

# Difference Between Classical & Human Relations Theory of Public Administration with Reference to The Impact of Foundational Political Theories

Priyanka Mohanty<sup>1</sup>, Somnath Dey<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduation & Masters in Political Science from the University of Ravenshaw, Cuttack, Odisha, India  
Qualified UGC NET in political science

<sup>2</sup>Qualification – Graduation & Masters in Political Science from the University of Kalyani, West Bengal, India  
Qualified UGC NET in political science, Qualified WBSET in political science

## Abstract:

In this journal, a sincere attempt is being made by the author and co-author to highlight the similarities and some of the common characteristics of political theories like positivism – post-positivism, modernism – postmodernism, materialism – post materialism as well as liberalism – conservatism, etc with administrative theories like classical theory and human relations theory of public administration. Here the aim and objective of writing this journal are to put a question on readers' minds to look into the matter of how political theories have a significant impact on the thinking process of administrative thinkers. Being a student of politics, we must be aware of a thinker's mindset and understanding of political phenomena which makes things better and easier in giving conceptual clarity as well as many readers as milestones to guide a scholar in future research. When we read the core subjects of political science, we must have holistic thinking rather than only understanding a particular theory in a given period. This journal is designed briefly to avoid reader boredom and as per reader's convenience to make readers believe that reading it is worthy for them. However, despite covering various points this journal as earlier discussed is just like a stepping stone to those students and scholars who try to think holistically on this topic.

**Keywords:** human relation, Classical, Universal, Unity of command, Hierarchy, organization

**Methodology:** This study is based on an analytical research methodology, which describes the internal interpretation of several theories in a combined manner. For the creation of this particular study, we have to take the help of various secondary data, like – Books, internet, articles, websites, and Journals. This study is related to the qualitative method with the help of inductive enquiry.

**Introduction:** In the late nineteenth century, public administration emerged as a separate academic discipline from the social science. But still, if we scrutinize the theoretical framework of political science and public administration in-depth, some similarities are observed. Some political theories have emerged

to deal with the changing situations, which are something equivalent to the theories of public administration.

• In explaining the evolution of public administration, we can identify five paradigms, which are as follows

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*Paradigm 1: Politics - Administration Dichotomy (1887-1926)*

*Paradigm 2: Principles of Administration (1927-1937)*

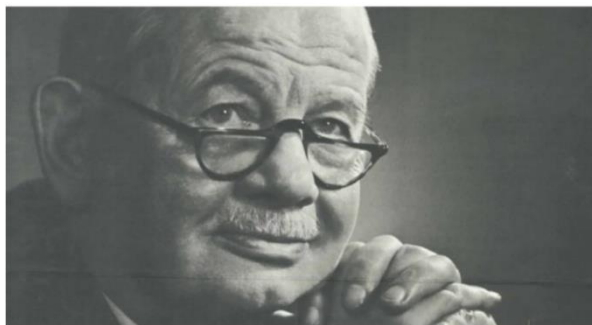
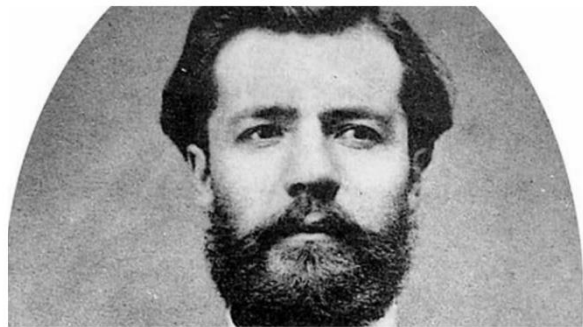
*Paradigm 3: Era of Challenge (1938 - 1947)*

*Paradigm 4: Crisis of Identity (1948 - 1970)*

*Paradigm 5: Public Policy Perspective (1971 - present )*

Among all these stages in the evolution of public administration, the second and third stages are very crucial for the discussion, due to the second stage is inextricably linked with the classical theory, and the third stage is connected with the human relation theory.

• Classical theory of public administration is constructed on some fixed principles with universal applicability. During this stage, the classical theory emphasized increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. This phase is also called the 'Period of Orthodoxy' because the theorists of this age favor all traditional configurations and denied the radical changes. Some such theorists are named - *W.F Willoughby, Henri Fayol, F.W Taylor, M.P Follet, Mooney & Reiley, Gulick & Urwick, etc.*



• Fayol in his book 'General Industrial Management' (1916) mentioned five elements of management, which are planning, organizing, command, coordination, and control. He also pointed out the 14 principles for the improvement of the economy and the efficiency of an administration, which are - *Division of work, Unity of command, unity of direction, Remuneration, Equity, Discipline, Authority and responsibility, scalar chain, Esprit De corps, Centralization, order, Initiative and stability.*

• Taylor discussed the scientific method and experiments to solve organizational problems and he also talked about the standardization of working conditions. He promotes cooperation between workers and managers for the development of production. Taylor firmly believes in scientific management theory. He divided work at the supervisory level under the concept of 'Eight Functional Foremanship'. Some famous

books of Taylor can be mentioned in this context which are - 'A Piece-Rate System' (1895), 'Shop Management' (1903), 'The Art of Cutting Metals' (1906), 'The Principles of Scientific Management' (1911).

- Gulick and Urwick explored the system of structural management in the organizational perspective, which is also known as the 'Administrative Management theory'. In the book 'The Papers on Science of Administration' (1937), they believed on scientific principles, empirical documentation with the systematic observation for the developmental issue.

Gulick coined the acronym '*POSDCORB*', which represents *Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting*.

Urwick identified 8 principles for the creation of effective organization, those are -

1. *Principle of Objectives*
2. *Principle of Correspondence*
3. *Principle of Responsibility*
4. *Scalar principle*
5. *Principle of the span of control*
6. *Principle of the specialization*
7. *Principle of the Coordination*
8. *Principle of the Definition*

- In the classical approach, M.P Follet play an essential role for the resolving conflict. She invented the idea of 'Constructive Conflict', which denotes the three ways of resolving a conflict, i.e Domination, Compromise, and Integration, and finally she suggested the method of integration, which is the best and difficult way for the resolving a conflict permanently.

In the phase of the challenging era, classical thinkers were facing some criticism from Herbert Simon and Elton Mayo. Simon criticized the principles-based approach with the term 'proverbs'/Myths. In the book 'Administrative Behaviour'(1947), Simon propounded the theory of 'Decision-Making' for organizational development. According to Simon, the decision-making process consists of three activities, i.e

1. *Intelligence activity*
2. *Design activity*
3. *Choice activity*

To him, the creation of any decision should include the combination of logic and facts, logic refers to the value with subjectivity, and facts describe reality and scientific order.

- The human relation theory emphasized the importance of social groups and social relationships in the organizational environment. Elton Mayo is the major exponent of human relation theory, who realized that informal elements like- value, morality, Interpersonal relationship, motivation, behavior, and psychological aspects are very significant factors for increasing production and organizational sustainability.



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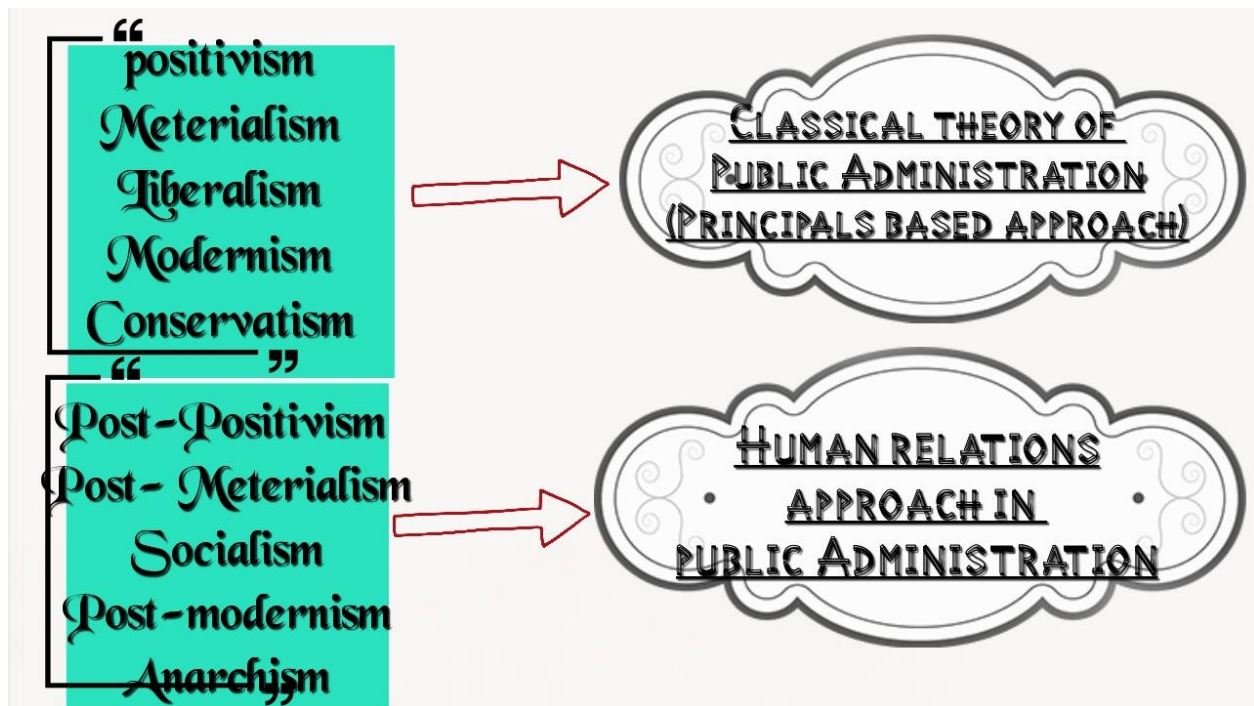
The human relation theory is the outcome of 'The Hawthorne Experiment', this experiment was conducted at the Western Electric company in the USA. This experiment was carried out in four phases i.e,

1. *The Great Illumination experiment (1924-1927)*
2. *Relay assembly test room experiment (1927-1928)*
3. *Human attitudes and sentiments / Mass interviewing programme (1928-1931)*
4. *Bank wiring experiment / Social organization (1931-1932)*

Human relation theory underlined certain points, which are based on the result of the Hawthorne experiment i.e,

- Focus on worker's psychology and mental satisfaction rather than hard machinery and economy.
- The organizational environment should promote social bonding and connectivity, where the employees feel themselves as a part of the organization.
- Create an informal structure for the making of interpersonal relationships between the workers and supervisor.
- Motivation is the key factor in the establishment of teamwork, cooperation, and flexibility among the workers.
- Human relation approach provides equal importance to individual and organizational interests simultaneously.

This study is based on certain similarities between the theories of public administration with the foundational political theories, which are given below -



### 1. Influence of Positivism and post-positivism tradition :

The evaluation of public administration represents mainly two approaches, namely the classical approach (principles-based) and Behavioral Approach (Human relation). In the history of public administration, these two theories were developed as a part of some political theories. For example, in public administration classical theory is closely connected with the positivist approach. Classical theory refers to some kind of principles-based thinkers i.e, fayol, Taylor, Gulick, Urwick, etc. This theory focuses on absolutism, which is based on some universal principles that are unchangeable. It emphasized the creation of a hierarchical structure in an organization, which is structured and controlled by the supervisor. Subordinates are like a machine to perform their activities to fulfilling the benefits of the organizational purpose.

Apart from this, positivism is a scientific approach, which defines facts, data, and quantity. That's why the positivist approach supported absolute reality and objectivity. It focuses on the source of true knowledge and universality, which is based on the scientific method.

The father of positivism, Auguste Comte said, "Positivism is a theory of knowledge according to which the only kind of sound knowledge available to humankind is that if science grounded in observation". Positivism firmly believes in the sense-based experience i.e, touch, smell, sound, taste, etc.

Similarly, the classical theorist F.W Taylor's scientific management theory emphasized some basic principles of scientific management. like - the development of true science, scientific selection, scientific education, etc which are comparatively engaged with the roots of positivism, due to both approaches encouraging universal absolutism. Otherwise, both theories are not of the same background, certain similarities can be seen between them. Like –

- Science /Data/Facts
- static and unchangeable structural dimension
- Some universal principles with a fixed hierarchy
- Focus on quantitative factors rather than quality.

- Believes in a sense-based experience with absolute applicability.

Relatively, the behavioral approach of public administration is interconnected with the theory of post-positivism. In the phase of the 'challenging era,' (1938-1947) behavioral theory plays an essential role in criticizing the classical approach. In the book 'The Proverbs Of Administration' (1946) Herbert Simon criticized the classical theory, called 'Proverbs', and the mechanistic approach. In this stage behavioral theory is also attached to human relation theory, which was propounded by Elton Mayo.

Human relation theory highlights the subjectivity of opinions, qualitative aspects, probability, the humanistic tendency of behavior, and unstructured & uncontrolled functions. According to Elton Mayo, human is not mechanistic being, humans always want an environment where they can work together as they wish with their autonomous activity. And if workers are mentally satisfied with the working condition, then definitely the production of the organization will increase day by day. Besides, post-positivism considered values, morality, and subjectivity which represent the critical reality with human tendency. Post-positivism is associated with the combination of logical (common sense) and empirical (science) factors. Whereas positivism's main aim was to bring out the truth, according to post-positivism truth can never be brought out but we can get closer to the truth.

So we can easily identify some similarities between behaviorism (Human relation approach ) and post-positivism, which are –

- both are against the principle of universal relevancy and support particularism.
- both promote different values, morality, perception, and opinions.
- Both firmly believe in the subjective worldview, which is mostly interpretative.
- both are against the quantitative factors and support the qualitative data.

## **2. Effect of Materialism and Post materialism :**

The publication of Ronald Inglehart's essay "Silent Revolution"(1977) heralds the birth of materialism and post-materialism. Inglehart noticed certain trends in his famous work about the changing political values, attitudes, and cultures of Western people. People's value system was drastically determined by material, security, physical as well as survival needs. We can understand in the context of modernization and industrialization theory which are more concerned about economic needs as well as their focus of attention on better off the livelihood of people as well as countries. People at that time who were disadvantaged, poor, poverty, and starving looked upon those theories and policies(which are largely focused on well off of prevailing conditions of people)as path-breaking ideas to improve or reform their existing conditions. But as we know the world is ever-changing, and change is the law of nature, and people's choices and values also went on a drastic transformation, although not violent but a gradual shift in which people got satisfied with high economic growth and prosperity. The same idea as discussed above was given by Inglehart in his book "Silent Revolution"(1977) in which he labels two hypotheses. One is the scarcity hypothesis and another is the socialization hypothesis. The idea of the scarcity hypothesis is that people's needs and values are determined by the socioeconomic environment. When these values and needs which were highly pivotal for people(economic needs) got fulfilled through economic growth and prosperity, people's interest to give them meaning or priority get diminishes, which can be compared to the law of marginal utility in economics(in which the meaning of a glass of water for thirsty fellow get change after having it).In this context, we can cite the idea of Abraham Maslow, a famous psychoanalyst theory of "need hierarchy" where he says as a human being is a continuously wanting creature, the lower needs get replaced with higher needs and this is an ongoing process. Furthermore, Inglehart is also similar to the

position of Maslow while advocating his non-materialist needs self-actualization which was at the top in Maslow's hierarchy. Here we can say economic conditions and value priorities are directly proportional to each other. Another hypothesis as given by Inglehart is the socialization hypothesis. Before understanding it we must understand the meaning of socialization. In simple terms, it means the values, attitudes, and beliefs of a definite population. Early socialization has a greater impact on adulthood. It means a person experiencing the phenomena i.e, condition of economic security and survival in the period of childhood has a greater impact on adulthood.

Classical theorists have also similar assumption to as materialists theory. They attach the utmost importance to incentive-driven growth. The central focus of them is that they think of man as an economic being primarily focuses on fulfilling physiological and security needs.

In contrast, in the case of human relations theory, the assumption is that human beings are also social beings instead of economic men. They get satisfaction as well as motivation through nonmaterial psychological things like their desire for self-expression by being a member of the group. The group indicates here a social setting in which a human searching for fulfillment and self-actualization. The above assumptions we can say bring human relations theory closer to the post-materialist theory.

### **3. Influence of Liberalism and Socialism :**

Similarly, liberalism is based on the idea that human beings are rational as utility maximizers, they know their best interest very well. No wonder classical theory also considers human beings as rational creatures who are concerned about their self-interest only, if the situation demands can sacrifice the larger interest of the formal organization for the sake of his interest which is the core assumption of classical theory in public administration.

Nonetheless, socialism highlights the importance of cooperation, sociability, and group solidarity. We talk about communism or socialism we can find that both of them highlight the strength of individuals being a part of a group or community that he is constantly trying to change it.

We can cite Marx's famous quotation "Men make their own history" we can get a clear understanding of how Marx considers human beings as progressive and have faith in their capabilities. In this scenario we can relate human relations theory with the positivistic view of human nature where he doesn't believe that man is essentially a social entity that always tries to build a healthy relationship with society through cooperation and goodwill, he feels aligned with his group and community rather than becoming alienated. Thus we can put human relations under this tradition.

### **4. Commonalities with Modernism and Post Modernism -**

It is rather controversial to discuss the era of modernism and Post Modernism.

We can say Modernism is a period in which dominant political theories like liberalism and Marxism had their command over the minds of the people. Shaking head to both of these theories was not an option for everyone. The world was also divided in the same line as believer of liberal ideologies and subscribers of Marxist or communist ideology. The problem of minorities who doesn't subscribe to these above ideologies took the form of post Modernism through the series of thinkers like Martin Heidegger, Jean Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Richard Rotary and Friedrich Nietzsche respectively. It can be considered as a revolutionary stand in which world is transforming from its status quo orientation to a dynamic system in which people becomes creator and constructor of their own ideologies and ideas rather than becoming passive being to accept those ideologies. It became a task for post Modernist thinkers

to raise awareness about the shortcomings of these theories. In this context we can discuss Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, proponent of famous concept of "Deconstruction" where he discussed about lack of consciousness among authors sometimes we can say ignorance towards answering societies major complications and contradictions. Further he added post modernism theory is to be regarded as "Post Structuralism" as change in dominant theories and beliefs may change and restructure the society drastically. Martin Heidegger in his work "Being and Time"(1927) enthusiastically express that with the advent of technology social man is moving towards mechanical world in which everyone is subordinated to the logic of machines. By recognizing human essence we can escape from this mechanical world in which human existence became less than technology.

In addition, to this Michel Foucault, a French radical intellectual, believed that these meta narratives(dominant theories)are the product of constant struggle for power only and truth being social construct. In the similar line let us understand the idea of classical and human relations theory. In classical theory like Modernist theory has immense interest in developing different theories and principles which are not much concerned about explaining complexities and contradictions of human problems rather these beliefs human beings should accept these theories unquestionably. In this context we can compare the idea of classical theories with that of modernism. In contrast, human relations theory stood against these universal principles as claimed by classicists. Although human relations theory has not applied any tool like deconstruction, semiotics etc, to uncover hidden power interest still this theory gives a voice to those administrative scholars and thinkers who are non subscribers of any particular set of assumptions and principles for structuring an organisation and increasing its efficiency.

Furthermore, classical theory has an assumption that human beings are subordinated to the technology where we can easily replace a human being with a machine, for which it is severely criticized as a mechanistic theory, here we can notice the closer relationship of classical theory with that of modernist theory which emerged during the enlightenment movement in order to highlight the importance of science and technology to make lives easier. But gradually, it became a giant to destroy and doubt at human capability. Nevertheless, human relations theory truly recognize the social character of human being as Foucault rightly observed truth being social construct, it is the man's social creation neither nothing.

Similarly, human relations theory doesn't believe in mechanistic theory where individual creativity and potential is deliberately ignored for organisational efficiency. Rather this theory goes beyond the technological world to recognize man's social world in which he feels himself fulfilled as well as has immense potential to increase organisational efficiency, here we can understand Martin Heidegger argument that man essence can be realised by attaching oneself to social world by renouncing the mechanistic world. Further it can be mentioned that classical theory is also known as structural theory and human relations theory is known as Post structural theory.

### **5. Impact of conservatism and Anarchism :**

Human nature refers to a phenomenon that highlights the inner characteristics of a human being. We get various interpretations and debates around these contested terms like nature-nurture, competition-cooperation as well as instinct-intellect, etc. But, here without going any deeper meaning our attempt should be to understand how the views or assumptions on human nature of various political ideologies like conservatism and anarchism have some commonalities with that of classical and modern theory.

In political theory, conservatism is influenced by social Darwinism the argument that people are selfish, greedy, have desires, etc. These basic qualities make a man a security-seeking creature who is primarily



interested in his actions. If we think of the classicist's argument we can notice this type of negative picture regarding human nature. Classical theory is based on the passivity of human nature as well as if reason is used by man it is used as means to an end only which is rightly described by Thomas Hobbes, the greatest conservative thinker of his time. In the words of Hobbes, "Government is necessary, not because man is naturally bad, but because man is more individualistic than social". If we look into this quotation we can find that Hobbes was in favor of regulating the behavior of individuals which was also a prime objective of classical theorists who have often used several concepts like the unity of command, close monitoring, supervision, hierarchy, etc, to achieve the organizational goals. In one word these can be described as the carrot-and-stick policies of classical thinkers. Hence we can conclude that the pessimistic view of human nature has also been seen in the classical tradition of public administration.

Anarchist tradition is also to some extent similar to the assumptions of socialism in which it throws light on the social essence of a human being. Selfishness and competition are not natural traits of any human being rather they came with the arrival of capitalist tradition. In this context, we can cite Peter Kropotkin's "Mutual Aid" in which for the first time he systematically studies human nature on a scientific basis. He focuses on cooperation and the social solidarity of each human being.

Similarly, we can't forget the work of Emile Durkheim in which he says weak societal, moral, and communal ties often lead to suicides. This way if we talk of human relations theory it largely believes in social solidarity, and cooperation as well as collective strengths of people.

Furthermore, classical theorists believe in the rabble hypothesis which implies that individuals work best alone and for their self-interest. But human relations theory by discarding the rabble hypothesis suggested the herd hypothesis, in which the individual himself is free, secure, and protected within a group rather than in solidarity. In this sense, we can conclude that human relations theory truly recognizes the social human essence of an individual. Human relations theory also through its various experiments like illumination effect, relay assembly test room, mass interviewing, and, bank wiring experiment found the outstanding result that before becoming part of an organization human being is a social instinct that finds its fulfillment and recognition of self-actualization needs through its community or we can say the group. In this sense, we can notice the similarities of different political theories with classical and human relations theories.

**Conclusion:** From the above writing we found that in some way or other administrative ideas of classical theories as well as core political theories have shared some common traits or elements to a great extent. Although we have discussed a sharp difference between traditionalist (classical theory) and modernist theories (human relations theory) these theories believed in organizational efficiency and productivity besides improving management. In the words of Mohit Bhattacharya, "They differed from the traditionalists in their basic approach to the organization which they characterized as a social system consisting of individuals, informal groups, and intergroup relationships in addition to the formal structure".

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