisms are:

- (i) The main problem with the psychological theories is that there is an absence of any direct evidence concerning the relationship between perceptions, psychological processes and political violence among individuals. It thus becomes difficult to find out which psychological variable is important or under the influence of which psychological variable political violence emerges.
- (ii) The psychological theories have given importance only to

86. Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven, 1971), Chap. 1, pp. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

psychological processes and have totally neglected the structural factors. These theories thus have not taken into account the structured inequalities that exist in terms of wealth, power⁸⁷ and status between various groups in societies.⁸⁸ Similar viewpoints have also been expressed by the proponents of resource mobilization theory.⁸⁹

The proponents of "political conflict" approach like Charles Tilly have levied criticism against the psychological theories for lack of emphasis on the idea of organisation.⁹⁰ This viewpoint has been supported by Rod Aya.

According to Leon Trotsky -

...that without organization the force of popular discontent would dissipate like steam not enclosed in a piston - cylinder - adding, of course, that what moves things is not the piston or the cylinder, but the steam-volcanic theories attend to the 'steam', not to the 'cylinder'. And they wind up in a quandry .91

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87. The idea of power has also been emphasized by scholars like Walter Korpi. See, Walter Korpi, "Conflict, Power and Relative Deprivation", The American Political Science Review, vol. LXVIII, no. 4, December, 1974, p. 1569.
88. Taylor, n. 41, pp. 84-86.
89. Bert Klandermans, "Mobilization and Participation: Social Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory". American Sociological Review, vol. 49, no. 5, Oct. 1984, p. 583. (Oberschall, 1973; Gamson, 1975; Marx and Wood, 1975; McCarthy and Zald, 1976; Snow et al., 1980; Gamson et al., 1982). These scholars have also laid emphasis on the rational decision processes whereby people weigh the costs and benefits of participation.
90. Taylor, n. 41, p. 130-31. This factor should be given emphasis even when establishing a link between land inequality and discontent.
91. Aya, n. 40, p. 52.

Besides, the above mentioned criticisms, some scholars have levied criticisms against the specific psychological theories.

The theory of J.C. Davies has been criticised by Rod Aya in the following way -

- (i) In his theory, Davies has given importance to the "state of mind" but "objective" conditions have been neglected. There is also lack of emphasis on the economic and political circumstances.
- (ii) A variety of gratifications have been put by Davies under one dimensional, non-empirical index i.e., the "J" curve.
- (iii) Absence of any measure to determine whether the gap between expectations and gratification is "intolerable".⁹²
- (iv) Lack of explanation of how the "revolutionary state of mind" leads to the toppling of a regime.
- (v) Fails to identify the groups which experience declining gratifications and thus feel frustrated.⁹³

Besides Rod Aya, other scholars who have criticised J.C. Davies' theory is Paul G. Lewis. Lewis on the basis of the study of the peasant revolt in Mexico came to the conclusion that it was not improvement but progressive degradation which played an important role in the occurrence of revolt and thus falsified

92. Ibid., p. 54.

93. Ibid., p. 54.

Davies' argument that revolution do not occur in situations of progressive impoverishment.⁹⁴

The theory of relative deprivation propounded by Gurr has also been criticised.

According to David Snyder, the theory has its usefulness only at the aggregate level for at the individual level it leads to hetrogenous conclusions.⁹⁵

Rod Aya points out that Gurr has undermined the role played by the government in generating political conflicts.⁹⁶

Inspite of the criticisms levied against the theories relating to direct nexus between economic inequality and political conflict, they do provide one way of understanding the link between the two variables.

B. Though most of the scholars believe that in situations when a substantial portion of the population is not in a position to get a share from the allocation of scarce resources, anti-system frustrations are apt to be high. Such viewpoint however is not supported by scholars who on the basis of their study undertaken have arrived at different conclusions. Thus, Edward J. Mitchell

94. Lewis, n. 17, pp. 69-70.

95. David Snyder, "Collective Violence: A Research Agenda and some strategic consideration". Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 22, no. 3, Sep. 1978, p. 503.

96. Aya, n. 40, p. 58.

and Manoucher Parvin have not regarded the existence of economic inequalities as a necessary precondition for the outbreak of political conflict.

Edward J. Mitchell, on the basis of a statistical study of South Vietnam came to the conclusion that the relationship between economic inequality and political conflict is not a direct one. According to Mitchell, in South Vietnam there existed inequality in terms of ownership of land, sizes of farms and lack of redistribution of large estates. This inequality that existed in terms of ownership of land did not generate a situation for the emergence of insurgency. Instead, inequality provided for greater security. This according to Mitchell is mainly because of the fact that inequality of land distribution in Vietnam is directly associated with governmental control.⁹⁷ The other reasons which have been put forward by Mitchell to provide an explanation for the absence of linear relationship between inequality and political conflict are:

Firstly, the poor peasants have low aspirations and are of docile nature.

Secondly, the relationship between the peasant and the landlord is not merely economic but it is social as well as political.⁹⁸

97. Edward J. Mitchell, "Inequality and Insurgency: A Statistical Study of South Vietnam". World Politics, vol. XX, no. 3, April 1968, p. 422.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 423.

Thus Mitchell, on the basis of his study of South Vietnam came to the conclusion that existence of economic inequality is not always the accelerating force for the occurrence of political conflict.⁹⁹

A viewpoint similar to the above has also been expressed by Mark Irving Lichbach. According to him, the economically well off use social, economic and political power in such a way that inspite of the existence of economic inequalities political dissent does not arises.¹⁰⁰

The absence of a direct link between economic inequality and political conflict has also been accepted by Bruce M. Russett. Though Russett in his article "Inequality and Instability: The Relation of Land tenure to Politics", has regarded the inequality existing in terms of land ownership as the potent cause of political conflict. Nevertheless, he has mentioned in his article that inequality existing in terms of ownership of wealth need not lead to instability. This he proved by giving the example of Spain, where he observed that in spite of the fact that goods were distributed unequally, yet the polity was not marked by instability.¹⁰¹

The scholars of the sociology of revolution have also concluded that economic inequalities do not lead to political

99. For criticisms of Mitchell's viewpoint see, Jeffery M. Paige, "Inequality and Insurgency in Vietnam: A Re-analysis: World Politics, vol. XXIII, no. 1, Oct. 1970, pp. 24-37. Also see Nagel, "Inequality and Discontent: A Nonlinear Hypothesis", World Politics, vol. XXVI, no. 4, July 1974, pp. 457-472.

100. Lichbach, n. 52, pp. 437-38.

101. Davies, n. 4, p. 206.

conflict. According to them the people who occupy lower ranks in the social hierarchy are content with their position and thus do not support any action that would lead to political conflict. They further point out that the very poor also does not resort to violent means because of the fact that they have very little energy left after meeting the basic necessities of life.¹⁰² In the words of Eric Hoffer, "There is thus a conservatism of the destitute".¹⁰³

The absence of nexus between economic inequality and political conflict has also been emphasized by the conservatives like Edmund Burke and others. According to the conservatives, it is the existence of equality rather than inequality that leads to political conflict.¹⁰⁴

Another scholar, M. Parvin who on the basis of his case study of 26 predominantly Western nations, by using indicators like deaths from domestic group violence per million population to measure political unrest and economic determinants like per capita income, came to the conclusion that the chances of emergence of political unrest are more in an egalitarian society.¹⁰⁵

102. Ibid, p. 216. Similar viewpoints has been expressed by Philip Green. According to him, as long as people belonging to the lower rungs get a reward sufficient to maintain a subsistence level there exists an absence of opposition to the system of inequality. See, Philip Green, The Pursuit of Inequality (Oxford, 1982), Introduction.

103. Ibid., p. 217.

104. Lichbach, n. 52, p. 438.

105. Sigelman and Miles, n. 3, p. 110. However, Parvin was not in a position to account adequately for his findings.

C. Apart from the above mentioned line of thinking there are scholars like Jack Nagel, who on the basis of his detailed analysis came to the conclusion that political conflict emerges at the intermediate levels of inequality. He thus, regards the relationship between inequality and discontent as curvilinear.

In his theory, Nagel has incorporated the idea of social comparison, which has been emphasized by psychological theories.¹⁰⁶ Thus, he says -

One individual measures his lot against another's, finds himself relatively advantaged or disadvantaged, and accordingly feels gratified or dissatisfied. Both the perceptual act of comparison and the ensuing emotion are necessary for inequality to produce discontent. 107

This idea has been shown by Nagel in the following way,

$$D = TG (1)$$

Where D stands for discontent that emerges due to inequality, T represents the tendency to make comparison and G represents grievances that emerge because of comparison. According to Nagel, inequality leads to discontent through the factors T and G; the relationship between inequality and the

106. The idea of social comparison was stressed by Leon Festinger, See. Nagel, n. 99, p. 454.

107. Ibid., p. 454.

factor G is straightforward. Thus, in situations where inequality exists in terms of assets between two individuals; the tendency to compare with the rich by the poor, plays an important role for the emergence of discontent. The second equation that has been put forward by Nagel is -

$$G = a_2 g \quad (2)$$

where a_2 shows the slope and g represents inequality.¹⁰⁸ This equation shows that a linear relationship exists between inequality and the slope a_2

Nagel, by applying Festinger's hypothesis to wealth postulated that the tendency to compare wealth varies inversely with inequality. This idea has been shown by Nagel in the form of an equation -

$$T = I - a_1 g. \quad (3)$$

Thus, according to the first equation, the expression in the second equation and third equation should be multiplied together to determine the overall effect of inequality on discontent:

$$D = (I - a_1 g) a_2 g \quad (4)$$

or

$$D = a_2 g - a_1 a_2 g^2 \quad (5)$$

108. The letter "g" is used because inequality is commonly measured by the Gini index which varies from 0 (absolute equality) to one (all wealth held by one individual).

The fifth equation shows a curvilinear relationship between inequality and discontent.¹⁰⁹

The relationship between inequality and discontent has been shown by Nagel in the form of a diagram (2.3). The curve ceteris paribus, begins at zero in a perfectly egalitarian system, increases with inequality, reaching a maximum at some intermediate level of inequality and then decreases as complete inequality is approached. Thus, the shape of the curve is a parabola. Thus, according to Nagel, maximum discontent takes place when -

$$g = \frac{1}{2a_1} \quad \text{110}$$

The curvilinear relationship between inequality and political conflict has been tested by Nagel through an intra-national analysis.

According to Nagel, in the less developed countries where agriculture is the dominant mode of production, the inequality existing in rural areas increases, when the economy comes under the influence of factors like Green Revolution.¹¹¹ This is because

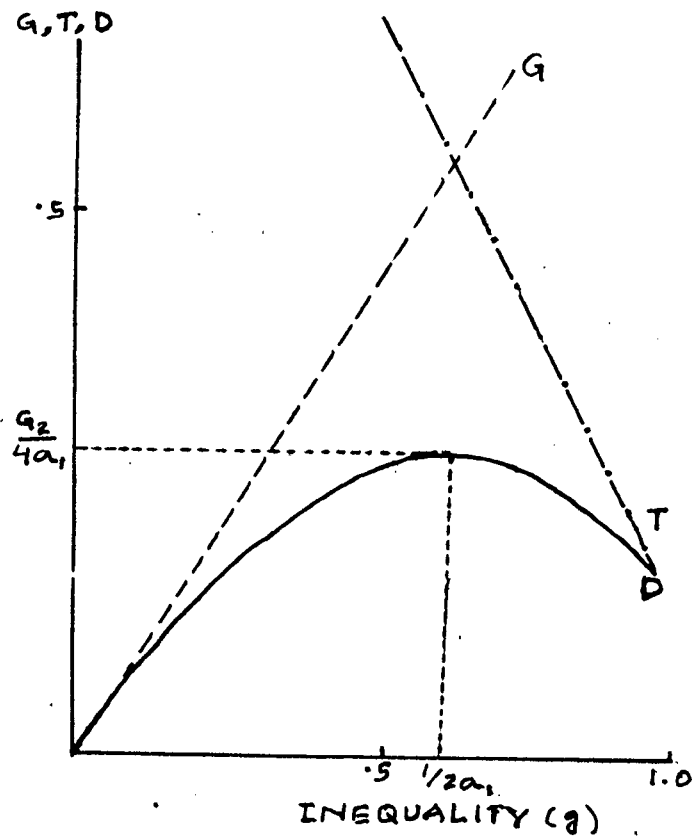
109. Nagel, n. 99, pp. 454-55.

110. Ibid., p. 455.

111. According to Nagel of the seventy-three world nations which have gone in for advanced techniques in farming, 2 of the 3 with the lowest Gini indices - India and the Philippines have experienced increasing rebellion in rural areas. Of the 4 with higher Gini scores, only country which has suffered greater instability is Pakistan.

Diagram: 2.3

**Tendency to compare, Grievance from Comparison,
Discontent as Functions of Inequality**



- - - - - $G = a_2 g, a_2 = .9$
 - · - · - $T = 1 - a_1 g, a_1 = .8$
 ———— $D = a_2 g - a_1 a_2 g^2$

Source: World Politics
Vol. XXVI, no. 4, July, 1974.

of the fact that new techniques will be adopted only by the richer farmers and thus leading to concentration of economic power in the hands of a few people. Further, with the pattern of land tenure becoming more unequal, all those countries initially low on the left side of the inequality - discontent curve will move into the region of maximum discontent and are thus likely to become less stable, whereas countries initially at the maximum region or on the right side of the curve will experience decreasing discontent as inequality becomes even greater for according to Nagel the tendency to compare decreases as inequality increases.¹¹²

Since the approaches that have been adopted by scholars for understanding the link between economic inequality and political conflict are different, it becomes difficult to accept any approach as universal for understanding the nexus between economic inequality and political conflict. The economic inequality and political conflict nexus thus allows all scholars to raise great normative questions in their own way.

The differences in conclusions arrived at by various scholars can be accounted for alternative definitions of economic inequality and of political conflict, and from the different cases explored, the various time frames in which the effects on conflict are

112. Nagel, n. 99, pp. 469-70.

For criticisms of Nagel's viewpoint see, William H. Panning, "Inequality, social comparison, and Relative Deprivation," The American Political Science Review, Vol. 77, No. 2, June 1983, pp. 323-329.

examined, and different ceteris paribus understanding about the context in which the economic inequality and political conflict relationship occurs.

Hence in conclusion, one can say that for a scholar who is attempting to understand the link between the two variables should give emphasis to the context in which he is carrying out his study for different regions of the world owing to large-scale historical and geographical differences yield a different kind of relationship between the two variables - economic inequality and political conflict.¹¹³ Thus, the issue is context-specific rather than a matter of universal applicability.

113. Midlarsky, n. 1, p. 492.

CHAPTER - III

OUTCOMES OF POLITICAL CONFLICT

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The main concern here is to focus on the consequences that take place in situations where there exists a direct nexus between economic inequality and political conflict.

In 1965, Harry Eckstein observed that "almost nothing careful and systematic has been written about the long-run social effects of internal wars".¹ Similar kind of viewpoint is held regarding other lesser forms of political conflicts like riots and coups d'etat.

Nevertheless, some efforts for studying the impact of political conflict have been made since 1965. Some scholars like Ted Robert Gurr, William A. Gamson and P.D. Schumaker have provided a theoretical perspective for studying the outcomes of political conflict.

Ted Robert Gurr, in his work has talked about three kinds of outcomes of political conflict. They are:

- i. the fate of the groups which are engaged in the conflict with special emphasis given to the challenging rather than to the challenged groups;
- ii. the emphasis is given to the policies adopted by the advantaged groups to face the challenges posed to them; and
- iii. the changes which take place in the system including the changes that are brought in the attitudes and beliefs, social and political structures and economic production and distribution.

These three different kinds of outcomes of political conflict have been depicted by Gurr by means of a process model² which

1. Ted Robert Gurr, ed., Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research (New York, 1980), p. 238.
2. Ibid., pp. 249-50.

can be depicted by means of a diagram. (diagram 3.1)

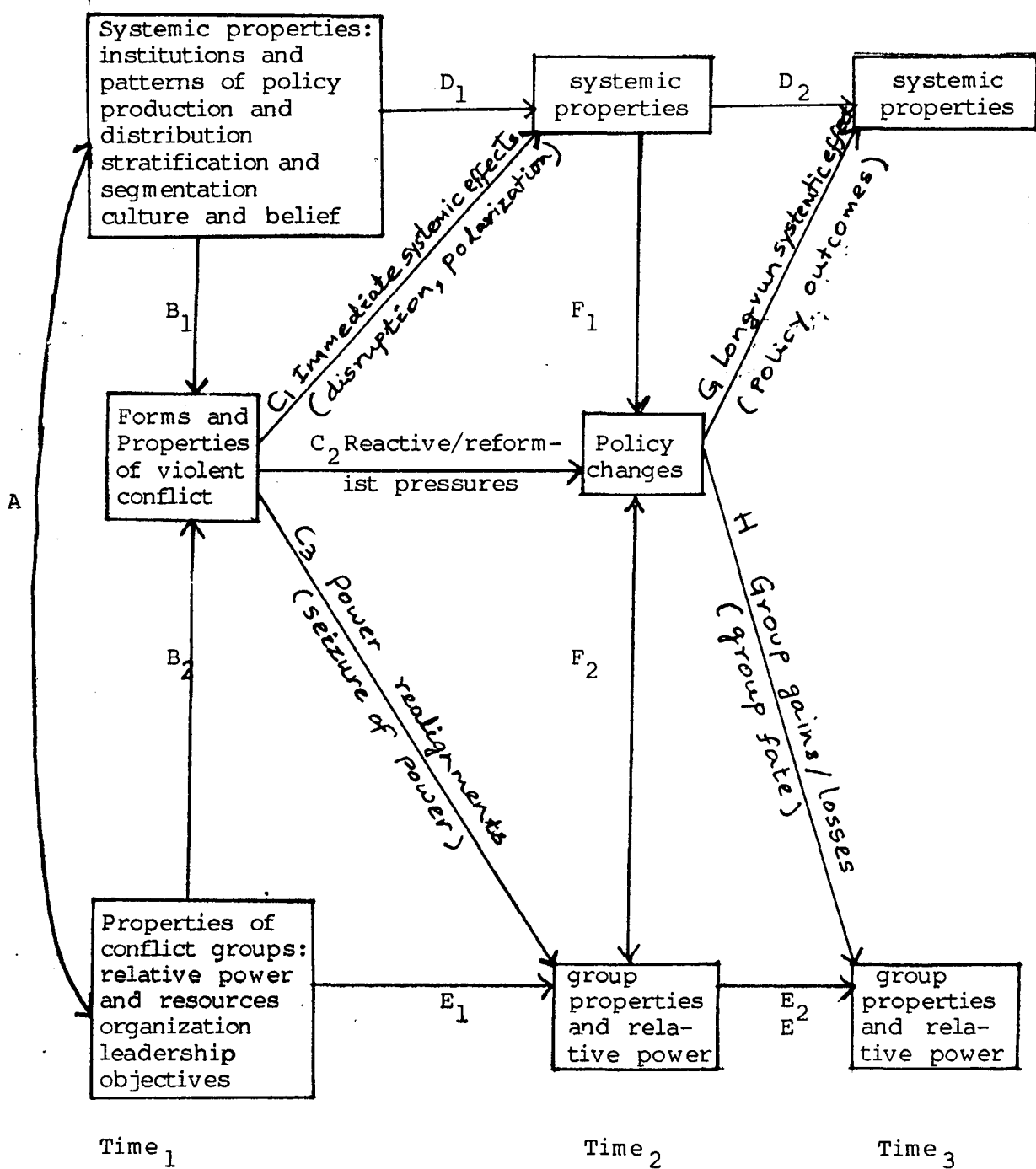
The details of this diagram are:

At time₁, the events that take place are a function of properties of the socio-economic and political system. These properties are common to the groups that become parties to the conflict. These complex relationships are labelled A and B_{1,2}, and A and B_{1,2}, play a very important role for they affect conflict characteristics and outcomes.

At time₂, three general kinds of consequences may take place as a result of violent conflict. As a result of the conflict (C₂), those holding power have to undertake a mix of remedial and repressive actions. As far as the groups which are involved in conflict; conflict may lead to realignments in the relative power of the groups (which has been labelled as C₃). Besides, the realignment that may take place among groups; the other outcomes of political conflict as far as the groups are concerned are - they may be suppressed; they may be allowed to participate in the decision making process or they may succeed in seizing political power.

The other consequences that may occur as a result of violent conflict at Time₂ are social and economic in nature. These consequences are determined to a great extent by intensity, duration and locale of the violent conflict. Thus, as a result of the conflict, numerous outcomes may occur. They are like - a change in people's social concerns; increase in social interaction among some groups and decrease in others. Or there may take place a change in the existing patterns of political participation, governance, production and distribution. These consequences have

Model of the policy, group, and systemic outcomes of political conflict



Source: Gurr

been put by Gurr under the category of negative effects of conflict.³

In the figure, $D_{1,2}$ indicates the tendency of systems to persist over time. The paths $E_{1,2}$ shows the weaker tendency of groups contending over issues of power and policy to persist. According to Gurr, the regimes are more durable than the challenging groups.⁴

Gurr, however, has emphasized the point that the outcomes of political conflict are determined by numerous factors like - pre-existing patterns of policy and scarcity of resources. Apart from these internal factors which act as constraint, the other factor which has been emphasized by Gurr is the international system. According to Gurr - "Insofar as a society is economically and politically dependent on powerful neighbours, political allies, or the international capitalist system, policy responses to conflict may be almost entirely predetermined".⁵ Thus, according to Gurr, $F_{1,2}$ which reflects the role played by the international system, will be more important determinant of outcome of conflict than the path C_2 .⁶

The impact of violent conflict on group fate and on the society has been assessed by Gurr at Time₃. According to Gurr,

3. Ibid., p. 251.

4. Ibid., p. 252.

5. Ibid., p. 252.

6. The other scholars who have emphasized the role played by international system in determining the outcomes of conflict are - Schumaker, S. Eckstein, Theda Skocpol and E.K. Trimberger.

there are two kinds of consequences that take place - the fate of the groups involved in conflict which is shown by Gurr by path H and the other outcome that takes place as a result of conflict is the change in the social system. This has been shown by Gurr by path G.⁷

The fate of the groups involved in conflict, according to Gurr basically stands for the acceptance that the challenging groups are in a position to attain or the ability of the groups to attain new advantages. As far as the idea of change in the social system is concerned, this according to Gurr stands for the changes that take place in the powers, resources, values and goals of the political authorities. The changes in the social system are determined to a great extent by the intensity of conflict. Thus according to Gurr - "... that violent conflict provides a considerably greater impetus to change than does routine politics: the squeaky wheel presumably does get greased first".⁸ Thus, violent forms of conflict like revolution may lead to realignment in power. Further, the long run effects of violent conflict on the polity, economy and society are very predominant.⁹

Thus, the conflict process can be studied by giving emphasis to group outcomes and the effect that the conflict has on the system. These two are linked by the concept of policy change. For he says - "... the fate of challenging groups is affected and changes in social systems are effected through

7. Gurr, n.l, p.252.

8. Ibid., p.253.

9. Ibid., p.250.

changes in the policies followed by powerful groups".¹⁰

Another theorist, who has provided a framework for studying outcome of political conflict is William A. Gamson. He has studied the consequences of conflict by emphasizing on group fate of the protesters. Like most of the empirical literature on group fate, which lays emphasis on the success of protesters, he too has focussed on the success of protesters. According to him, success can be defined in two different ways:

- i. the ability of the group to win acceptance from its opponents; and
- ii. the ability of the protest groups to win new advantages.¹¹

According to Gamson, the success of the protest group depends on numerous factors like - the nature of their demands, nature of their organisation and the methods used by or against them. Thus, in the sample study of fifty-three challenging groups in the United States for the period 1800 and 1945; he identified certain traits that contributed either to the success or to the failure of the protest groups. This has been shown in the form of a table.¹² (Table: 3.1)

10. Ibid., p. 249.

11. Ibid., p. 257.

12. Ibid., p. 258.

Table: 3.1

**Traits of Fifty-three American Protest Groups Associated
with Success and Failure**

Group Trait	No. of Groups with trait	% that gained Accepta- ance	% that gained New Advantages
1. Trait that enhances success			
Offer incentives for membership	11	91	82
Use nonviolent constraints	10	80	80
Use Violent constraints	8	62	75
Bureaucratic Organization	24	71	62
Do not seek antagonist's removal	37	62	68
No internal factionalism	30	57	70
Limited goals	18	56	67
Large Group (over 10,000 members)	26	64	54
Centralization of Power	28	54	64
Not subjects to arrests	30	57	60
2. Traits that contribute to failure			
Receive violence , do not use it	7	14	0
Seek to remove antagonist	16	12	6
Focus on multiple issues	9	22	0
Subject to arrests	8	25	25
Internal factionalism	23	35	22
Nonbureaucratic organization	29	28	38
Universalistic goals	10	30	40
Decentralization of power	25	40	32
Small Group (under 10,000)	27	30	44
No incentives for members except solidarity	42	36	40
Use no constraints	28	39	43
Has radical goals	35	43	40
3. All groups	53	47	49

SOURCE: GURR

On the basis of this empirical research, Gamson came to the conclusion that organizational and tactical variables play a very significant role in contributing towards the success of the protest groups. Further, according to him -

...the groups that used 'violence, strikes and other constraints' (eighteen out of fifty-three) had better-than-average success, while the twenty-two groups that neither gave nor received violence had middling success. Objectives sought were somewhat less decisive: groups whose goals were limited and did not threaten their opponents' displacement tended to be more successful.¹³

According to him, those groups which aimed to displace their opponents, or which had radical goals, or whose efforts were not directed to specific issues, were the ones which were likely to lose.¹⁴

Besides, Gurr and Gamson, another scholar who has provided a theoretical perspective for studying the outcome of political conflict is P.D. Schumaker. He has studied the group fate of the protestors by emphasizing on the idea that whether the protestors were in a position to bring about changes in public policy so as to meet their demands. This approach was adopted by him in the case study undertaken of American cities, during the period 1960s and early 1970s, to study the official response to the protest that took place in the cities. According to Schumaker official response can be of the following types - no response, minimal response, compromise response or adoption of

13. Ibid., p. 258.

14. Ibid., p. 258.

a policy that meets the demands of the protestors.¹⁵

But unlike Gamson who lays emphasis on a variety of traits that contribute to the success of the protestors, Schumaker has given importance to the constraints used by protestors. These constraints are:

- "1. constraints avoided; protestors use private negotiations only
2. disruptive constraints avoided but protestors discredit or embarrass officials by publicizing demands
3. protestors employ nonviolent and minimally disruptive direct action tactics such as marches or rallies
4. protestors use nonviolent but disruptive or obstructive tactics such as sit-ins and boycotts
5. protestors use violence resulting in personal injury or property damage".¹⁶

In order to study the effectiveness of the above mentioned constraints (when used by issue - specific protest groups), Schumaker has put forward two main hypotheses -

- i. In situations where the political conflict is confined to the protest groups and their targets, in those situations, according to Schumaker, the use of constraints enhances the chance of successful outcome for the protest groups and
- ii. In situations, where the public is involved in the resolution of political conflicts in those situations, the

15. Scholars like M. Lipsky have categorized the official response into six different categories - symbolic satisfaction may be given to the protestors; token material satisfaction may be given; proforma organizational changes can be made; the official may claim an inability to meet the protestors demands; actions can be postponed or the protestors may be publically discredited by the officials.

16. Gurr, n.l, pp. 259-60.

use of constraints lessen the chances of a successful outcome for the protest groups. 17

Apart from the above two main hypotheses, Schumaker has also put forward certain subsidiary hypotheses like - if the protestors demands affect other citizens, then the scope of conflict is likely to broaden and the effect of which would be that there would be greater opposition to protestors. Further, Schumaker points out that - "... in a 'nothing to lose' situation may have so much nuisance value (or worse) to officials and the public that it is less costly to meet some of their demands than to countenance escalating violence".¹⁸

Thus, according to Schumaker - "... the use of constraints (including violence) by protestors is curvilinearly related to success: success is greatest either when constraints are low and the scope of conflict narrow, or when constraints are so high and persistent that the public and participants are polarized".¹⁹

Apart from the theoretical perspective provided by Ted Robert Gurr, Gamson and Schumaker to study the outcome of political conflict, there are other scholars who have studied the consequences of political conflict. These consequences can be broadly put under two distinct categories - those who see negative outcomes of political conflict and others who view the positive effects of political conflict.

Most of the scholars of conflict i.e, from Edmund Burke to P.A. Sorokin to S.P. Huntington have regarded the occurrence

17. Ibid., p.260.

18. Ibid., p.260.

19. Ibid., p. 260.

of violent conflict as undesirable.²⁰ According to these scholars, the occurrence of violent conflict leads to loss of life, destruction of property, disruption of ordered routines of life and government. Besides, these negative effects, violent form of conflict leads to a reversal of economic progress and brings about a transformation of a good government into an oppressive autocracy.²¹ Similar kinds of viewpoints have also been expressed by William J. Dixon and Bruce E. Moon on the outcomes of domestic political conflict. According to these scholars, as a result of political conflict, the allocation of resources is effected. for they are directed away from developmental purposes and further the occurrence of violent conflict also leads to a destruction of resources. "Other resources are hidden or driven abroad by fear of loss in such quantities that international gold markets reverberate with both anticipated and actual domestic violence. By the same token, neither investments nor such revenue streams as tourism can be maintained in the face of even relatively limited conflict".²² Further, as a result of conflict, production and exchange activities are effected thus leading to underutilisation of resources. The negative consequences, according to Dixon and Moon, are felt most by the poor for most of them are marginally employed. The negative outcome of political conflict

20. William J. Dixon and Bruce E. Moon, "Domestic Political Conflict and Basic Needs Outcomes: an Empirical Assessment", Comparative Political Studies (London), vol.22, no.2, July 1989, p.178.

21. Gurr, n.1, p.239.

22. Dixon and Moon, n.20, p.181.

is felt the most on basic needs for the redistributive and infrastructural activities of the government are effected by the occurrence of political conflict.²³ The negative effect of conflict is felt on growth and basic needs all the more when a situation emerges where conflict breeds conflict.²⁴

Apart from the above-mentioned negative outcomes of political conflict, some conflict theorists have emphasized the idea that - "... the occurrence of violence in conflict situations tends to undermine the effectiveness of conflict - regulating procedures such as negotiation and mediation".²⁵ However, there are other groups of scholars who have highlighted the positive consequences of violent political conflict.

According to Frank J. Popper, internal war at a low level of violence plays an important role in transforming the traditional village, making it more receptive to external influences and thus accelerate the process of political development of a developing country.²⁶ Further, the emergence of middle class as a result of internal war, also makes contribution towards the development process.²⁷

23. Ibid., p.182.

24. Ted Robert Gurr and Mark Irving Lichbach, "Forecasting Internal Conflict - A Competitive Evaluation of Empirical Theories", Comparative Political Studies, vol. 19, No.1, April 1986, p.6.

25. Ted Robert Gurr, "The Revolution - Social Change Nexus: Some Old Theories and New Hypotheses", Comparative Politics, (New York), vol. 5, no. 3, April 1973, p. 381.

26. Frank J. Popper, "Internal War as a Stimulant of Political Development", Comparative Political Studies (California), vol. 3, no.4, January 1971, p.415.

27. Ibid, p.416.

The other positive consequence of internal war according to him is that - as a result of internal war, people start thinking that they belong to one society and are under one government. As a result of internal war, the feeling of "public regardiness" replaces the feeling of "private regardiness". Thus, one can say that internal war contributes towards the process of "building a nation".²⁸

The other scholars who have viewed the outcomes of political conflict in positive terms are William J. Dixon and Bruce E. Moon. They say -

Domestic conflict is capable of massive societal restructuring, particularly at its greatest magnitudes of violence. Governments rise and fall while institutions crumble and are replaced. Social patterns - of authority and political power, of status and access to influence, of wealth and welfare - are all rendered malleable and temporary. When the crucible of conflict has cooled, the society usually reforms but, as in any process of crystallization, the new structure is novel and its very appearance may be unrecognizable.²⁹

Also, political conflict may contribute towards the emergence of a society which is more egalitarian and is more efficient. They further hold:

Marxists would anticipate that class-based conflict would strengthen class consciousness and accelerate the reorientation of the socioeconomic formation. Violence frequently accompanies the adjustment of the social relations of production to the productive forces and conflict is the means by which the political

28. Ibid., p. 416.

29. Dixon and Moon, n. 20, p. 179.

superstructure is brought in line with the mode of production. These developments liberate productive forces, accelerating growth while simultaneously shifting the allocation of surplus in ways likely to improve basic needs provision.³⁰

Mancur Olson has also viewed the outcomes of political conflict in a positive way. According to him, political conflict brings to an end the obstacle that stand in the way of liberal functioning of the economy. By doing so, political conflicts prevent the emergence of a situation of stagnation in a system.³¹ Further, the occurrence of political conflicts in the medium-term contribute towards the process of rapid economic growth.³²

The positive consequence of political conflict have also been emphasized by scholars like Lewis A. Coser.

In his theoretical work, The Function of Social Conflict he has put forward this viewpoint: "far from being necessarily dysfunctional, a certain degree of conflict is an essential element in group formation and the persistence of group life".³³ Thus, Coser takes up George Simmel's famous proposition that "even in entering into violent relationships, the very act of conflict establishes a relationship where none may have been before".³⁴

30. Ibid., p. 183.

31. Ibid., p. 183.

32. Arthur A. Goldsmith, "Democracy, Political Stability and Economic Growth in Developing Countries: Some evidence on Olson's Theory of Distributional Coalitions", Comparative Political Studies, vol. 18, no.4, January 1986, p.518.

33. Gurr, n.1, p. 240.

34. Henry Bienen, Violence and Social Change (Chicago, 1968), p.21. Similar viewpoints have also been made by V.I. Lenin when he says "the correct and organized use of force would bring about the strengthening of class consciousness". (Gurr, n.1, p. 240).

According to Coser, people resort to violence only when the established authority fails to accommodate the demands of new groups. People resort to violence "...only under extremely frustrating, ego-damaging, and anxiety-provoking conditions".³⁵ Similar kind of viewpoint has also been expressed by William Kornhauser -

Rebellions are ways of making demands on authority, whether for the change of specific acts or rulers or of structures of authority.... Rebellions therefore signify failures, small or large, of the political system. Nevertheless, rebellions may be a way of performing political functions in the absence of political structures capable of accommodating political demands. Rebellions also may³⁶ help to create more effective political arrangements".

The other positive consequence of which Coser talks about is that political conflicts helps in removing maladjustments that exist in the political system.³⁷

A positive viewpoint regarding the outcome of political conflict has also been expressed by H.L. Nieburg in his essay "The Threat of Violence and Social Change" published in 1962. According to him, "violence and threat of violence are among the pressures that lead to legal change, And threats are credible to the extent that those who seek change occassionally unleash actual violence. Therefore, in as much as the fact of violence

35. Ibid., p. 22.

36. Harry Eckstein, Internal War: Problems and Approaches (New York, 1964), p. 142.

37. According to Coser, violence is an indicator of maladjustment of the political system; hence in order to remedy this maladjustment, the rulers undertake remedial social action.

reinforces the effect of threat of violence, threat of violence can be a positive force for peaceful social change".³⁸

Further, while talking of violence and the threat of violence, he says - "They instill dynamism into the structure and growth of the law, the settlement of disputes, and the processes of accommodating interests"³⁹

The other scholar who has focussed on the positive consequences of violence is Hannah Arendt. According to Hannah Arendt violence leads to the destruction of the old system and marks the beginning of a new political system.⁴⁰

Apart from the above mentioned scholars who have concentrated on positive effects of political conflict, the other eminent scholars who have focussed on the positive consequences of extreme form of political conflict - revolution are Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and G. Sorel.

According to Marx, the occurrence of political revolutions

38. Gurr, n.l, p.240.

39. Joan V. Bondurant in association with Margaret W. Fisher, eds., Conflict: Violence and Non-violence (New York, 1971), p.73.

40. Hannah Arendt, On Revolution (Middlesex, 1965), p.35. Similar viewpoint has also been expressed by Theda Skocpol. According to Skocpol, the occurrence of French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions replaced the old regime by a distinctly structured new regime. Further, according to Skocpol, after the outbreak of Revolutions, the peasants and the urban workers were allowed to participate in national politics and in projects run by the State. See, Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (London, 1979), p.285.

marks the transition from one economic system to another.⁴¹ Thus in the words of Marx, "... Force, however, plays another role in history, a revolutionary role;..., it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with the new, that it is the instrument by the aid of which social movements forces its ways through and shatters the dead, fossilised, political forms..."⁴²

Like Marx, Engels too has emphasized on the use of force. According to him, the victorious revolutions contribute to the process of spiritual and moral regeneration.⁴³

As far as Sorel is concerned, positive consequences of extreme form of political conflict is the emergence of new and healthy society.⁴⁴

The entire discussion on outcomes of political conflict can be summed up thus⁴⁵ -

1. The greater is the use of violence in the present society; the greater will be its acceptance in the future. Further, if the use of violence enables the dissidents' to seek gains, the greater will be its value for the future dissidents.

41. Similar viewpoint has been expressed by Alexander Gershenron when he says - "It is, then, the function of political revolution to mark the transition from one economic system to another and as such to be an integral part of economic history". See Bienen, n. 34, p. 80.

42. Ibid., p. 70.

43. Gurr, n.1, p.240.

44. Bienen, n.34, p.72.

45. Gurr, n.1, p.242-43.

2. The greater is the use of violence by a regime to impose enduring deprivations on a dissident group, the greater will be the opposition by the dissidents in the future.
3. The occurrence of violent conflicts depends to a great extent upon the kind of material gains made by the dissidents. Thus, in situations where the material gains are quickly consumed, in those situations there takes place reoccurrence of violence but in situations where permanent solution has been provided, there comes an end to the conflict.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The existence of economic inequalities in certain situations act as an important precondition for the outbreak of political conflict. This is a viewpoint that has been upheld by a large number of social scientists.¹

In this chapter, the emphasis is on certain measures which when undertaken effectively, can play a significant role in reducing the inequalities existing in economic terms in the society and thus lessening the chances of occurrence of political violence.

Great political thinkers like Aristotle advocated the idea of strengthening of the middle class as an important factor that will prevent the outbreak of revolution.² Similar viewpoints have also been expressed by scholars like Euripides. He says:

"...the midmost saveth states;
They keep the order which the state ordains".³

Karl Marx has provided a radical solution to the problem of economic inequalities. According to him, the outbreak of

-
1. These social scientists have postulated the existence of a direct relationship between economic inequalities and political conflict. For details refer Chap. 2, Section A.
 2. Aristotle, The Politics, (Translated by T.A. Sinclair, Revised and Represented by Trevor. J. Saunders) (Middlesex, 1981), p. 369.
 3. J.C. Davies, ed., When Men Revolt and Why: A Reader in Political Violence and Revolution (London, 1971), p. 206.

revolution is the only remedy to overcome the economic divisions existing in the society for it will bring to an end the existence of the institution of private property.⁴

However, it must be emphasized that the occurrence of violent political conflicts is not necessarily the only solution to the problem of economic inequalities.⁵ On the other hand, the goal of economic equality can be achieved by certain reformist and progressive measures undertaken by the state machinery. The state thus has to enter the arena of economic activities, undertake certain welfare measures with the ultimate aim of promoting the idea of material and social well-being of the society as a whole.

Let us now discuss in detail the reforms that should be carried out by the state to promote economic equality⁶ and thus

-
4. However, it should be borne in mind that occurrence of revolution though has positive consequences, yet it is not free from negative outcomes. This idea has already been dealt in Chapter -3.
 5. People resort to violent political conflicts like revolution with the aim of bringing reform. But such an objective need not get concretised in situations where counter-revolution takes place.
 6. Some scholars like W.G. Runciman and Prof. Frederick August von Hayek are against the idea of economic equality. According to Runciman, equality in economic terms tends to have negative effects on the efforts of the creative individuals and on the productivity of the nation. According to Prof. Frederick August von Hayek, the governmental efforts directed towards achieving the goal of economic equality acts as a threat to the freedom of the individuals. On the other hand, scholars like R.H. Tawney supports the idea of economic equality. According to him equality helps to promote the idea of public good.

contribute towards the emergence of a harmonious political order. Some of these are -

Some scholars have regarded the existence of economic inequalities in the form of ownership and inheritance of wealth as an important factor in the emergence of a situation of political conflict.⁷ The state thus should formulate ways for overcoming such a situation. Some of the devices that can be used by the state are a tax on wealth, a tax credit scheme, and a graduated inheritance tax falling on the recipients of bequests.

The inequalities emerging owing to the ownership of more concrete form of wealth - land has been regarded by some theorists as significant precondition for the emergence of political conflicts.⁸ Such a situation can be overcome by the state by enacting land reform measures⁹ which include steps like reduction in rent, security of tenure, breaking up of large holdings and redistributing the excess land to the peasants, cultivators and landless workers. Land redistribution through effective land reforms legislation act

7. For details, see Chap II, section A.

8. For more details please refer Chap II, section A.

9. This task however is not an easy one for it involves great deal of administrative complexity and is a time consuming process. Further, it may so happen that the people who are delegated the task of bringing reforms may belong to the same group which owns maximum land; they thus would not like to act in ways that would harm the interests of their own group.

as an important precondition for raising the productivity of both the land and the labour. These measures pave the way towards just agrarian relations and agrarian structures and thus contribute towards the emergence of a society where minimum inequalities exist.

Apart from reducing inequalities in terms of wealth; the state should also direct its efforts towards minimising income inequality, which for some theorists provide an important ground for the occurrence of political disorder.¹⁰ This kind of situation can be overcome by the state in various ways.

The state can impose progressive taxation on the income of the people which exceeds a particular level, which can be fixed by the state. Besides, imposing a limitation on the income of the rich; the existing income inequality can also be reduced by the state by increasing the return from assets that are possessed by the poor. This can be done by increasing the output prices and reducing the input prices. In cases, where the poor does not possess anything but their labor; in those situations the income of the poor can be increased by raising their real wages or by providing more outlets of employment. Thus, the state can play an important role towards creating political stability by distributing income in such a way that concentration does not take place in a few hands.

10. Refer to Chap II, Section A for more details.

The state should also undertake measures to control factors like education and urbanization; for these have been regarded as important for generating a situation of frustration and thus aggression.¹¹

The level of education determines to a great extent the socio-economic mobility. Hence, the state should undertake positive actions like provision of public education. The state should see that no one is denied schooling opportunity in line with his abilities and desires for lack of the necessary means. Thus, by doing so, the state can play an important role in creating political order for each individual will be provided a chance to climb the career ladder of meritocracy.

As already pointed out in Chapter I, urbanization as a factor does contribute towards worsening the political situation for it tends to exacerbate the income inequality.¹²

The problem of income inequality arises when migration starts taking place from rural to urban areas. In order to combat with such a situation, the state should undertake measures which control the infiltration of rural population to the urban areas. To do this, the state should direct its efforts towards providing greater employment opportunities to the masses in the rural areas. It should set up industries which are in a position to absorb the

11. Refer to Chap. I for details.

12. The details has been provided in Chap-I, section IV (f).pp.27-29.

surplus labour. The state should provide financial assistance with the aim of concretising the idea of self-employment. Further, it should also see that there takes place a balanced regional development. All these steps undertaken by the state machinery can play an important role for reducing the emergence of tensions among individuals and thus the chances of outbreak of political conflicts.

Apart from the above mentioned measures which should be undertaken by the state to curtail income inequality; the state should aim at accelerating the process of economic growth in such a way that concentration of economic power does not take place in the hands of few people.

All the above suggested measures if carried out with effectiveness by the state machinery can help in contributing towards the emergence of a reasonably just economic order.¹³ This equitable economic order can contribute towards maximising the welfare of the maximum number and thus contributing towards the emergence of a society which is free from competition amongst groups, class divisions and thus of political conflicts.

13. The achievement of just economic condition is a Herculean task for even in the socialist countries which have abolished private property; inequalities do exist for they still have to devise some machinery which will lead to economic redistribution.

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