The Pluralistic theory of Sovereignty has been developed by German jurist Otto Von Gierke, which originated in late 19th century. It emerged as a reaction against the Monistic theory of sovereignty. It emerged in response to the undue emphasis on the power of the state as advocated by the monists. Some of the leading exponents of the Pluralistic theory include Emile Durkheim, F.W.Maitland, G.D.H.Cole, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Miss M.P.Follet and Prof. Harold Laski. It has not supported the monistic theory as it denies that sovereignty is the absolute and indivisible supreme power of the state. According to Laski, “State is only one among the various forms of associations and as compare with them, has no supreme claims to the individual allegiance”. Gierke wrote, “The state should accept the common point of view that permanent associations have rights and duties as groups whether or not the state has accepted them as corporations.”

Main principles of Pluralism:

1. Sovereignty resides not with the state but with many other social, economic and other groupings and many of these institutions are prior to the State, Example, family and church are prior to the State.
2. The State is not only the supreme institutions. Like other institutions, it is also one of the institutions of the society.
3. All other institutions are on par with each other and the State enjoys no supreme power.
4. Other institutions and associations like trade unions, churches, professional societies etc. are also very necessary and important as State.
5. Pluralism does not completely reject the existence of State as one of the other institutions on equal fronts with them. State is the principle among the various groups in the society.

6. It advocates for decentralisation of power.

7. It believes in multiple centres of power but none of them is wholly sovereign. They advocate centre of power at local level i.e. termed as community power and not at national level.

**Criticism of Pluralism:**

1. There is an intimate need of State need of State to control various types of institutions existing in society. It is sovereign state that brings about unity and regulates all the associations existing in society.

2. If sovereignty is divided among various associations prevailing in society, this division will lead to the destruction of sovereignty that will result to anarchy and chaos in the society.

3. Pluralism leads to disintegration of the State because they believe that there exists various associations in the society co-parallel to the state.

4. Its views are ambiguous and contradictory because it does not give a detail and scientific explanation about the relationship between the two.

5. Its hypothesis about law is also wrong because laws are framed by the State.

6. It is a mere illusion and not a reality that other associations are equal in status to the State.

7. State is needed for protecting people from the excess of associations.

**Significance of Pluralism:**

1. According to Miss M.P.Follet, the Pluralism “prick the bubble of present state’s right to supremacy.

2. It recognise the value of the group which must be immediately reconed within political life.

3. It plead for revivification of local life.

4. It see that the interest of the State is not always identical with the interests of its parts.

5. Pluralism is the beginning of the disappearance of the crowd.

6. It contains the prophecy of the future because it has, with keenest insight, seized upon the problem of identity of associations, of federalism.
Thus the Pluralists make a timely protest against the rigid and dogmatic legalism of the Austin theory of Sovereignty. Gettel says that the emphasis on the fact that states, in spite of legal omnipotence, should be subject to moral restraints is a desirable reaction against the idealization of the state and the doctrine that state is an end in itself, free from all moral restraint.