Pluralism; an Old but New Phenomenon in Socio-political Processes

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Abstract: *This paper presents pluralism as a historical process. The term pluralism frequently appears not only in the field of political philosophy but also in social sciences. In one sense, the growing literature is stimulating and enriching, nevertheless the abundance of material attempting to explain the various interpretations of pluralist theory can be convoluted and overwhelming. Despite the constant usage of the term, its definition is much more complex. An attempt, here, is made to analyze and present some of the notable features of the pluralist debate and theoretical and methodological implications. The objective is to determine whether this phenomenon can be characterized as new, old or cyclically repeating. It is argued that aspects of pluralism, which are characteristic for pluralism in the present, appeared in remote past and they repeat in human history cyclically, and, consequently underlining that no single version of pluralism offers a wholly accurate description of the modern world. It is concluded that, for all the apparent weaknesses, pluralism has given us greater insight into the socio- political systems of modern democracies. Although no longer considered the potent display of equality as originally put forth, the pluralist stress on the role power of many pressure groups has been central to the survival of pluralism as a relevant theory for liberal democracies. Until Marxist and elitist interpretations of the sources and nature of power allow for greater influence of the multiplicity of interest groups, pluralist theory will continue to prevail as an important theory of the study of politics and socio-cultural issues in modern world.*

Keywords: *Pluralism, fairness, elitist, power, participation, diversity.*

Introduction

The continuing debate around pluralism is strangely paradoxical. In one sense, the growing literature is stimulating and enriching. Alternatively, the abundance of material attempting to explain the various interpretations of pluralist theory can be convoluted and overwhelming. Pluralism, a theory which gained acceptance and momentum in the 1950's and 1960's, has attempted to distinguish itself from Marxist and elitist schools of thought. In doing so, however, the parameters of "what is pluralism" have become vague. This paper is an examination of some of the notable features of the pluralist debate. Indeed, pluralism extends beyond politics into disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and economics, but the scope and purpose of this paper will be based mostly on social and political thought. An attempt is made to give as comprehensive an analysis as possible, and consequently argue that no single version of pluralism offers a wholly accurate description of the modern world. For this purpose the following questions need to be answered:

What are pluralism's main tenets? Is there a distinctively pluralist conception of the sources and power in society? What are the implications of pluralist ideas of power and the state for the methodology of studying socio- political processes? Is pluralism an anti-theory? It should be noted that the first question deals exclusively with classic pluralism, the critique of which will be explored in the meaning questions. For structural purposes, these criticisms will be sequentially revealed in the context of their relation to the respective questions. Before examining the above questions, it is helpful to see what does pluralism conceptually means?

What is Pluralism?

Pluralism conceptually refers to a condition in which many cultures coexist within a society and maintain their cultural differences. Webster dictionary defines it as "a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization" (2015). Since, in pluralism more than one basic substance or principle is accepted, it could

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refer to more than mere a society; say, system of government, or organization that has different groups that keep their identities while existing with other groups or a more dominant group. This means that, rather than just one group, subgroup, or culture dictating how things go, pluralism recognizes a larger number of competing interest groups that share the power and resources. Pluralism serves as a model of democracy, where different groups can voice their opinions and ideas. These meanings equate pluralism with such concepts as multi-culturalism, relativism, discrimination, inclusionism and so on (Longley, E. and Kiberd, D. 2001). Examples in real life have been highly cited in the literature. For instance, it is said that Many cities in the United States have areas referred to as Little Italy or Chinatown, where people from those countries keep their cultural traditions; native American tribes have separate governments, religions, schools, and communities in which they practice and live out their traditions and histories; in India, Hindus and Hindi-speaking people are the majority, but people of other backgrounds, religions, and languages also live there; Indonesia is a pluralistic society, where people of different backgrounds (religion, caste, culture, language, ethnicity) live side by side; in the United States many religions and denominations within religions are practiced side by side, with each group allowed to voice their concerns and thoughts (Sparke M. 2002; Martínez 1986; Cohen 1986). These few examples imply that today we are pluralist in some way, meaning that pluralism is unavoidable process. People are forced to live together in unprecedented ways. The unavoidability of pluralism has no a single reason, nevertheless explaining some of its basic tenets may help to understand its roots and sustainability.

What are Pluralism's Main Tenets?

This question is immediately problematic due to the lack of agreement on what constitutes pluralist theory. Grant Jordan assumes that "pluralism has been an under-explicit theory; an evolving or (less flatteringly) a mutating theory; an inconsistent theory". (1990: 286).

Although there is no single pluralist theory, Smith states that "it is possible to pull together the various strands to define the basic features of pluralism" (1990: 302). An effective starting point for this analysis can be found in Held's models of democracy. The roots of pluralism, however, date back to the works of great political philosophers such Locke, Madison and de Tocqeville, Held focuses "what may be regarded as the classic version found in the writings of, among others, Truman and Dahl". (1987: 188). Due to the complex nature of society, pluralism rejected the theories of Marxism and Elitism as too simplistic. Outlining the main features of pluralism may clarify this point.

- **Resources and Bargaining**

In the pluralist view, everyone has some resources to wield power in the political arena. It would be incorrect to assume that resources are simply another word for money. "Financial means are only one kind of resource, and can easily be outweighed by, for instance, in opposition with a substantial power base" (ibid: 189). Therefore, virtually no group is powerless in policy influence. However, one group may have better access to relevant resources at a particular time or for a specific issue. Given this situation, groups must continually bargain to further their interests. There are many types of groups in society that are overtly powerful, reflected largely by their ability to influence policy. Pluralists believe that this power exists in all groups, given the fragmented and static nature of society. "In the pluralist account, power is non-hierarchically and competitively arranged. It is an inextricable part of an 'endless process of bargaining' between numerous groups representing different interests…" (ibid: 189). While no group can expect to have their demands fully satisfied, the constant interaction between these groups shape decisions in a way that gives many groups a share in policy formulation.

This brings to light the important role of government in a pluralist society. Pluralism exists on liberal democracies, and governments in these systems are not monolithic entities. Government is "just another type of interest group competing for scarce resources" (ibid: 190). There are numerous theories that deal with the state role a mediator such as the weathervane, neutral, and broker state models (Dunleavy and O'Leary), but suffice it to say that pluralists generally assume that the states function is merely that of a forum where these bargaining inputs are processed.

- **Overcoming Membership and Equilibrium**

If pluralists believe that power is dispersed among groups throughout society, it is crucial to examine the character of these groups. Marxists believe that class is the central element in any group theory, but in Truman and Dahl's account class is reduced to one among several variables. Dahl states that "economic class is only one factor, often less important than others and can and quite evidently do yield distinct sub-cultures- ways of life, outlooks, norms,

identification, loyalties, organizations, social structures" (Maley 19883: 370). These sub-cultures produce other groups that are united under common interests.

Bentley's analysis stressed the importance of groups in the socio-political process. He believed that "all political activity is the result of group pressure. Therefore the political process "is concerned with the adjustment of conflicting interests manifesting themselves in group antagonisms" (Nicholls 1975: 20). Considered the latter-day disciple of Bentley, Truman suggested that the 'overlapping membership' between groups protects the democratic system. Given the array of social, cultural, religious and vocational institutions, most individuals belong to more than one group. According to Truman, "no tolerably normal person is therefore totally absorbed in any single group to which he belongs" (Nicholls 1974: 24). Furthermore, the internal divisions among each interest group weakens its ability "to secure a share of power incommensurate with its size and objectives" (Held 1987: 191). An appropriate example of this can be seen in the composition of women's organizations. Although many women are united as a group to correct the existing social injustices regarding issues such as equal pay and tougher rape legislation, there is a strong division concerning the right to have an abortion. As a consequence, the abortion issue has divided women into pro-abortion and anti-abortion groups. Although these same women remain united on certain issues, there is clearly the existence of internal divisions.

These internal divisions are the result of cross-cutting cleavages. This may initially seem detrimental to democracy stability, but pluralists argue the opposite. "Each new cleavage continues to narrow the cross clefts, so that one might say a society is sewn together by its inner conflicts" (Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987: 60). Pluralists further argue that the existence of 'potential groups' strengthens stability. The continuous influence of the various sub-cultures always holds the dangerously incalculable degree of latent power. This is once again somewhat similar to the Marxist axiom of collective interest, but extends beyond any simple notion of class consciousness. Dahl asserts that class "in its various manifestations is only an element, albeit nearly always a significant one, in a fragmented pattern of cleavages…" (1978: 193).

The most obvious place that these organized and unorganized groups express their interests is in the voting booth. Dahl's polyarchy, meaning the rule of (archy) the many (poly), asserts that elections by the 'minority's government' ensures that competition is fair. "A tyrannous majority is impossible because elections express the preferences of various competitive groups, rather than the wishes of a firm majority" (Held 1987: 193. Politicians must therefore seek to find consensus among the public. Directly-elected politicians that take the pulse of their constituencies will fare much better at the polls than those pursue private interests.

The success of polyarchy depends on consensus. To ensure fairness and honesty in a democratic society, there must be an agreed set of rules and objectives. This prevents continued disruption of the system, because the winner does not take all, and the losers can accept defeat knowing that their chance at success will come again. How does this consensus account for the many apathetic, disinterested, and uninformed citizens? These citizens may not be vocal or active, but inactivity is by no means indicative of hostile disagreement with the rules of the game. On the contrary, the lack of hostility more likely signifies some degree of agreement. Pluralists agree that the lack of involvement actually benefits the stability of the system, because "extensive participation can readily lead to increased social conflict, undue disruption and fanaticism" ibid 1987: 191).

From the above debate, we may conclude that pluralist theory has had a profound influence on post-war social and political theory, especially in America and Britain. The theory transcended the rigidity of constitutional and institutional forms, dispersing power throughout society. Although the numerous critics have attacked virtually every concept in pluralism, the theory has adapted to meet these challenges. Whether these changes diluted pluralism to a significant degree will be discussed in the following questions.

Is there a Distinctively Pluralist Conception of the Sources and Nature of Power?

The pluralist attempt to distinguish the sources and nature of power from Marxist and elitist interpretations has encouraged difficulties. Although pluralists see the source of power dispersed among various groups, this belief does not divorce pluralism from a Marxist or elitist perspective. Examining the theories of countervailing power and cooptation to expose some the problems with a pluralist distinction may help to clarify this attachment. Before it, it is helpful to discuss briefly the most salient feature of current versions of pluralist theory: inequality among groups.

In 'pluralism reconsidered', Dahl recognizes that pluralism and polyarchy "are not sufficient conditions for a high degree of equality in the distribution of control over the government of the state or other organizations, or the distribution of political resources, or, more broadly, status, income, wealth, and other key values" (1978: 199).

Dahl assures us that the pluralists never believed in total equality; a fact that has escaped many critics of pluralism. However, the mere existence of inequalities demanded the pluralist school to redress this seemingly incongruous notion. Added to this largely theoretical criticism was the worldwide social and political crises that emerged in the mid-1960, notably the impact of the Vietnam War on America. New versions of pluralism sought to resolve its problems, simultaneously maintaining that some elements of classic pluralism were indispensible.

- **Countervailing Power**

Pluralists believe in Galbraith's theory of countervailing power. The theory has been described as 'the modern version of Adam Smith's economics and of the Madisonian or Edralism theory of checks-and-balances, adapted to the new circumstances of large scale organizations" (Pilisuk and Hayden 1969: 132). The imbalance of power in society is constrained by external forces. Powerful pressure groups are kept in check by the emergence of counter-groups. Once again, the pro-abortion/anti-abortion groups provide an appropriate example. These groups arise in response to pressure exerted by their counterparts, because these pressures have some negative impact on them. Furthermore, pluralists believe "even if countervailing groups do not emerge, powerful groups are also externally checked by the existence of potential groups" (Smith 1990: 305). Equilibrium is therefore maintained, with no single group having excessive power. The government also provides an internal check to these powerful groups; those seeking re-election must not ignore the interests of the less-powerful and unorganized interests.

Given the inequality of groups, countervailing power is immediately problematic. A society composed of groups having equal power, the achievement of any significant equilibrium is by no means guaranteed. There are some interests that are relatively balance, but to assign such equality to all competing interests is inconsistent with the recognition of interest group inequalities.

Of all the multiple groups competing for influence, business has been identified as holding a privileged position as an interest group. Dahl and Lidblom agree that "businessman play a distinctive role in polyarchal politics that is qualitatively different from that of any interest group. It is also much more powerful than an interest group role" (Manely 1983: 373). This special position of business is as a result of the functions of large corporations in the political economy. Undoubtedly, a principle indicator of government stability rests on a stable economy. Government, therefore, while not conceding all power, cannot neglect the strength of business in legitimizing their authority.

Pluralist acknowledgment of this privileged position disables the abilities of countervailing powers, which are "not sufficient to check business and so there is a danger its power will corrupt the democratic process. Business is therefore in a position to "prevent issues which threaten the interests of business from reaching the agenda" (Smith 1990: 316-7). Avoiding the lengthy debate as to what constitutes public or private means of production, there are obviously businesses that retain a high degree of financial autonomy. This recognition of economic control, coupled with the special relationship with government, begins to resemble a Marxist analogy.

Although pluralists will argue that class is only one of many factors, this is merely an ideological split as to what constitutes a basic unit of society. Manely explains that, "in pluralist theory, classes have merely a nominal existence compare to groups; in class analysis, groups are seen and analyzed as fractions or sub-parts of class" (Manley 1983: 382). Marxist analysis of class can withstand privileged businesses by virtue of the inherent belief of massive inequalities; pluralists risk serious contradictions.

- **Cooptation**

Now that pluralism has been revised to allow for grater inequalities, pluralism must now be compared to elitist theory in a quest for distinction. Even if groups were dispersed throughout society, elitists argued that power was not. As Schattschneider so famously put it in 1960, "the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with strong upper-class accent".

C. wright Mills challenged pluralism from elitist position. He believed that the nature of the political system stifled small unorganized groups from influencing the policy process. There existed a 'power elite' – "a triumvirate of interest groups drawn from big business, the military and the political cliques surrounding the U.S. president" (Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987:144). This oligarchical system perpetuated the ideas and objectives of ruling elite. A phenomenon of 'cooptation' ensures this conformity.

Cooptation is a process through which those who climb the ladders of business and government are absorbed into the higher ranks of an organization. Those selected to advance are usually chosen by older members, conforming new entrants into the prevailing institutional practices. This constant psychological pressure shapes those climbing

the ladder to have the same outlook as everyone that rises to the top. "Cooptation, then, is an administrative and intellectual process that assures the continuity of large organizations" (Ricci 1971: 110). These elite do not necessarily remain in one organizational group: they can, if they choose, switch among them.

"The military chiefs like the tope business executives enter politics, politicians and 'warlords' take office in industry, and so on. This means that the most important pressure groups, which were at one time independent of each other, no longer complete. They devise policies and start military or industrial projects in concert with each other" (Schwartzmantel 1987: 57).

This is a serious charge levelled against pluralism, especially since many pluralists have conceded the 'privileged position' of business in relation to the government. Examples of these cross-overs are many, and given that there is a significant relationship between these groups, pluralism exhibits distributing tendencies toward an elitist perspective. In this respect, pluralists seem to have changed direction in their attack on oligarchy.

There does seem to be an important distinction between the pluralist and elitist nature of power. Dahl's study of the diverse community of New Haven led him to discover "that there was not a single, coherent, elite group, but a number of specialized groups interested in and influential upon decisions taken on specific issues, rather than across the whole field of political life (Vile 1983: 66). Dahl and his colleagues searched for the tangible, the graspable; they were satisfied with 'reputed power'. They felt that it was sufficient for someone to claim that on group has dominate over a community or nation "without basing his analysis on the careful analysis of a series of concrete decisions" (Dahl 1958: 466). If this was not the case, and other various groups could influence and benefit from policies that concerned them, then the theory of single ruling elite was more bark than bite. These "key" decisions would best prove whether oligarchy existed in New Haven.

To sum up the above discussion, we may say that pluralist views of equality have admittedly shifted. The pluralist complain about being incorrectly labelled as believing that total equality existed is countered by Manley. "but if it is true that pluralism has always recognized that not all groups are equal, it is also true that pluralism seems to require the assumption of at least some rough equality among groups for the system to be polyarchy" (Manley 1983: 379). However imperfect the balance, pluralism cannot dispense with these fundamental beliefs, because it then begins to slip into class or elitist assumptions of power. Placed against theories that were based on inequality from the outset, the pluralist bells of equality do not ring quit so loudly.

What are Methodological Implications of Pluralist Idea of Power?

A sizable portion of the criticisms that arose in response to pluralism centered on the methodology employed by pluralists. The assumptions and conclusions of arguably the most famous study, New Haven, were unacceptable. It would be too kind a description to say that methods of Dahl, Polsby and Wolfinger was exceptionally criticized: their ways of assessing the political process were outright assaulted. This being the case, the implications of pluralist methodology should therefore be addresses with emphasis on David Ricci, one of the most brutal critics of the onslaught.

In his *Community, Power and Democratic theory*, Ricci gives a competent analysis of the four most salient methodological problems. This is a feat in itself, for as Ricci notes. "The elements of this critique do not fall into a neat and consistent pattern, since they were expounded by different persons or for different purposes" (1971: 161-2).

- **Objectivity and overt conflict**

In *Who Governs*? Dahl intended his research to be as objective as humanly possible. The facts would speak for themselves; empirical evidence would provide a convincing appraisal of community politics in New Haven. This attempts at greater objectivity yielded subjective elements that exhibited the following characteristics: "inclusion of certain concepts and exclusion of others, acceptance of some data as relevant and rejection of other data as irrelevant, emphasis on particular community affairs and disregard of others" (Ricci 1971: 154). The choice of 'key' decisions exhibits these characteristics.

Dahl chose that he felt exemplified overt conflict. The 'routine' political decisions that were uncontroversial would not provide an adequate viewpoint to assess who governed New Haven. Dahl, therefore, concentrated on three issues that involved many public as well as private spheres of the community - public education, urban renewal, and party nominations. The involvement of a diversity of groups ensured the proper conditions for open conflict, and Dahl concluded that in these three areas, the input of various groups was taken into account. Dahl recognized

that public education and party nominations were "unimportant to *the Economic and social Notables*", but this raised the "analytical problem of salience". This is to say that *the Economic and social Notables,* disinterested in matters that were not important to them, may have felt no need to exercise their power. Ricci goes on to argue that it would have been better to "select intentionally an issue that is not only visible but also widely salient", giving such examples as right-to-work legislation and school integration (ibid: 163). Interest, therefore is an added condition to the methodology of selection.

- **Noncumulative resources**

The scope of power for any one group remained limited due to the tremendous diversity of resources that are dispersed throughout society. Money, knowledge, charisma, and expertise are just a few of the many resources that can be used to wield power. The various resources are noncumulative because "they do not attach to the same position; not all of them can be used in every event; and there is no one of them that dominate the rest" (ibid: 134). This last point is where noncumulative resources runs into serious trouble, because there is a failure to accept wealth as the superior resource.

Some sources like money per se a powerful resource and by most accounts cumulative ones. Wealth allows access to information, facilities, legal advice, and a host of other relevant political tools; these can be utilized at both local and national levels. I find the election campaigns are a good example of the power of money. The primaries can be described as a metaphorical horse race. To actually make it to the primaries, candidates need capital to campaign effectively at a national level. Various groups place their bets (Donations) to specific the campaign funds of specific candidates. Throughout the race, winners are posted and the losers (e.g. failing to gain financial support), March off the glue factory. The stakes increase, the odds change, and in the end those with the right number win. Most of these groups do not pour million into campaigns out of charity or for the sport of it; politicians are therefore obliged to listen to the interests of their supporters. It can be argued that they also cannot neglect the people that voted them in, they should never forget who got them on the ballot in the first place. Unlike those holding non-financial resources, "men of wealth can afford to wait, to bide their time while maintaining continual pressure on behalf of their interests" (ibid: 169).

- **Political power and indirect influence**

The methodology of pluralism does not account for potential power. As discussed earlier, in choosing to study issues that were of no interest to *the Economic and social Notables,* the political power could not be ascertained. Furthermore, political power and indirect influence are not empirically measurable; data cannot be obtained on power that is not exerted.

Many critics used the urban renewal scheme to explain this incongruity. Mayor Lee created the Community Action Commission (CAC) to assist in the redevelopment plan. Of those appointed to the CAC, the majority of citizens were also part of *the Economic and social Notables.* Dahl found that the Mayor was the most influential because he initiated   proposals, and the role of the CAC was minimal; the CAC approved the proposals, but participation beyond that wasn't significant. Bachrach and Baratz argue that Dahl's findings were unreliable. "To measure influence solely in terms of the ability to initiate and veto proposals is to ignore the possible exercise of influence or power limiting the scope of initiation (Bachrach and Baratz 1969: 15). The Mayor's self-appointed characterization as an "expert in group dynamics", led him to form proposals that he felt the CAC would find acceptable. Given the high proportion of ESNs on the CAC, Morriss suggests that "the Mayor was a pawn of the CAC, and that the banks and other economic interests could hold the Mayor, and the whole redevelopment plan, to ransom" (1972: 463). The ESNs, therefore, may have been highly influential without taking an active role if the Mayor chose his proposals based on the 'anticipated reactions of the CAC.

This relationship between the Mayor and the CAC is described as a 'closed-loop system', and this is "difficult to grasp empirically; we CAC only know that there is a circular flow of power – a closed loop … but who in the chain exercises more power? … No method has yet been devised" (Ricci 1971: 172). The existence of closed-loop system thereby destroys the pluralistic method of measuring power through the analysis of specific decisions. The power of relations between members of the public and private members of society will, no doubt, remain immeasurable.

- **Mobilization of Bias**

Of all methodological problems, the greatest attention has been focused on what Schattschneider termed the 'mobilization of biases. This concept, an amalgamation of the other methodological problems previously

discussed, deals mostly with decisions and non-decisions. The major flaw of pluralism was found in explaining "the way power and power relations were conceived" (Held 1987: 199). Power, which was exercised in the form of decisions, was measurable. But how does on measure a non-decision? There is debate as to what constitutes a non-decisions, but I feel a sufficient definition is a "a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker" (Bachrach and Baratz 1970: 44). The occurrence of non-decisions engenders a political system that acknowledges cumulative resources and latent power.

In Bachrach and Baratz's *Power and Poverty*, they quote the famous words of Schattschneider when he wrote: "all forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 8). Even if power is dispersed among many groups, this should not imply an equal distribution. Some groups will not be given an adequate forum to present their views, reducing their voices to significance. Furthermore, simply voicing opposition to the established practices of the system (e.g. businesses, universities, and the government) can evoke serious retribution. When chances for promotion disappear, economic sanctions emerge, and other situations emanate from the laps of the vested interests on top, the darker side of power appears. These realities silence potential opposition, limiting the scope of power to issues that don't 'rock the boat'.

Dahl and others have attempted to explain democracy from what Ricci calls the prophylactic perspective. Added to the undefined powers of the ESNs was the fact that conditions such as crime and underdevelopment were realities in places like New Haven, but the analysis of these was avoided (Ricci 1971: 157-8). Without a more comprehensive apprehensive appraisal of such community bias, a more genuine picture of the democratic nature of society was avoided.

Is Pluralism an Anti-theory?

Grant Jordan (1990) includes this question in the title of his essay on pluralism. There is indeed a 'pluralism of pluralism', which can be discovered simply through a perusal of the tentative offerings over the past four decades. In addition to the classic and neo-pluralist theory that may better fit the realities of political and economic power in the United States?" (Manley 1983: 369).

It is therefore suggested that pluralism is anti-theory. By this Jordan poses to an interesting consideration. "What it is rejecting is more important than what it is establishing. The pluralist image of a complex political process and uncertain outcome is a denial of elite and Maxist accounts" (Jordan 1990: 295-6). This seems to be a more palatable, although somewhat deflated, view of pluralism. By this we can say that the inability of pluralism to withstand an coherent model that is adequate, pluralists have be more concerned with what the political system isn't more than what pluralism is. It can be said that this is necessarily a weakness; Jordan argues that it may actually be strength. "There are just too many remarks in the pluralist corpus about networks, rules of the game, about forms of the state or group relationships – that leap out with contemporary relevance for the discipline to imagine that they can be ignored at little cost". He therefore concludes that, rather than abandon pluralism, "we need to build on and improve it … to explore the puzzles and inconsistencies it has engendered" (Jordan 1990: 301).

In conclusion, for all the apparent weaknesses, pluralism has given us greater insight into the socio- political systems of modern democracies. Although no longer considered the potent display of equality as originally put forth, the pluralist stress on the role power of many pressure groups has been central to the survival of pluralism as a relevant theory for liberal democracies. Until Marxist and elitist interpretations of the sources and nature of power allow for greater influence of the multiplicity of interest groups, pluralist theory will continue to prevail as an important theory of the study of politics.

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