parties to all relationships have some power : the sociological examination of power concerns itself with discovering and describing the relative strengths: equal or unequal, stable or subject to periodic change. Sociologists usually analyse relationships in which the parties have relatively equal or nearly equal power in terms of constraint rather than of power. Thus 'power' has a connotation of unilateralism. If this were not so, then all relationships could be described in terms of 'power', and its meaning would be lost.

Even in **structuralist social theory,** power appears as a *process,* an aspect to an ongoing social relationship, not as a fixed part of social structure.

Primary and Secondary Power

> - One can sometimes distinguish primary power : the direct and personal use of force for coercion;
> - and secondary power, which may involve the threat of force or social constraint, most likely involving third-party exercisers of delegated power.

Types of Power

Power may be held through:

- Delegated authority (for example in the democratic process)
- Social class
- Personal or group charisma
- Ascribed power (acting on perceived or assumed abilities, whether these bear testing or not)
- Expertise (Ability, Skills) (the power of a doctor to bring about health; another famous example would be "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king")
- Persuasion (direct, indirect, or subliminal

Theories of Power

Rational Choice Theory

- Game theory, with its foundations in the theory of Rational Choice, is increasingly used in various disciplines to help analyse power relationships.
- One rational choice definition of power is given by **Keith Dowding in his book Power.**

- In rational choice theory, human individuals or groups can be modelled as 'actors' who choose from a 'choice set' of possible actions in order to try and achieve desired outcomes.
- An actor's 'incentive structure' comprises (its beliefs about) the costs associated with different actions in the choice set, and the likelihoods that different actions will lead to desired outcomes.

> - **Outcome Power**—The ability of an actor to bring about or help bring about outcomes;
> - **Social Power**—The ability of an actor to change the incentive structures of other actors in order to bring about outcomes.

This framework can be used to model a wide range of social interactions where actors have the ability to exert power over others. For example a 'powerful' actor can take options away from another's choice set; can change the relative costs of actions; can change the likelihood that a given action will lead to a given outcome; or might simply change the other's beliefs about its incentive structure.

As with other models of power, this framework is neutral as to the use of 'coercion'. For example : a threat of violence can change the likely costs and benefits of different actions; so can a financial penalty in a 'voluntarily agreed' contract, or indeed a friendly offer.

Marxist Theory of Power

- In the Marxist tradition, The Italian writer Antonio Gramsci elaborated the role of cultural hegemony with ideology as a means of bolstering the power of capitalism and of the nation-state.

- In order to understand why there had been no Communist revolution in Western Europe, whilst there had been in Russia, Gramsci conceptualised this hegemony as a centre, consisting of two halves.

- 'The back end', the beast, represented the more classic, material image of power, power through coercion, through brute force, be it physical or economic.

- But the capitalist hegemony, he argued, depended even more strongly on 'the front end', the human face, which projected power through 'consent'.

Modern Theory of Power

- One of the modern views of the importance of power in human activity comes from the work of **Michel Foucault**, who has said, "Power is everywhere... because it comes from everywhere."

- Foucault's analysis of power is founded on his concept "technologies of power".

- Discipline is a complex bundle of power technologies developed during centuries as Foucault demonstrated in 'Discipline and Punish'.

- For Foucault power is exercised with intention.

- Instead of analysing the difficult problem of who has which intentions, he focused on what is intersubjectively accepted knowledge about how to exercise power.

- For Foucault, power is actions upon others' actions in order to interfere with them.

- Foucault does not recur to violence, but says that power presupposes freedom in the sense that power is not enforcement, but ways of making people by themselves behave in other ways than they would have done.

Elite Theory of Power

- **Pareto, Mosca, Michel, Karl Mannheim, Schumpter, Anathony Down, Raymond Aron, Bottomore, C. Wright Mills, are the main exponent of elite theory of power.**

- **Elitism** is the belief or attitude that there are some select people who are considered to be the elite—a selected group of people with outstanding personal abilities, wealth, specialised training or experience.

- Alternatively, the term elitism could be used to describe a situation in which power is in fact concentrated in the hands of an elite, whether rightly or not.

- The elite theory of Pareto (1848–1923) is contained in his principal affirmation that 'history is a graveyard of aristocracies'.

- He develops his idea to the point that his theory of elite also becomes a theory of the circulation of the elites.

- According to him, in every society there is an increasing movement of individuals and elites from higher to lower levels and from lower to higher levels resulting in a considerable increase of the degenerate elements in the classes of elements of superior quality in the subject classes.

- Psychological changes in the characteristics of the elites occur from time to time that lead to the changes in the composition and operation of different elites so much so that some elites are replaces by others that sometimes causes political instability.

- Pareto finds that elites make both logical or rational and illogical or irrational actions for the attainment of their ends.

- He, however, advises that the elites should have the qualities, what he calls 'residues', through which their members can rise up and maintain themselves in power.

Residues of Pareto

- **Combination**-tendency to invent and embark on adventures;

- **Persistence of preservation** - tendency to consolidate and make secure;

- **Expressiveness**-tendency to make feelings manifest through symbolization;

- **Sociability** - tendency to affiliate others;

- **Integrity** - tendency to maintain a good self-image; and

- **Sex**-tendency to see social events in erotic terms.

Party System and Political Process

- Political parties are extra consti-tutional institutions which are crucial in running democratic government of a country.

- They are essential for the proper functioning of different types of democratic government.

- The successful democratic func-tioning of any government depends upon the healthy political party system.

- Bryce has said "political parties are inevitable" for the successful working of democracy.

- Maurice Duverger, Robert Michels, Max Weber, Ostrogorki, Sigmund Neumann, Sartori, Kirchhemer and others are some leading scholars in the field of comparative study of political parties.

- In some African countries, poli-tical parties are aligned with tribal and ethnic identities.

- In some Asian countries, religion based parties can be seen. Some political parties are closely aligned with the military.

- Everywhere it exhibits an etra ordinary degree of adaptability and adjustment.

- Political parties in the western world developed with Parlia-mentary process.

- They grew as electoral groups which obtained for a candidate the support and sponsorship of a few prominent citizens and raised funds for Parliamentary groups, thus constituting the beginning of political parties.

- In the third world countries, the background is different. It is the national movement for freedom that later led to growth of political parties. However, there was no legitimacy of govern-mental procedures within which the parties could operate and to which they could give their support. Thus, there was little experience with representative government.

Functions of Political Parties

- **Representation**
- **Integration**
- **Interest Conversion or aggre-gation**
- **Persuasion**
- **Political Recruitment**
- **Policy formation**
- **Control of the Government.**

- The first and foremost function of political parties is to represent the interests of the people. They articulate the interests that are considered to be important for acceptance by the political deci-sion makers.

- A political party integrates the individual into the political system. Political parties are agents of political participation, political socialization and mobi-lization.

Definitions of Political Parties

Edmund Burke—Political party is a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours, the national interest, upon some political priniciple in which they are agreed. It is their first purpose to pursue every method to put the men who hold their common plans into action with all the power and authority of the state.

Gilchrist—A political party may thus be defined as one organized group of citizens who profess to share the same political views and who by acting as a political unit, try to control the government.

MacIver—A political party is an association organized in support of some principles and policies, which by constitutional means it endeavours to make the determinant of the government.

Leacock—A political party is more or less a group of citizens who act together as a political unit.They share or profess to share the same opinion, on public questions and by exercising their voting power towards a common end, seek to obtain the control of the government.

Types of Political Party System

One-Party System

- It is usually found in totalitarian political systems

- Communist parties in communist countries are example of one-party system.

- In such countries, other parties are not allowed to function.

- One party system is found in some African countries and in some states ruled by military.

Two-Party System

- If there exist only two parties which are strong enough to expect coming into power, the system is called two party system.

- There may be other parties, but they are not competent enough to pose a threat to the big parties.

- Great Britain and the U.S.A. are classic examples of bi party system, where voters are given a clear alternative to choose a party.

Multi-Party System

- As the name itself clarifies, multi party system is characterized by the existence of more than two political parties in which no single party ordinarily expects to win a majority.

- Thus coalition government is a hall mark of multi party system.

- A political party functions as an agency to convert the various interests of the People into policy decisions. Political Party try to persuade the masses to accept the policies they have formed.

- Political parties function as a platform through which future leaders of the nation are recruited.

- Political parties formulate broad national policies for implement-ing them when they come to power.

- In a Parliamentary democracy, the ruling party takes the control of the government and the opposition keeps a healthy watch on the government.