



POS 212

Political Ideas

Course Manual

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Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple platform for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfillment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.



Prof. Isaac Adewole

Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing education for “Liberty and Development” for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

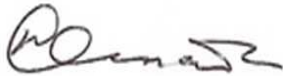
Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre’s provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Okunade', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Bayo Okunade

Director

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Course overview

This is a *compulsory course* which introduces political ideas in their historical contexts. The course will provide answers to such germane questions such as: just what is the state? What is the origin of the state?

The course will start with an introductory study session; and proceed to discuss the various political ideas in subsequent sessions. The political ideas discussed include: democracy, monarchical absolutism, conservatism, liberalism, fascism, anarchism, socialism. Once you learn the various political ideas, you can easily provide answers to questions relating to justification to the existence of the state and the purpose for which the state is created.

This course manual supplements and complements POS212 UI Mobile Class Activities as an online course. The UI Mobile Class is a virtual platform that facilitates classroom interaction at a distance where you can discuss / interact with your tutor and peers while you are at home or office from your internet-enabled computer. You will also use this platform to submit your assignments, receive tutor feedback and course news with updates.

This course is intended for people who intends to: understand the origin and features of political ideas and how these ideas have changed over time. The course will provide a working knowledge of the debates that have occurred within and between political ideas.

Course outcomes

Upon a successful completion of course you will be able to:

- *describe* the context in which political ideas came into being.
- *distinguish* each of the ideas from the others.



Outcomes



Timeframe



How long?

This is a one semester course.

45 hours of formal study time is required.

Study skills



As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different to that from your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be *time* and *space* i.e. the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now—before starting your self-study—to familiari

excellent web links & resources on the course website. Go to “Self-Study Skills” menu in course website.

Assessments



Assessments

There are two basic forms of assessment in this course: self assessment questions (SAQs) and tutor marked assessment (TMAs). Feedbacks to the SAQs are at the manual. You will need to forward responses to activities to your tutor via the UI Mobile Class. Feedbacks to TMAs will be provided by your tutor in not more than 2-week expected duration.

Schedule dates for submitting assignments and engaging in course / class activities is available on the course website. Kindly visit your course website often for updates / to be on top of information.



Study Session 1

The Nature of Political Ideas

Introduction

In this study session you will learn about: the basic nature of political ideas; how political ideas arose, the questions which they are designed to answer; and the different ways in which they have answered them.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:



Learning Outcomes

- *define* and *use* correctly the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQ 1.1)
- *explain* the central questions which have given rise to political ideas. (SAQ 1.2)
- *discuss* at least four representative answers to these questions. (SAQs 1.2 and 1.3)

1.1 Central Questions to Political Ideas

State could be conceived as an entity that exercises sovereign authority over a given set of people through the instrument of government in a specified given territory.

Political ideas arose out of attempts to understand and explain political life. There are many questions which political ideas seek to answer but generally, these questions relate to the origins of the **state** and the justification for its existence. Some of the specific questions which political ideas seek to answer are: Just what is the state? How did it emerge? Does God ordain it, or is it the product of a common agreement among citizens? Does the state promote good or evil? How much power should the state have and in what spheres of human activity? *The concept of the state is central to political ideas.*



Activity 1.1

Allow 5 minutes

Pick up as many dictionaries as you can find and write down the definition of the state in each of them. Look for introductory texts on political science and also see if you can find additionally very good and clear definitions of the state.

- **ITQ** What is a political idea?
 - A. It is a theory of political science
 - B. An idea that seeks to explain and justify the existence of state
 - C. It is all about politics and leadership

Feedback on ITQs answers

- The correct answer was B
- It was not A because political idea is more than political theory.



Sovereign supreme independent authority exercised by a State in a defined territory



Activity 1.2

Allow 15 minutes

- It was not D because political ideas are not about politics and leadership.

The state is a **sovereign** or independent association exercising authority over defined territorial boundaries and people through the machinery of a government. Although government and the state are often used as if they mean the same thing, you should realize that government is simply the machinery or institutional framework of authority in a state.

Read the section on 'Essential Elements of the State', in the book by Rodee and others, Introduction to Political Science.

- **ITQ** What do you consider to be the essential attributes of a state?

Feedback on ITQ

- We do not know what you considered, but you probably thought of some of the following:
 - sovereignty
 - authority
 - population
 - territory

- **ITQ** Give a short definition of the state

Feedback on ITQ

Your definition should include the following elements:

- state is a sovereign or independent association
- state exercises authority over people in a defined territorial boundaries through the machinery of government

1.2 Some Answers to the Central Questions of Political Ideas

In this section, we shall consider some specific answers to the central questions of political ideas that are highlighted in study session 1.1. The answers we shall consider in this section includes: divine theory; the force theory; natural or organic theory; the social contract theory; liberal theory; socialist theory and conservative theory.

1.2.1 Divine Theory

This is perhaps the oldest of the ideas on the origin and nature of the state. The divine theory simply states that God Himself ordained and established the state. The rulers are therefore regarded as descendants or agents of God and opposition to them must be regarded as opposition to God.



1.2.2 Natural or Organic Theory

This political idea argues that the state arose out of people's natural desire to interact with their fellow men and achieve moral perfection. Accordingly then, people are human only within the state and an individual outside of the state was either a god or a beast. The state is an organism and the citizens are its organs. The government is the brain of the state and its task is to control other organs – the citizens – in the interest of the whole organism.

1.2.3 The Force Theory

According to the force theory, the state arose out of conquest and domination of the weak by the powerful. There is no ethical or moral justification for the state. Rulers govern because they have the power to do so. Subjects obey because if they did not they would be punished heavily. In a word, the subjects are merely the tools of their rulers.

1.2.4 Social Contract Theory

According to liberal theory, the state is needed to provide security of life and property and to settle disputes which cannot be resolved directly by citizens themselves. Beyond the protection of life and property and the settlement of disputes, government intervention in social life becomes unnecessary, oppressive and illegitimate. The state should permit citizens the greatest possible freedom and liberty to express their abilities or creativity.

1.2.5 Socialist Theory

This political idea argues that the state should do more than protect life and settle disputes. The state should be responsible for meeting the welfare needs of citizens in education, health, pensions, water supply, electricity, housing etc. In other words, the state should seek to meet the material needs of citizens and should intervene actively in social life in order to achieve this.

1.2.6 Conservative Theory

Conservatism as a political idea attacks all those political ideas which seek to use human reason to explain the nature of the state. According to the conservatives, no citizen should regard the state as an association to do certain jobs for him or as a partnership agreement in a trade that must yield profit. The state is a legitimate institution because it is the product of historical wisdom, tradition, laws, customs and established practices and institutions. These traditional or historical factors and forces, rather than human reason, provide an adequate basis for understanding the nature of the state.

Flowing from all the above explanations and notwithstanding the disagreement amongst these writers, all agree in ascribing to the State four elements namely: people, territory, government and last but not the least, sovereignty. Some writers define the state as essentially a class structure. Others regard it as the one organization that transcends class and stands for the whole community. Some interpret it as a power system. Some view it as a legal construction. To some, it is a necessary



evil, and to a very few an evil that is or will be unnecessary someday, while to others it is the world that God has made for itself. Yet to others, it is a community “organized for action under legal rules.” Taking cognizance of all such considerations, Garner, gives a matter-of-fact definition of the state:

“a community of persons, more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent or nearly so, of external control, and possessing an organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience”.



Activity 1.3

Allow 5 minutes

So far, we have discussed some representative political ideas about the nature of the state. Which of these ideas or theories do you find most attractive or reasonable? Rank all the seven political ideas in the order (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd... 7th) in which you think they adequately explain the nature of the state.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study session you learned that political ideas are attempts to explain and understand political life particularly the origins of the state and the justification for its existence. Political ideas differ greatly in the answers they provide to questions regarding the origins and nature of the state. Some political ideas see the state as a product of force or conquest, while others see it as a divine creation or even as a product of common agreement among citizens. Some political ideas envisage a limited role for the state in social life while others expect to be an active agent in the lives of citizens. Whatever may be the differences among political ideas, however, they share one thing in common; they all seek to answer important questions about the nature of the state.

Assessment



Self Assessment

SAQ 1.1 (tests Learning Outcome 1.1)

- A. What is a state?
- B. Give a brief definition of political ideas.

SAQ 1.2 (tests Learning Outcome 1.2)

- A. Compare the following theories of the state: natural theory, social contract theory & socialist theory.
- B. What is the underlining difference between divine right theory, force theory & conservative theory? Do these theories have a point of convergence?



SAQ 1.3 (tests Learning Outcome 1.3)

Fill the table below with the most suitable answers from the array of options.

S/n	Scenario	Applicable Idea
1	Mrs. Amordi, the minister of information, maintained that the primary aim of the State is the welfare concern of her citizenry.	
2	Mr. Tolu, a national activist, proclaims that the state is a product of collective bargaining designed to make ends meet for her citizenry.	

Options

- A. Socialist theory
- B. Divine contract theory



Assignment

TMA 1.1 What is the relationship between political ideas and the concept of state?

Send your answer to the class at Study Session 1 Assignment Page on Course Website.

Bibliography

Textbooks

‘Theories are concerning the origins of the state’, in chapter two of C. Rodee, T. Anderson, C. Christol and T. Greene (1976), *Introduction to Political Science*. Tokyo: McGraw-Hill.



Study Session 2

Democracy: Its Meaning, Development, Varieties

Introduction

In this session, you will be exposed to a major concept in political ideas, namely democracy. This study session is divided into four sections. Section one discusses the meaning of democracy while section two traces the historical development of democracy. The third section looks at types of democracy. We conclude our discussion of democracy in the fourth section by looking at principles of democracy.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:



Learning Outcomes

- *define* democracy as a method of government. (SAQ 2.1)
- *explain* the development of democracy. (SAQ 2.2)
- *Identify* and *explain* two types of democracy. (SAQ 2.2)

2.1 The Meaning of Democracy

Democracy as a system of government can be related to participation in the affairs of government either directly by the people or via elected representatives. As a body of ideas, democracy is considered as the basic idea that political power arises from the people.

Democracy is a very controversial term. C.B. Macpherson points out that ‘the word democracy has changed its meaning more than once and in more than one direction’. One important reason why democracy is very controversial to define is that it has become very fashionable for different types of governments to lay claim to being democratic. We will therefore attempt to clarify the meaning of the term in this section.

A useful way of clarifying the concept of democracy is to realize that it is used to refer both to *a system of government* and to *a set of principles*. As a system of government, democracy simply means rule by the people or their elected representatives. When people rule themselves directly, we talk of direct democracy; when people are ruled by their elected representatives we talk of indirect democracy. There are some other senses in which democracy can be understood as a system of government which we shall discuss in subsequent sections (sections 2.3 & 2.4).

Democracy can also be viewed as a set of principles or ideas as earlier noted. The most important principle associated with democracy is the idea that political power originates from the people and that government is therefore legal or legitimate only when it is based on the consent of the people. You will immediately notice the close connection between democracy as a set of ideas and democracy as a system of government. For, it is precisely because of the idea that power belongs to the people that a democratic system of government either takes the form of direct



democracy in which people rule themselves directly or indirectly when people are ruled by those they themselves have elected. We shall discuss in greater details the ideas and principles of associated with democracy in section 2.4.



Activity 2.1

Allow 10 minutes

Look for as many dictionaries and introductory texts on government and politics as you can find and write down the definition of democracy in each of them.

See whether there are any contradictions in all the definitions of democracy you have been able to find including the one provided in this section.

Write down your own preferred definition of democracy.

2.2 The Development of Democracy

Democracy developed first among the ancient Greeks. Indeed, the word democracy has its roots in two Greek words, *demos* meaning the people and *kratien* meaning to rule. Thus, democracy in ancient Greece was understood as direct democracy, that is, rule by the people or the whole body of citizens.

Ancient Athens was the Greek city state in which direct democracy flourished most. In the fourth century B.C., Athens had a population of some 40,000 citizens and meetings or assemblies were usually held when important decisions were to be taken. However, less than ten per cent of Athenians actually attended or participated in these meetings.

The type of town-meeting democracy associated with Athens, however, had to be abandoned as societies became larger and people lost the opportunity for face-to-face interaction. The best that can be done under these modern circumstances is for all citizens to participate in government through their elected representatives. Modern democracy is therefore a government of elected representatives i.e. it is based on representation rather than the direct participation.

The history of the development of modern democracy is a very complex one. After the fall of the Greek city states, it was not until the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789 that representative democracy fully came alive. The American Revolution saw the beginning of a series of political reforms which led to the introduction of universal male suffrage – the right of all men to vote – in 1845. Five years later, in 1850, women's suffrage was introduced in America. The French Revolution of 1789 also proclaimed the right of the people to choose those who will rule them and since that revolution, elections and even plebiscites based on universal suffrage has become a familiar feature of French life.

For a very long time, Britain practiced a system of representative democracy in which only a few – namely those who had enough property or wealth – were allowed to participate in electing the increasingly powerful parliament. In 1918, however, Britain recognized the right of



all adult males to vote. Ten years later in 1928, full women's suffrage was introduced.

Other countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas soon followed the example of America, France and Britain so that by the end of the second world war in 1945, virtually all independent countries of the world proclaimed their commitment to one form of representative democracy or the other. When the colonies in Asia and Africa also gained independence from alien rule, they adopted democratic forms of government although in many cases, democracy eventually gave way to military rule and one-party dictatorship.



Discussion on Activity

Look for as many dictionaries and introductory texts on government and politics as you can find and write down the definition of democracy in each of them.

See whether there are any contradictions in all the definitions of democracy you have been able to find including the one provided in this section.

Post your own preferred definition of democracy on course forum at UI Mobile Class. Your definition should not be more than a paragraph or 80 words.

2.3 Varieties of Democracy

In the last section (2.2), we spoke of two broad types of democratic governments, namely direct democracy and indirect democracy. In this section, we shall not only examine the essential features of direct and indirect democracy, but also discuss two other sub-types of democracy namely liberal democracy and social democracy.

2.3.1 Direct democracy

This is the original meaning of democracy as a system of government. Under direct democracy, the right to make political decisions is exercised directly by the whole body of citizens acting under procedures of majority rule. Thus, the essential characteristic of direct democracy is the direct participation of citizens or a majority of them in government. As we noted earlier, Greek democracy as practiced in the small Greek city state of Athens during the 4th century B.C. was the closest approximation to direct democracy.

2.3.2 Representative Democracy

This is also known as modern or indirect democracy. It is a form of democratic government where citizens exercise their right to take part in the affairs of government through representatives chosen and responsible to them. As we observed while discussing the historical development of democracy in the last section, modern societies are very large ones and the greater the number of people involved, the less meaningful and possible their direct participation in government. Thus, modern democracy, unlike direct democracy, is based on representation rather than participation of the people in government. The people who are governed are not the same people who govern. Instead of the people directly making laws or policies themselves, they elect representatives or



legislators to do so for them. An important feature of representative democracy is therefore the right of the people to elect those who will govern them and the regular conduct of such elections.

2.3.3 Liberal or Constitutional Democracy

Democracy is also understood, particularly in countries of North America and Western Europe, to mean a form of government usually a representative democracy, where the powers of government are exercised within a framework of constitutional restraints. These constitutional restraints or checks are designed to protect certain political rights of citizens – such as freedom of speech, religion and association from arbitrary interference by the government. Thus, in a liberal democracy, there are limits on what the government may do and the government does not control or even largely influence such institutions as the mass media, religious groups and pressure groups. In short, *the liberal democratic government operates at the margin of social activity.*

2.3.4 Social Democracy

This is a form of government which regardless of whether or not it is democratic in any of the three senses above, *tends to minimize social and economic differences among citizens.* This type of democratic government has had the greatest influence in Russia and the other socialist countries of Western Europe. Usually, a government of social democracy would intervene actively in the economy or even assume direct control of it in order to ensure that resources are evenly distributed among various groups in society and that citizens are provided with basic needs such as employment, education, electricity, water supply housing etc. Social democracy is based on the principle that the right of the people to elect those who will govern them will be meaningless unless it is accompanied by the right of citizens to have a fair access to the economic resources of society.



Reflection

Allow 10 minutes

There are four varieties of democratic government, namely direct, indirect, liberal and social democracy. What are the differences and similarities among these varieties of government?

What would you consider to be the relative advantages and disadvantages of direct and indirect democracy?

Write down your answer clearly and concisely.

You may see Political Ideologies, pages 104 – 107 by Leo P. Baradat and Rodee and others, Introduction to Political Science, page 35 – 36 for further notes.

- **ITQ** Define liberal democracy?

It a democracy where the powers of government are exercised within a framework of:

- A. constitutional restraints.
- B. by the principle of majority rule.
- C. by the king.
- D. by the representatives of the people.

Feedback on ITQ



- The correct answer was A
- It was not B because it is not democracy by majority rule of face to face democracy
- It was not C because it is not a monarchical government where the king has absolute power
- It was not D because the representatives do not rule by their whims and caprices

2.4 Principles of Democracy

Democracy, as we have observed, is more than a method of government. It also embodies a set of ideas or principles. Some of the principles or ideas of democracy are:

Social contract the belief that government should be a contract between the people and the governing body.

a Political power comes from the people and government; it is therefore legal or legitimate only by the consent of the governed. In order to justify this principle of popular sovereignty, early democratic theorists argued that in the past people had come together and agreed to establish a government to regulate their common affairs and enhance their collective security. This agreement was called the **Social Contract** and it was regarded as the source of the authority of the government.

Rights a power or privilege possessed by a particular person by virtue of law. Each right that an individual possesses usually relates to a corresponding legal duty imposed on another. For example, when a person owns a home and property, he has the right to possess and enjoy it free from the interference of others, who are under a corresponding duty not to interfere with the owner's rights by trespassing on the property or breaking into the home.

b Another principle of democracy is the belief that the individual is of major value or importance in society and that he has some **rights** that are inalienable and fundamental or that cannot be taken away without the due process of law. The rights to life, freedom of association and speech are commonly regarded as the most important of these rights. Other democratic rights include the rights to property, employment, and financial support in old age, education and other socio-economic benefits.

c Another principle of democracy is the idea that each individual is basically equal to all other individuals and, therefore, that no human being is more human than the other. However, the precise meaning of this equality is uncertain. While some democrats argue that people are equal in all ways, others argue that while people have the same fundamental human rights they differ widely in such qualities as intelligence and business ingenuity.

d Lastly, all democrats share the idea that men are basically rational and that they should therefore be given a role in the activities of government or in the process of electing or choosing the government.



Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study session, we have tried to clarify the meaning of democracy as well as trace its historical development. Although democracy is a very controversial term, it can adequately be understood as a method of government and a set of ideas or principles. Historically, democracy first developed in Ancient Greece where it took the form of direct or 'town meeting democracy'. But modern democracy developed in America, France and Britain and as it is widely practiced today, it is the indirect or representative type of democracy in which people participates by electing representatives to do so for them.

A democratic system of government can take the form of any one or more of the following varieties of democracy: direct democracy, indirect or representative democracy, liberal democracy and social democracy. Direct democracy is based on the direct participation of the people in government and is hardly possible in modern times. Most democratic systems in the world today take the form of representative democracy. Liberal democratic regimes are those operating within restraints imposed by the constitutional guarantee of certain rights to citizens and are common in countries of North America and Western Europe. Social democratic governments seek to meet the economic needs of the majority of citizens and are usually to be found among the socialist countries of Eastern Europe including Russia. As a system of ideas, democracy embodies principles that emphasize popular sovereignty, human rights, human equality and human rationality.

Assessment



Self Assessment

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Online Meeting. You can check your answers with the Feedbacks on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Manual.

SAQ 2.1 (tests Learning Outcome 2.1)

How will you define democracy?

SAQ 2.2 (tests Learning Outcome 2.2 & 2.3)

Explain two types of democracy and briefly explain how each of them evolved.



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Study Session 3

Monarchical Absolutism

Introduction



Learning Outcomes

In this study session, you will be exposed to one of the most important ideas in political thought, monarchical absolutism. We will discuss the nature of monarchy as a political institution, and also review the theory of monarchical absolutism as expounded by Thomas Hobbes.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- *define* and *use* correctly the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQ 3.1)
- *trace* the historical development of monarchy as a political institution. (SAQ 3.1)
- *discuss* the ideas of the theory of monarchical absolutism by Thomas Hobbes. (SAQ 3.2)

3.1 The Development of Monarchy as a Political Institution

Monarchy a form of government with undivided rule or absolute sovereignty by a single person, usually holding such authority by birthright.

Monarchy refers to *the rule of one man*, and monarchical absolutism refers to the idea that the monarch should exercise absolute or unrestricted powers over his subjects. Usually, monarchy takes the form of a hereditary system of rule in which succession is by inheritance or blood descent.

The monarchical system of rule can be traced back to ancient times and was particularly popular among the Teutonic tribes (people who lived in north-western Europe in former times). Among early political theorists, monarchy was also considered the best of all possible forms of government. For instance, Plato argued that power in a good system of government should be concentrated in the hands of a 'philosopher-king' or a knowledgeable monarch.

Initially, ancient kings were elected by tribal councils. Gradually, the kings began to suggest those who should succeed them and the councils approved these people without opposition or criticism. In the course of time, kings began to choose their successors without consulting the councils. By the late sixteenth century, supporters of the monarchy started to use the theory of the divine right of kings to justify the powers of the monarch. According to this theory, God had personally chosen the king to rule and opposition to the king was therefore opposition to God.

Much of the history of Europe between the sixteenth century and the early twentieth century was dominated by a struggle between the defenders of monarchy and the advocates of democracy who favoured a system of government controlled by the elected representatives of the people. So bitter was this struggle that in 1815, an agreement known as the Concert of Europe was signed among the kings of Europe under



which they resolved to perpetuate the absolute rule of the monarch despite mounting popular pressures for democracy. Nonetheless, the forces of democracy remained steadfast and by the end of the First World War, monarchy had been eliminated as an important political institution in Europe.

With respect to Africa, most of the pre-colonial monarchical systems had their powers reduced when the colonial masters handed over power to new and modern political elite at independence.

There are some countries in the world today that have retained their monarchical institutions. Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Morocco and Saudi Arabia are just a few of such countries. It is important to note however that most of the present-day monarchies have no governing functions at all. For example, in Great Britain today, the king or queen occupies a merely symbolic or ceremonial position. He or she merely performs such ceremonial functions such as reading the government's legislative programme at the beginning of a new parliamentary term, approving the laws made by parliament and calling for elections when the government decides it is time to seek the peoples' mandate.

In Europe generally, those monarchies that have survived to the present day are those that accepted the democratic revolution and the consequent reduction in their powers. In countries like France and Russia where the monarchies refused to accept political democracy, the institution of monarchy was completely wiped out after very bloody revolutions in which the monarch, his family and loyal supporters were killed.

- **ITQ** Which of the following statement is false.
 - A. Monarchy developed from ancient times as a system of rule supported by tribal councils.
 - B. The power of the institution of monarchy was strengthened by the theory of the divine right of kings.
 - C. Most present-day monarchies play ceremonial role.
 - D. In Europe generally, the monarchies that have survived to the present day were those that resisted reduction in their powers.

Feedback on ITQs answers

Only D is false. In fact, it is only monarchies that accepted a very substantial reduction in their powers that have survived to the present day. Others who resisted democracy were completely annihilated.

3.2 Thomas Hobbes and the Theory of Monarchical Absolutism

The most famous exponent of monarchical absolutism was Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679). He developed his ideas in England during a period in which conflict between the parliament and monarchy led to a civil war in which the monarchy was violently overthrown before it was later restored after eleven years of army control. Hobbes therefore



developed his ideas which were published in the book *Leviathan* to justify the restoration of the English monarchy.

The most important feature of Thomas Hobbes idea is that unlike most supporters of the institution of monarchy during his time, he rejected the theory of the divine right of kings. Rather, Hobbes argued that the absolute powers of the monarch came from the people through a social contract.

According to Hobbes, man was naturally and basically an aggressive creature. Before the making of a social contract which enthroned the monarch, man lived in a state of nature in which people acted as they wished and pursued their selfish interests without any concern for the interests and security of others. Each man was insecure and committed every kind of falsehood or violence in order to prevent himself from being harmed by another. Also, according to Hobbes, 'if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies and endeavour to destroy or subdue one another'. The state of nature was therefore 'a war of all against all'; it was full of conflict and without peace and could only lead to arbitrary death. According to Hobbes, the life of man in a state of nature was 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Hobbes however argued that men in spite of their natural greed and aggression, were rational and could reason with each other in order to end the insecurity and chaos of the state of nature. Men therefore entered into a social contract or agreement with each other in which they agreed to submit themselves to the authority of a monarch in return for the security and order to be provided by the monarch. Each man therefore laid down his right of self-protection and is contented with the security which the monarch would provide for him and his colleagues. It is after this social contract that human beings are really able to live reasonably and comfortably; it is only after this contract that art, science, morality, law, peace and tranquillity are able to develop.

Under the contract, the monarch's only obligation to the people is to keep order and maintain peace and only if he failed to do so can the people rise against him. Other than the provision of order and security, the people had no rights to claim against the monarch. On the other hand, the monarch exercises absolute powers. For Hobbes, monarchical absolutism was the price people had to pay for the movement from the chaos of the state of nature to a civilized society of order and security.

Despite Hobbes' argument that the monarch should enjoy absolute powers, he was very unpopular among the defenders of monarchy or the monarchists. This should not surprise you. While the defenders of monarchy believed that the king's authority arose directly from God's will, Hobbes argued that the authority of the monarch came from the people through a social contract.

- **ITQ** Highlight what you think is peculiar to Thomas Hobbes theory of monarchical absolutism.

Feedback on ITQs answers

- We don't know exactly what you identified, but you probably thought of the following:



1. Hobbes argued that the absolute powers of the monarch arose from a social contract among the people; and
2. Hobbes believed that monarchical absolutism was the price people had to pay in order to escape the solitary, poor, nasty brutish and short' life in the state of nature.



Activity 3.1

Allow 10 minutes

1. *Study these materials that comes with your course manual to access more information on*
 - A. The Nature of the State and the Relation between the State and the Individual I (Appendix A, [linked here](#)).
 - B. The Nature of the State and the Relation between the State and the Individual II (Appendix B, [linked here](#)).
2. *As you study the materials, try to*
 - A. Examine Machiavelli's thesis that the 'end justifies the means' in the action of rulers.
 - B. Examine the social contract theory of John Locke
 - C. Review how Hobbes conceives the state of Nature?



Discussion

Post your findings in Activity 3.1 on course forum at UI Mobile Class. Your response should not be more than a paragraph or 80 words on each of the questions.

Study Session Summary



Summary

In this Study session, we have tried to define Monarchical absolutism as an idea that the monarch should exercise absolute or unrestricted powers over his subjects. Monarchy as a political institution developed from ancient times, and was subsequently strengthened especially in the sixteenth century when the theory of the divine right to kings claimed that the monarch was chosen by God.

Thomas Hobbes was the most famous exponent of monarchical absolutism in that he argued in his book, Leviathan, that the monarch should exercise absolute powers over his subjects. Hobbes, however, did not believe in the divine right of kings by arguing that the monarch's absolute powers came from the people.



Assessment



Assignment

TMA 3.1 Examine Machiavelli's thesis that the 'end justifies the means' in the action of rulers.

TMA 3.2 Examine the social contract theory of John Locke.

Make a summary of your findings, and send your response to your tutor at Study Session 3 Assignment Page on Course Website.

Bibliography

Textbooks

Read page 52 of Baradat's *Political Ideologies* and pages 31 and 32 of C. Rodee's *Introduction to Political Science* for additional information on the institution of monarchy.

For a very interesting discussion of the ideas of Thomas Hobbes read pages 53 – 66 of David Thompson's edited book, *Political Ideas*.

Another interesting discussion of the ideas of Hobbes can be found in pages 54 – 57 of Baradat's book, *Political Ideologies*.

See Hale, J.F. (1966). "Machiavelli and the Self-Sufficient State" in David Thomson, *Political Ideas* (Penguin Books Ltd.) Pp. 25 – 28.



Study Session 4

Conservatism

Introduction



Learning Outcomes

In this study session, we shall be discussing a major political philosophy in the countries of Western Europe, namely: conservatism. The study session is divided into two sections: section one discusses the historical context within which conservatism emerged while section two discusses the ideas and principles associated with conservatism.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- *define* and *use* correctly the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQ 4.1)
- *highlight* the historical circumstances that gave birth to conservatism as a major political philosophy.
- *identify* the major principles or ideas associated with conservatism as a political philosophy.

4.1 The Development of Conservatism

Conservatism a systematic.

Anarchy term often used to describe a state of disorder due to absence or nonrecognition of authority; but as a political idea, it actually refers to advocacy for absence of government and absolute freedom of the individual.

The English philosopher, Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797), was the most famous philosopher of **conservatism**. It was not until Burke wrote his famous work, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, that conservatism became a very important philosophy in the West. As the title of Burke's work suggests, the French Revolution (1789) was an important factor in the development of conservatism. Indeed, the French Revolution was the most important single influence on the development of conservatism as a political philosophy. In his work, Burke condemned the French revolutionaries for assassinating a legitimate monarch, destroying the nobility, undermining religion, and breaking the loyalty of citizens to the government. In short, Burke resented the French revolutionaries for destroying existing traditions and institutions which had survived for centuries. Burke feared that the French Revolution would turn into total **anarchy** which would create conditions for the rise of arbitrary and violent dictatorship and that this new dictatorship would spread to the rest of Europe.

Apart from the French Revolution, two other events of the 18th century also helped to give birth to conservatism. These were the *Industrial Revolution* which introduced man to new and sophisticated technologies, and the *Enlightenment*, which made reason rather than tradition the most important guide to human conduct.



In reaction to these three forces of change in the 18th century – The French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment – Conservatism emerged as a philosophy which emphasized stability rather than change, and tradition rather than reason.



Tip

- **ITQ** Which of the following events influenced the development of conservatism?
 - A. The French Revolution
 - B. The Glorious Revolution
 - C. The Industrial Revolution
 - D. The Enlightenment

Feedback on ITQs answers

- Options A,C & D are correct. If you choose B, you are wrong. In fact, conservatism as idea started as a response to events in the 18th century:

We will identify the major ideas associated with conservatism in the next section.

4.2 Principles of Conservatism

The following are some of the major ideas or principles associated with conservatism:

4.2.1 The Limited Capacity of Human Reason

Conservatives were pessimistic about man's ability to improve his condition through the use of human reason. While not denying the importance of human reason, conservatives argued that it is dangerous for men to rely on it for understanding the nature of man and the nature of society and for solution to all human problems. In short, conservatives believed that human reason is an imperfect guide to the analysis and solution of man's problems.

4.2.2 The Importance of Traditional and Existing Institution

Existing institutions and traditions are to be valued because they reflect the accumulated wisdom of the past. Any attempt to change or destroy existing practices or traditions will produce unpredictable and unfavourable consequences that are likely to bring great suffering and hardship to the people. Furthermore, a new institution can never be as valuable and effective as an old one. This is not to say that conservatives did not want changes at all. Indeed, conservatives argued that existing institutions and traditions must be adjusted to cope with new developments. Conservatives however insisted that new institutions or practices should be introduced after very careful reflection and discussion and in an orderly rather than abrupt manner.

4.2.3 Inequality

Conservatives believed that men were naturally unequal in most human qualities. These natural inequalities are responsible for differences in the properties and social status of individuals. Hence, a person who has greater property and status is naturally superior to another person who has little or no property and status. Conservatives also argued that all societies through recorded history have been characterized by inequality



and that it will be unwise for anyone to attempt to eliminate by force this inequality as the French revolutionaries did.

4.2.4 The Importance of Private Property

Like the classical liberals (see classical liberalism in the next course) conservatives emphasized the importance of private property. The conservatives believed that private property is an inalienable right of the individual and that it is one of the important factors that can be used to distinguish men of high character from those of low character. Government should not interfere with private ownership of property but should defend and encourage property owners.

4.2.5 The Rule of Enlightenment Minority or Aristocracy

Conservatives believed that social chaos would result if the masses were allowed to rule. Burke in particular argued that the well-governed society is one which the few men of ability, property and high birth ruled. Ability is necessary if government is to be efficient. Property is an important qualification for rulership because if those who do not own property assume leadership, they are likely to attempt to deprive the wealthy of their property and thus disrupt society. High birth of membership of the aristocracy or the middle-class is important because it makes the ruler sensitive to his heritage and to the established traditions of society. People who are lower on the social scale- who are of low birth, and do not have the ability or property should willingly submit to the rulership of those who are higher on the social scale.

4.2.6 Respect for Religion

Conservatives believed in the value of religion and in the moral code which religion provides. According to the conservatives, stability in society must rest ultimately on man's faith in God and on his willingness to obey God's commandments. The many problems of human existence can be solved not by the use of human reason but by relying on God and religion.

4.2.7 Representative Democracy

Conservatives did not oppose a democratic system of rule in which people will choose who will rule them. Burke, in particular, argued that the elected parliament was the proper governing agency of England. Burke, however, did not believe that the Member of Parliament should be bound by the wishes of those who elected him. He argued that while legislators should always consider the wishes of those who elected them in making decisions, they should not let such wishes prevent them from exercising their better judgement. As Burke puts it: 'while a member of the legislature ought to give a great weight to the wishes of his constituents, he ought never to sacrifice to them his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement and his enlightened conscience'.



In this study session, we identified seven principles of conservatism as a philosophy. Which of these principles are in your opinion, reasonable and acceptable? Which of them would you consider unfair and



Discussion

unacceptable? What are the reasons for your answers? Post your response at e-class forum.

Study Session Summary

Conservatism developed as a reaction to three forces of change in the 18th century – the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment. Its leading exponent was Edmund Burke whose philosophy of conservatism was particularly influenced by what he regarded as the excesses of the French Revolution. Among the ideas or principles associated with conservatism as a philosophy are: limited capacity of human reason, importance of traditions and institutions, the natural inequality of men, the importance of private property, the rule of the enlightened minority, respect for religion and representative democracy.

Assessment



Assignment

TMA 4.1 Conservatives are in the habit of revering the founders, but a founding is an unconservative action. Discuss

TMA 4.2 The seven principle of conservatism is valid. True / False?

Post your response to course forum for Study Session 4 on Course Website.

Bibliography

Textbooks

You will find a very good discussion of the French Revolution on pages 263 – 268 of Samuel Finers's Comparative Government.

For more facts about the principles or ideas associated with conservatism, read pages 73 – 77 of Baradat's Political Ideologies; pages 106 – 109 of Rodee and others, and Introduction to Political Science: pages 118 – 129 of David Thompson (ed) Political Ideas.



Study Session 5

Classical Liberalism

Introduction



Learning Outcomes

In this study session, we will discuss a tradition of political ideas known as classical liberalism. The study session is divided into two sections. Section one discusses the historical development of classical liberalism and section two discusses its central or important principles.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- *define* and *use* correctly the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQ 4.1)
- *trace* the historical development of classical liberalism in medieval England;
- *highlight* the central principles of classical liberalism.

5.1 The Development of Classical Liberalism

Liberalism refers to a particular set of ideas which focus on the attainment of greater freedom (i.e. liberty) for all men and women.

Liberals people who support idea and practices that permits and deepens fundamental freedom and rights because they belief enjoyment by individuals is an instrument for the creation of a healthy and progressive society.

Medieval period a time between the 5th to 15th century.

Liberalism refers to those sets of ideas and policies that have as their common aim, greater freedom or **liberty** for individual men. **Liberals** all over the world support policies that permit the free expression of individual personality because they believe that that expression is valuable not only to the individual but also to the society.

Classical liberalism refers to that version of liberalism that was first developed in England in the **medieval period**. It is to be distinguished from modern or neo-classical liberalism (to be discussed in the next study session) which is largely a phenomenon of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Classical Liberalism	Modern Liberalism
Started in the medieval period	Started in 19th century

As already pointed out, classical liberalism developed in medieval England. During this period, men suffered under the dictatorship of absolute monarchy and the church. Men lost faith in their own abilities and looked heaven-ward to God for the solution to the many problems of human existence.

Gradually, however, the use of scientific methods to make improvements in man's material existence led people to begin to develop confidence in their ability to solve many problems which they had previously borne with little complaint. People began to conclude that if technological problems could be solved through the use of human reason, the same could be done with social and political problems. They began to attack monarchical government and the church as institutions which prevented the development of man's abilities and abused human dignity.



In particular, liberals argued that government was bad if it was given too much power and, therefore, that the less power of the government the better.

The revolution which took place in England in 1688, otherwise called the Glorious Revolution, was the first liberal revolution in human history. The Glorious Revolution was the end-product of a long struggle between the king and parliament for dominance in England. The reigning monarch in this period, King James II (1685 – 1688) who was a catholic, exercised absolute powers in spite of protests from the parliament and a number of nobles. In June 1687, a group of English nobles sent an invitation to King William of Orange, the ruler of Holland and the husband of Mary Stuart, daughter of James II, to rescue England from the tyranny of King James II. William accepted the invitation and came to England with a small army. William was so popularly received in England that James II fled to France.

- **ITQ** Classical liberalism developed in an atmosphere of political and religious dictatorship as well as a general lack of faith in man's abilities. True / false?

Feedback on ITQs answer

- The statement is true.

Before allowing William and Mary to ascend the throne jointly as the monarchs of England, the parliament adopted a document, the Bill of Rights that limited the power of the English king. The bill guaranteed the parliament, acting as the representatives of the people, the right to hold free elections, to meet regularly, to make known their views on various issues to the king and to make laws. The king was not allowed to suspend any law made by parliament and was prevented from levying taxes or keeping a standing army in peace-time without the approval of parliament.

The Revolution of 1688 was thus a major revolution in that it led to major changes in English government but was practically, bloodless hence, the label: "The Glorious Revolution". Modern British government developed from this revolution. The powers of the monarchy were steadily reduced until the monarch stopped playing an active role in government and was replaced by a prime-minister elected from parliament. This, in short, is the story of the first liberal revolution in human history.

- **ITQ** Which of the following was the major political expression of the determination of men to resist the political and religious dictatorship which restrained the free expression of individual freedom.
 - A. The French Revolution
 - B. The Industrial Revolution
 - C. The Enlightenment
 - D. The Glorious Revolution

**Feedback on ITQs answer**

- The correct answer is D. Options A,B & C were invalid as the focus of the question is on individual freedom i.e. liberalism and not just an attempt to wipe off absolute monarchism.

5.2 Principles of Classical Liberalism

In the previous section, we discussed the circumstances that led to the development of classical liberalism. In this section, we shall identify the major ideas or principles associated with classical liberalism and classical liberals.

5.2.1 Human Reason

The most important principle of classical liberalism is faith in human reason. Classical liberals were optimistic about the ability of human beings to solve their problems or improve their existence through the use of human reason.

5.2.2 Natural Laws

Classical liberals believed that just as there were scientific laws so also there were certain rules of nature governing human conduct that could be discovered through the use of human reason and utilized to improve human existence. These rules were called natural law.

5.2.3 Natural Rights and Liberties

Classical liberals argued that Natural Law guaranteed to each individual certain rights that could not be legally taken away without due process of law. John Locke (1632 – 1704) history's leading classical liberal, identified three of these rights, namely, the rights to life, liberty and property.

5.2.4 Equality of all Individuals

The principle of individual equality was very important in classical liberalism. Classical liberals argued that no individual is more human than the next or had greater claim on life, liberty and property than anyone else. The argument here was not that all people were equal in all ways. Classical liberals recognized that people could differ in intelligence, physical ability and so on. Classical liberals however insisted that in spite of differences in human ability, all people had the same natural rights.

5.2.5 Importance of Private Property

We have pointed out that John Locke identified three natural rights of man namely: life, liberty and property. He and many other classical liberals attached great importance to the right to private property because of two reasons:

- They argued that possession of private property allowed people to provide for themselves and their families the basic necessities of life. Once they were able to satisfy these basic necessities,



man could turn to the task of developing their character or human qualities. In short, the possession of private property frees men from the pressures of daily survival thereby allowing them to develop their human qualities.

- The classical liberals also argued that private property is an extension of man's personality. They argued that when people applied their labour to produce or acquire private property, they transferred something of themselves into it. Therefore, private property is important because it embodies the personality of its owner.

5.2.6 Economic Liberty or Free Enterprise Economy

Classical liberal economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo argued for the extension of liberalism to economic sphere. They argued that the production of goods and services should be left to private individuals and groups whose activities will be regulated by impersonal market forces i.e. the forces of supply and demand. The government should not interfere with the market forces because such intervention is likely to hamper free competition and efficiency in the production of goods and services.

5.2.7 Government as Defender of Private Property

In line with the importance which they attached to private property, classical liberals argued that a primary function of government was to defend or protect men's right to private property. Government cannot therefore take away the private property of an individual except when it is very clear that a man's possession of property has hampered the natural rights of another.

5.2.8 Parliamentary Rule

Classical liberals argued that people should be governed by parliament elected by citizens who owned property and were therefore free from the ordinary pressures of survival (see principle Five). Those elected by parliament are representatives of the people and they should take decisions which reflect the preferences or interests of the people who elected them.

5.2.9 Supremacy of Parliament over the Monarchy

Classical liberals argued that parliament which was the direct agent of the people should exercise more powers than the monarchy. Indeed, they argued that the parliament should decide on policies while the monarch should execute or carry out the directives or policies of parliament.

5.2.10 Right of Rebellion

Classical liberals argued that government should never become more powerful than the people it serves. All just powers of government were given to it by the people and the government should serve the people rather than the people serving the government. Hence, if government



tried to oppress the people or to interfere too much in their affairs, then, the people had the right to remove that government and to create a new one that would serve them better.



Activity

Allow 20 minutes

Read pages 57 – 65 of Baradat's *Political Ideologies* for more discussion of the principles of classical liberalism. See also the article on John Locke on pages 67 – 80 of David Thompson's *Political Ideas* as well as the section on classical liberalism on pages 63 and 64 of Rodee and others, *Introduction to Political Science*.

As you study the materials, try to identify any additional two or more principles that you think are related to classical liberalism.

Study Session Summary



Summary

Classical liberalism developed in medieval England and achieved a major success in 1688 when the Glorious Revolution put an end to monarchical absolutism in England. The major principles associated with classical liberalism are: faith in human reason, natural law, natural rights and liberties, equality of individuals, importance of private property, economic liberty, government as defender of private property, parliamentary rule, supremacy of parliament over monarchy and right of the people to remove an oppressive government

Assessment



Assignment

TMA 5.1 Historically, to what extent did the ideology of classical liberalism contribute to common good?

Send your response to your tutor at Study Session 5 Forum Page on Course Website.

Bibliography

Textbooks

For more information on the development of classical liberalism and the 'Glorious Revolution' read pages 57 and 58 of Leon Baradat's *Political Ideologies*.

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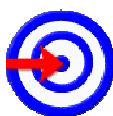
Study Session 6

Modern Liberalism

Introduction

In this study session, we are going to discuss the circumstances that led to the development of modern liberalism as a tradition of ideas separate from classical liberalism as well as the major principles or ideas associated with modern liberalism. Accordingly, the study session is divided into two sections. Section one deals with the reasons for the development of modern liberalism and section two with the principles associated with modern liberalism.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:



Learning Outcomes

- *identify* the reason or circumstances that influenced the development of modern liberalism.
- *highlight* the major principles and ideas associated with modern liberalism

6.1 Reasons for the Development of Modern Liberalism

Liberalism particular set of ideas which focus on the attainment of greater freedom (i.e. liberty) for all men and women.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, classical liberalism and the ideas and policies closely associated with it were progressively modified. While classical liberalism was essentially an English phenomenon, modern or neo-classical liberalism has been prominent not only in Great Britain, but also in Europe, the United States and to some extent, almost everywhere in the modern world. What factors were responsible for the development of modern liberalism?

6.1.1 Need to Extend the Gains of Classical Liberalism to Lower Classes

The success of classical liberalism had brought a number of privileges to the middle-class or property owners. But the same privileges did not adequately cater for the interests of the poor and weak, particularly peasants, workers, women and children. The need to provide effective liberty for these underprivileged groups seemed to require a modification of classical liberal theory.



6.1.2 The Need for Liberalism to Accommodate New Theories of Man and Society

The 19th century witnessed the development of new theories of man and his relationship to society such as socialism and democracy. Socialists and democrats, for example, argued that if government was based on the consent of the people then it was only reasonable that government should use its powers to improve the conditions of the majority of people who remained poor and exploited. Liberalism could not ignore these ideas and had to embrace them in order to retain its former revolutionary character.

6.1.3 The Need to Abandon Individualism

Classical liberal theory had tended to emphasize the individual as an isolated human being and to ignore the extent of interaction and interdependence among people. The growth of cities, the expansion of industry and the development of world-wide commerce made the emphasis of classical liberalism on individualism outdated. To cope with these developments, liberalism had to be less individualistic and more socially-oriented.

6.1.4 Realization that Government Action was Necessary to Promote liberty among the Under-Privileged

Classical liberalism sought to limit the powers of government in order to promote the liberty of the individual. But in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became increasingly obvious that the absence of government regulation had led to the oppression of the majority by the few privileged property owners. The system of private ownership of property without government regulation seemed to concentrate wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer people and to impoverish the majority. Wages were kept low, hours of work were long and women and children were exploited. It became obvious that government had to intervene to introduce social reforms that would help the poor and weak to achieve their liberty.



Tip

Given these factors, it was not surprising that as from the early twentieth century, modern liberalism became a most powerful influence on governments. Indeed, in virtually all countries of the world today, government intervention in social life has become a major means through which citizens are given greater opportunity for self-development.

- **ITQ** Identify at least two factors that could lead to advocacy of modern liberalism?

Feedback on ITQs answer

We don't know what you exactly identified, but your list may include of at least two of the following:

- the need to extend the gains of liberalism to the poor and exploited
- the need to accommodate new theories of man and society



- the need to make liberalism less individualistic and more socially oriented
- realization that government action was necessary to promote liberty among the poor.

6. 2 Principles of Modern Liberalism

In the previous section, we discussed the reasons for the development of modern liberalism. In this section, we shall identify the major ideas or principles associated with modern liberalism.

6.2.1 Government as a supporter and promoter of Liberty

Modern liberals believe that government should take positive steps to maximize happiness in society by improving social conditions in the society and helping disadvantaged individuals and groups to overcome their problems. Modern liberals therefore argue that government should undertake policies designed to make facilities in education, housing and health available to a greater number of people than before. In short, modern liberals argue that government should assume responsibility for the material well being of citizens, majority of whom are weak and exploited.

6.2.2 Rejection of Natural Law

Most modern liberals do not believe in the concept of natural law. They believe that there were no eternal or unchanging rules in nature by which people should govern their conduct. The value of any policy or law in society, they argue, should only be measured by the amount of happiness it brings to the majority of people or the society as a whole. Therefore, a good policy or law is one that brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people.

6.2.3 Rejection of Free Enterprise Economy without Government Regulation

Modern liberals believe that the philosophy of government non-intervention in the economy had benefited only a few privileged property-owners and led to the oppression of the weak. Modern liberals therefore favour active government regulation of the economy or government ownership and control of economic activities that affect the lives of the majority of the people.

6.2.4 Rejection of government activities that do not promote human liberty

While modern liberals argue for greater government intervention and action to promote liberty in the society, they do not want government to become so powerful that it will become oppressive. Government should only act when its action will definitely increase the freedom of the people and promote their happiness.



6.2.5 Belief in Social Engineering

Modern liberals argue that existing institutions could be adjusted or modified and new institutions created to increase happiness in society. They argue that people should not only be able to modify or replace institutions that oppress them but that they should also be able to go further by creating new institutions that will increase their happiness. This process of adjusting and creating institutions to increase happiness in society is what modern liberals meant by 'social engineering'.



Activity 6.1

Allow 10 minutes

Read the short excerpt below & answer the question that follows.

Most people have argued that given its emphasis on government intervention in social life to promote the welfare of the majority of citizens, modern liberalism is no longer liberal and has instead become a version of socialism which is an ideology that supports government ownership and control of the economy. But there are, at least, three reasons why modern liberalism should be seen as an extension of classical liberalism rather than a complete departure from it or a version of socialism. First, modern liberalism is committed to the same goal of a free individual that guided the thinking of classical liberals. The means to that goal have been changed by modern liberals who unlike classical liberals emphasize positive government action, but the end remains the same. Second, the changes in method and policy usually associated with modern liberalism – such as provision of educational and laws protecting women and children – have enhanced individual freedom and liberty. Third, the constitutional rights that were highly valued by classical liberals – such a government by popular consent and the legislature's right to make policies – have also been supported and protected by modern liberal governments. In short, modern liberalism has remained liberal and it has helped to enrich the quality of liberalism as it was known by the classical liberals.

Do you agree with this writer? Can you highlight some of the important differences between classical liberalism and modern liberalism? Can you also note areas of agreement between the two?

Submit your response to your tutor at the course website.

Study Session Summary



Summary

Modern liberalism emerged because of new developments in political theory and practice which made a revision of classical liberalism necessary. While there are significant differences between the two, it is important to note that they share the same commitment to the goal of a free individual. Indeed, rather than interpret modern liberalism as a departure from classical liberalism, it is better to see it as an extension of the ideas of classical liberalism to hitherto neglected groups in society.



Bibliography

Textbooks

For a fuller discussion of the impact of these and other factors on the development of modern liberalism read pages 64 – 66 of Rodee and others Introduction to Political Science.

For more information on the ideas and principles of modern liberalism, read Baradat's discussion of the ideas of the early modern liberals – John Stuart Mill (1807 – 1873); Thomas Hill Green (1836 – 1882); and John Dewey (1859 – 1952) – on pages 96 – 101 of his book, Political Ideologies. See also, the discussion of the ideas of John Stuart Mill on pages 154 – 167 of David Thompson's edited book, Political Ideas. Also, read pages 64 – 66 of Rodee and others Introduction to Political Science



Study Session 7

Fascism

Introduction

In this study session, you will be exposed to a fairly recent political ideology, namely, fascism. The study session is divided into two sections. Section one discusses the historical conditions that gave birth to fascism while section two deals with the major ideas and principles of fascism.



Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- *identify* the circumstances or historical conditions that led to the development of fascism.
- *highlight* principles or ideas for which fascism is famous.

7.1 The Development of Fascism

Fascism philosophy of government that stresses the primacy and glory of the state, unquestioning obedience to its leader, subordination of the individual will to the state's authority, and harsh suppression of opposition.

Fascism arose from the disappointments and frustrations that followed the First World War (1914 – 1918) and the economic depression in Europe during the twenties and thirties. It was in Italy that fascism first developed among the countries of Europe. Italy's participation in World War I on the side of the Victorious Allies (Russia, France, Britain, Romania and United States) did not bring the anticipated benefits. Apart from the fact that Italy was denied its principal territorial claims, unemployment and inflation also weakened its economy. Betrayed internationally by its Allies in the war and troubled domestically by a depressed economy, Italy's political stability was seriously threatened. In October 1922, Benito Mussolini, backed by his fascist party, threatened to march on Rome, Italy's capital, and was then invited to assume leadership of the country by the Italian monarch, King Victor Emmanuel, who was desperate to save his throne. On assuming leadership of Italy in October 1922, Mussolini proceeded to transform the Italian Republic into a personal dictatorship in which he monopolized power.

Germany, which suffered a worse treatment than Italy in World War I, faced problems similar to those of Italy. After the war ended in the defeat of Germany, her territories were handed over to France, Poland, Denmark and Belgium and Germany was ordered to pay compensation to the Victorious Allies for the destruction they suffered in the War. The German economy was also in bad shape as inflation and unemployment reached very high levels. As in Italy, Germany's external and domestic problems led to the formation of radical or extremist groups; one of which was the National Socialist German Workers Party, or the Nazi Party, under the leadership of Hitler. In 1923, Hitler, encouraged by Mussolini's success in Italy, attempted a coup d'état. The coup failed,



Hitler was imprisoned and the German economy recovered remarkably well enough to render the Nazi party politically irrelevant. But Germany's economic recovery suffered a set-back in 1929 when a world-wide economic depression took place. The Nazi party resumed its political activity and enjoyed increased support under Hitler who had been released from prison. Eventually, Hitler was appointed chancellor or Prime-Minister of Germany in January 1933 and like Mussolini in Italy, he proceeded to become a political dictator.

With fascist dictatorships in Italy and Germany, European countries with weak democratic institutions or depressed economies became vulnerable to fascist and semi-fascist coups. Fascist-type dictatorships emerged in Austria in 1933, in Bulgaria in 1934, and in Spain in 1936. But fascism ceased to be a major political force in Europe with the defeat of the two leading fascist countries – Italy and Germany – in the Second World War (1937 – 1945).

To summarize our discussion in this section, fascism developed from the crisis of World War I and the economic hardships created by the depression of the twenties and thirties. Under such conditions, the appeal of radical and extremist mass movements increased. Fascism had the advantage over other movements in that it was supported by the ruling classes who were anxious not to lose their positions. Fascism first succeeded in Italy in 1922 when Mussolini assumed leadership of the country. This was followed by Germany and then Austria, Bulgaria and Spain in the thirties. Fascism ceased to be a major political force in Europe with the defeat of the two leading fascist countries – Italy and Germany – in the Second World War.



Activity 7.1

For a very good account of the historical circumstances that led to the development of fascism read pages 92 – 98 of Jack Watson's *Success in Twentieth Century World Affairs*. Read also pages 109 – 110 of *Carton Rodee* and others, *Introduction to Political Science* and pages 242 – 248 of *Baradat's Political Ideologies*.

7.2 Principles and Features of Fascism

As a system of ideas and principles, fascism lacked the coherence and consistency associated with other systems of ideas like liberalism conservatism or socialism. Nonetheless, it is possible to highlight some of the most important principles and ideas associated with fascism.

7.2.1 Nationalism and Militarism

Nationalism is perhaps the most important feature of fascism. Nationalism refers to a powerful, emotional commitment to a country; Fascists were very active and devoted nationalists. This nationalism found expression in the desire to bring other countries under the control of the fascist country. Mussolini and Hitler saw the conquest and control of other countries as a national mission through which they could increase the status and prestige of their respective countries. The tool by



which they sought to achieve their ambitions was, of course, war or militarism. All the efforts of their respective countries were directed at building a powerful military industry. All sections of the society were mobilized in preparation for war. As Mussolini put it, “I adore War, War is to men what child birth is to Women”.

7.2.2 Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism refers to the belief that the government should exercise total control over virtually all aspects of social life. The powers of fascist governments covered all aspects of the lives of their citizens. The church, trade unions, educational institutions, business organizations, the arts, the media and other social institutions were all within the control or regulation of government.

7.2.3 Centralized Economy Planning

Fascists regarded centralized economic control as necessary to check the effects of depression and to build a viable military industry. In Mussolini's Italy, all major financial institutions and nearly all heavy industrial establishments were owned by the government. All other forms of private economic activity were under one form of government regulation or the other. In Germany, so extensive were the economic controls imposed by the fascist government that it called itself, and was regarded by many, as socialist.

7.2.4 Party Rule

Fascist states were usually dominated by a single mass party. Non-fascist parties or organizations were usually declared illegal or suppressed through the use of force. Major questions of policy were decided by the topmost members of the fascist party. The fascist party usually had many subsidiary organs or units through which the party reached out to the people and mobilized them in support of the goals of the fascist government.

7.2.5 Personal Dictatorship

Fascism relied heavily on the dominance of a single person, the leader, who demanded and was given total obedience. The leader was regarded as an unfailing and infallible personality. All forms of propaganda and falsehood were used to increase the popularity of the leader. In Italy, the Slogan was ‘Mussolini is always right’. In Germany it was ‘Hail Hitler’.

7.2.6 Terrorism and Repression

The fascist party, aided by the secret police, operated as a chief instrument of terror. In Italy, the fascist party undertook the task of punishing rebellious or anti-fascist elements in Italian society. Many people were killed or driven into exile. One of the many victims of fascism in Italy was Matteoti, a socialist parliamentarian who was murdered in 1923 by fascists because he wrote a book titled, *The Fascists Exposed*. Terrorism and repression were much more widespread in Germany than in Italy. In Germany, the fascists organized their own paramilitary units and used these units to kill uncooperative individuals and groups including many former supporters of Hitler who did not like



his ruthlessness, socialists, communists, trade unions and Jewish merchants and shop-keepers.

Study Session Summary



Summary

We noted in this session that fascism developed from the crisis of World War 1 and the economic hardships created by the depression of the twenties and thirties. It was most successful in Italy and Germany, and ceased to be a major political force with the defeat of these two countries in the Second World War. The principles and policies associated with fascism include: nationalism and militarism, totalitarianism, centralized economic planning, party rule, personal dictatorship and terrorism and repression.

Assessment



Assignment

TMA 7.1 Compare the development of fascism in any two States.

Forward your response to your tutor at Study Session 7 Assignment Page on Course Website.

Bibliography

Textbooks

For a discussion of the principles, policies and ideas of fascism read pages 248 – 249 of Baradat's Political Ideologies and pages 110 – 112 of Rodee and others, Introduction to Political Science.



Study Session 8

Anarchism: Its Meaning and Development

Introduction

This study session will introduce you to yet another body of ideas identified in political science as anarchism. The study session will explain the meaning of anarchism and highlight the perspectives that have developed within it. It will go further to outline developments within anarchism from the beginning to recent times.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:



Learning Outcomes

- *define* and *use* correctly the key word printed in **bold**.
- *distinguish* between anarchism and other political ideas.
- *identify* two groups into which writers of anarchism, as a body of political ideas, could be divided.
- *identify* the various developments in the literature on anarchism.

Anarchism a political philosophy which holds the state to be undesirable, unnecessary, or harmful.

Leftist socialist or communist elements that seek to overthrow liberal regimes of the West.

We know that when you see **anarchism** the first thing that comes to your mind is: anarchy. It is indeed often the case that anarchism, which described a political doctrine that exposes anarchy, is associated with chaos and lack of order. In other words, the two terms are associated with disorderly societies or entities on the verge of breaking down.

It is not surprising, therefore, that writers in Western Europe and North America tend to suggest that anarchism as a political idea arose in the West from the writings of disgruntled and frustrated **leftist**. The implication of this kind of argument is that anarchism is seen to portend something that is negative and destructive.

There is a lot that is true in this particular view of anarchism. At our level, however, you will agree with us that we need a more balanced perspective on anarchism. On this, we are sure that some of you may wonder whether it is possible to have a balanced view of anarchism which has to do with “chaos” and “disorder.” Our reply would be that that kind of opinion is in fact one of reflex. In other words, such an attitude results from the fact that most of us are already biased to that popular definition of anarchism as the religion of violence and chaos. As students of political science therefore, we need to be able to see beyond that kind of definition. The question, therefore, arises: What is anarchism?



8.1 The Meaning of Anarchism

As we have indicated to you earlier, anarchism could be viewed as that body of political ideas which suggest that the best form of society is one in which there is an absence of government and other regulatory institutions. It is important to point out, however, that anarchism has its own positive dimensions. Also, it is necessary to indicate that proponents of anarchism have not always been those on the fringes of society. In other words, adherents have not always been those described as having little or nothing to lose were society to be destroyed.

Let us make the two clarifications by beginning with the last. One point that is clear is that anarchism does not necessarily preach that society be destroyed. Rather, it suggests that society would be better run when government and other regulatory institutions are abolished or, at best, have most of their regulatory powers eliminated. In this regard, it is clear to you that it is wrong to see anarchism as the doctrine of only one particular segment of society. Take, for instance, our earlier example of Western societies, it is clear that anarchism cannot be identified only with socialists or other leftist writers.

Within Western societies, anarchism has been identified with both leftist writers like Pierre Joseph Proudhon and Michael Bakunin and conservative writers like S.E. Parker and Henry David Thoreau. The leftist anarchists believe that since the state has become an instrument of exploitation and oppression, it has to be eliminated before mankind can record meaningful progress. On their own part, the conservative anarchists hinge their argument for the scrapping of the state on the need to create an environment in which each individual would be free to develop at his own pace according to his own ability. According to the conservatives, society can best be served when each individual is left to achieve whatever he can achieve and not when the state continually strives to narrow the gaps between individuals.

I am sure that, by now, you have been able to identify what I earlier called the positive dimension of anarchism. For leftist anarchists, this positive dimension emerges from their belief that government does not allow the individual to maximize the level of his contributions to society. By removing government, therefore, the stumbling blocks on the path of the individual wishing to maximize his contributions to society would have been removed. In the same vein, for conservative anarchists, the positive dimension emerges from the belief that government hinders the optimal development of the individual. Positively, therefore, the less you have of government the more the opportunity for optimal development of the individual.

- **ITQ** Anarchism could have both positive and negative dimension. True / False

Feedback on ITQs answers

- True is correct. If you choose false, you are wrong. While it is true that anarchism could appear to propose a state of violence and disorderliness, it could also emphasise focus on the freedom and welfare of the individual,



development of egalitarianism and provision of human rights which it views could be achieved by the elimination of regulatory authorities.



Tip

For all who uphold anarchism, the uniting theme is the need to fashion a social system that would enhance individual well-being. Whether or not their prescription is the right medicine is another question.

8.2 The Development of Anarchism

In the last session, we tried to define anarchism. Now, let us examine how the literature on anarchism has developed across time.

Like most of the other political ideas examined in this course, anarchism emerged as a reaction to certain developments in society. In this instance, the major developments were the gradual strengthening of the state after the Thirty Years War and the Industrial Revolution.

The Thirty Years War, which was terminated after the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648, led to the emergence of the principle of the nation-state. It marked the beginning of the modern state as we know it today – a territorially defined entity within whose boundaries a government exercised sovereignty over its inhabitants. The Industrial Revolution, from around 1750 onward, ensured that the state would emerge ever more powerful. It also ensured that certain peculiar problems would henceforth come up for resolution in society. Such problems included how the new wealth being created by the Industrial Revolution should be distributed. Another major problem was how the evils attendant on industrialization – pollution, exploitation of labour, urban squalor, increasing gap between the rich and the poor – could be removed or ameliorated.

Utopianism political principle that is premised on idealistic schemes of social perfection

It was in the context of the increasing power of the state and the various problems attendant on industrialization that anarchism emerged as a political idea. It was not surprising, therefore, that given the harsh realities of the earlier stages of the Industrial Revolution, the earlier proponents of anarchism tended to be socialistic in their writings. Subsequent writers became more and more nihilistic. General to both groups, however, is a streak of what we can call **utopianism**. We now examine each of these in turn. Note, however, that we are not suggesting that the tendencies are mutually exclusive.

8.2.1 Socialism Tendencies in Early Anarchism

It is not surprising that William Goldwin one of those to first write in the tradition that we now identify as anarchism, wrote within 40 years after the take-off of the Industrial Revolution. His major argument was that the industrial age had created tyrannical government built upon the exploitation of man by man and unequal distribution of property. He, therefore, saw the need to replace the state with what he called several voluntary arrangements arrived at by individuals.

Another anarchist whose writings resulted from a sense of revulsion against the emergent capitalist system of the industrial age was Proudhon.



Writing in 1840, he condemned the economic system and made the famous statement that “property is theft.” He then called for the abolition of the state which he saw as presiding over an unjust economic system. In place of the state, he also suggested the setting up of several independent associations that would work to decentralize authority in society.

Yet another writer in this tradition was Kropotkin, who wrote in the last decade of the 19th century. He argued that it was wrong for society to be run in favour of those considered to be the fittest. Rather, for him, the basis of any society was co-operation. For him, therefore, the best society was one run along communistic lines. In such a society, there would be no division of labour or any economy based on monetary considerations. He, therefore, suggested the overthrow of the state in order for that kind of society to materialize.



Tip

What is common to these three early writers is a concern for the inequalities brought about by the Industrial Revolution and an expressed desire for a new, egalitarian society. In this sense, they were socialistic in their writings.

- William Goldwin, Proudhon & Kropotkin

8.2.2 Nihilistic Tendencies in Anarchism

Let us now examine some of the anarchists who laid much more emphasis on violence in their works. This trend had emerged by the 1860s, at the height of the alienation and disruptions in social life that followed the maturing of the Industrial Revolution and political repression in Europe.

One of the early proponents was Dmitri Pisarev who wrote the popular nihilist statement, that

What can be smashed must be smashed;

Whatever will stand the blow is sound;

What flies into smithereens is rubbish;

At any rate, hit out right and left

No Harm can or will come of it.

Thus, violence became something to be worshipped in itself. By the first decade of this century, another writer in this tradition, Georges Sorel, wrote a book, *Reflections of Violence*, outlining in detail how the working class could overthrow the capitalist state.

8.2.3 Utopian Elements in Anarchism

So far, you have seen the socialistic and nihilistic dimensions of anarchism. What unites these two elements, however, is a view about the possibility of a better society emerging out of the ruins of existing society.

In other words, anarchism has attempted to offer an alternative goal for human society better than what that society is at present. It not only does this, it also suggests means of achieving such a goal. In this manner, it offers a criticism of existing society and paints the picture of what is



believed to be a better alternative in a future society free from the problems of today.

For this reason, anarchism suffers the same faults identified with all utopian propositions. Since its proposed goal is apparently not yet in sight, it is now judged by the means that it suggests. In a 20th century in which violence has become so endemic, and in which anarchism has become more and more identified with violence, it is not surprising that people tend to frown upon and avoid violence and anarchism.

Study Session Summary



Summary

This study session informs you that anarchism is often identified as a body of ideas emanating from malcontents who preach disorder and chaos. However, we saw that anarchism is much more than this. It preaches that government and regulatory institutions be abolished (or have their powers drastically curtailed) because it believes that such institutions prevent the full development of the individual. The study session also discuss how anarchism emerged, as a reaction to an apparent increase in the size and power of the state, has developed along three lines that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. First, we have those writers who have been concerned about the inequalities of the industrial age. Such writers were more concerned with abuse of state power. Such writers have, therefore, emphasized the need for a violent overthrow of the state. Anarchism is now judged by its methods that two wrongs don't make a right; and for that, it has attracted opprobrium.

Assessment



Assignment

TMA 8.1 Give a brief account of the development of anarchism.

TMA 8.2 Discuss: "Anarchism is anarchy"

Forward your response to your tutor at Study Session 8 Assignment Page on Course Website. You may also check course website for submission date.

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Study Session 9

Socialism: Its Meaning & Development

Introduction

In this study session, we will introduce you to socialism. In the course of the study session, attention will be focused on the meaning of the concept and how it developed.



Learning Outcomes

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- *define* and use correctly the key word printed in **bold**.
- *describe* the elements of socialism.
- *describe* the intellectual history of socialism.
- *identify* the various brand of socialism down the centuries.

9.1 Elements in the Definition of Socialism

Socialism a set of political theories that advocates collective or State ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.

Since the 19th century, **socialism** has come to be identified as that political doctrine which insists that ownership and control of the means of production and distribution should be vested in the community and utilized for all members of the community. For this reason, it is now widely agreed that an accurate definition of socialism or a socialist state must include at least three elements. Let us take you through each of these elements.

9.1.1 Public Ownership and Control of the Means of Production

This is one of the required elements in the definition of socialism. Socialism preaches that the means of production – capital, land and property – should be owned and controlled jointly by the public and not by private individuals. Public ownership, as opposed to private ownership, is brought about in several ways, namely:

- a. through nationalization, in which government takes over existing business concerns; or
- b. through co-operatives, when groups of individuals are formed and then left to control such business.

While, as stated before, public ownership is central to the definition of socialism, what is still debatable is whether such ownership must be total. Experience in this century has shown that, even for countries that have publicly identified themselves with socialism, such public ownership of the means of production is not total. For instance, while, in the period between 1958 and 1965, the share of the socialist sector in the gross



industrial production in China, Czechoslovakia, North Korea and Yugoslavia was 100%, it was 85.7% in the German Democratic Republic, 95.5% in Hungary, and 99.5% in Bulgaria, among others. Similarly, while the share of the socialist sector in the gross agricultural production was 100% in North Korea, 99.9% in the USSR, 99.6% in Bulgaria, it was only 15% in Yugoslavia and 12.2% in Poland.

Given all this, what you need to note at this stage is that, generally, private ownership and control of the means of production is frowned upon in socialism. The emphasis is on public ownership, even if not full public ownership.

9.1.2 Public Ownership and/or control of the means of distribution

Socialism goes one step further to argue for state intervention in the distribution of the produce of society. In this regard, socialism upholds the need to narrow the gap between those who have and those who do not have. The basic assumption is that there is a bottom-line to poverty and that every individual should have a share of the produce of the society big enough to ensure a comfortable existence. In other words distribution of goods and services is not left to “market forces” alone. Rather, it is regulated by the state in order to ensure that it does not lead to gross inequalities of consumption.

9.1.3 A Goal of bringing about an Egalitarian Society

Socialism pledges itself to the creation of a society of equals in which there will be freedom from want. Thus, it hopes to create a new society based on co-operation and equality.

These are the three elements in the definition of socialism. Any definition of socialism or a socialist experiment must, therefore, contain the three elements. This is because socialism does not merely talk about the production process of the distribution of what is so produced. Rather, socialism also talks of bringing about a new society.



Tip

In essence, a socialist state must not only pledge itself to upholding and encouraging public ownership of the means of production and distribution; it must equally pledge itself to the task of bringing about an egalitarian society in which individuals would be free from material want.

African Socialism

Some first generation Africans post independence leaders embraced the ideology of African socialism. Its major advocates include Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Leopold Sedar Senghor (Senegal), Ahmed Sekou Toure (Guinea) Tom Mboya (Kenya), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) Modibo Keita (Mali) etc. They viewed this ideology as a device for articulating and solving the problems of the new states, chiefly for political stability and legitimacy and of economic development. The ideology was also seen as a means of asserting non-alignment (neutrality) in the struggle



between two world ideological blocs – Western capitalism versus Marxist – Socialism.

African Socialism derives from the pre-colonial cultural practices of Africa: ideas such as the practice of communalism, egalitarianism, the values of brotherhood and kinship and respect for the humanism of the individual. The group takes precedence over any of its parts. But it should be noted that the practice of African socialism was a flop. It neither improved production relations nor did it enthrone equity. Furthermore, most countries that proclaimed themselves socialist in Africa have since abandoned this ideology under the combined pressure of civil society, Western countries and international financial institutions and donor agencies. They have even been compelled to adopt the principles of liberal democracy and the accompanying capitalist ideology.

- **ITQ** Which of the following is the most appropriate definition of socialism?
 - A. The government of the people by the people and for the people.
 - B. The promotion of private ownership of means of production
 - C. That stresses the need for social welfare.
 - D. The need for public ownership and control of the means of production and distribution and for a state pledged to the eradication of material want.

Feedback on ITQ answers

- The correct answer was D.
- It was not A, because socialism is not democracy.
- It was not B because socialism does not promote private ownership of means of production.
- It was not C because socialism does not only seek for social welfare of the people.

9.2 The Development of Socialism

The origin of socialism can be traced back to France in the pre-revolutionary period (before 1789) and to the writing of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a French philosopher. Several of the ideas that later developed into socialism are traceable to this philosopher.

Some of these ideas can be briefly highlighted. They include:

- a. fears over unequal accumulation of property; and
- b. the idea of an organic society.

In his writings, Rousseau expressed his belief that it was wrong for a few individuals to amass large amounts of property as was increasingly becoming the case in the dawn of the industrial age. According to him, great inequalities of wealth were bound to create equally great inequalities in the sharing of political power. All this, subsequently, would put democratic government in jeopardy. For him, therefore, economic equality was a sine qua non for political equality.



In the second sense, Rousseau expressed the belief that man was a social animal. In other words, man acquired his human elements only by being a member of society. For that reason, human welfare was tied irrevocably to that of society to the extent that the individual could not be distinguished from the whole society. For that reason, the interests of the individual were identical with those of the group.

The first stirrings of violent socialism (or anarchist-socialism) were recorded in the period preceding the 1789 French revolution and up to about 1797. In that period, another French writer, Noel Babeuf along with Louis Blangui wrote in favour of abolishing private property and the setting up of a communist state. They argued that the people would have to be led in this fight against private property by an elite corps of conspirators. Even after the French Revolution, they continued to espouse the need for their own kind of revolution. For this, Babeuf was arrested and was beheaded in 1796. For the next few decades, “anarchist socialism” was eclipsed by “utopian socialism”.

- **ITQ** Socialism can be traced to France in the pre-revolutionary period (before 1789) and to the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a French philosopher. In his writing Rousseau expressed the fear of
 - A. unequal accumulation of property by few individuals.
 - B. that the society was getting richer than required.
 - C. that man is a social animal.
 - D. it was good for a few individuals to amass large amount of property.

Feedback on ITQ answers

- The correct answer was A.
- It was not B, because Rousseau’s concern was not the richness of the society but the distribution of the wealth of the society.
- It was not C because his argument was on the welfare of man and in the society and not sociability
- It was D because Rousseau condemned the accumulation of large property by few individuals.

A few decades into the 19th century, however, anarchic socialism was holding sway again, courtesy of writing of people like Pierre Joseph Proudhon and Michael Bakunin. Proudhon, who died in 1865, called for the abolition of property and the state. The two, according to him, were instruments with which rulers perpetuated their rule and hindered individual development. On his part, Bakunin, who died in 1876, exhorted those who were outcasts in society (vagabonds, the unemployed, the poor) to rise against such a society which allowed a situation in which they could go to waste. For him, in such a circumstance, there was “joy” in destruction. Anarchic socialism unleashed a vivid chain of terror while it lasted. The reactions that follow its methods, however, ensured that its impact would be short-lived since acts like assassinations; riots and mass murder could not but attract swift and equally violent reprisals from the state.



As we indicated earlier, the period immediately after Babeuf's death and after the French Revolution witnessed the emergence of Utopian Socialism. Among the leading proponents of this school were Claude Henri Saint-Simon, a Frenchman, Robert Owen, a Briton, and Charles Fourier, an American.

The Utopians believed that it was possible to create an ideal social system in which egalitarianism would be the order of the day. They, therefore, set about creating concrete examples of such systems in real life. These experiments subsequently failed, paving the way to the emergence, first of the second generation of anarchist-socialists like Proudhon and, later, to the emergence of Marx's brand of signified socialism.

Let us make one point clear at this moment. Karl Marx was not the founder of socialism. Before him, socialism had been underscored by humanitarianism, with *socialists being driven* to act by the hope that people could treat each other in a more humane way. Moreover, it was held that socialism was an option that people ought to adopt in order to develop themselves and create a better life. However, Marx's influence was so great that he could be said to have subsequently altered the fate of socialism – for good. He founded Marxism, the doctrine that will be introduced to you in the next study session.

After Marx, however, socialism assumed new dimensions. First, the driving force of socialism was no longer humanitarianism or concern for the poor *per se*. Rather, Marx propounded a scientific socialism in which certain laws determined the thoughts and deeds of human beings with scientific precision. According to him, it was the material conditions of individuals that determined their consciousness and actions. The working class, therefore, had to be led to develop revolutionary consciousness before they could be expected to attempt to change such material conditions and create socialist society.

○ **ITQ** After the death of socialists like Joseph Proudhon and Michael Bakunin, utopian socialist insisted that it is possible to:

- A. unleashed a vivid chain of terror on the state while it lasted.
- B. create an ideal social system in which egalitarianism would be the order of the day.
- C. called for the abolition of property and the state.
- D. Exhorted those who were outcasts in society (vagabonds, the unemployed, the poor) to rise against such a society.

Feedback on ITQ answers

The correct answer was B

- It was not A, because was method of the anarchic socialism but not their goal.
- It was not C because the abolition of the state was Proudhon's idea and not that of the utopian socialists.
- It was D because that was a method used by Bakunin to drive home his ideas of socialism.



In this regard, he helped to organize the first Socialist International organization in 1864. This was an international organization of socialists. It cut across national boundaries and sought to unit socialists under the socialist banner, subduing feelings of nationalism and sectionalism. The first Socialist International collapsed about 12 years later, due to quarrels within it, harassment by governments, and the death of Marx.

The second International organized by Marx's friends, Engels, died with the First World War while the Third International was dominated by Communist Russia under Stalin. The death of Stalin and the emergence of strong socialist parties in Western Europe after the Second World War led in the 1950s to a thawing in the international socialist movement.

Since then, Socialist parties in Western Europe, especially Italy and France, have had to develop strategies peculiar to their circumstances. They have, for instance, had to seek political power through active participation in elections, rather than by revolution or violence. By the 1980s, the French Socialist Party had succeeded in getting Francois Mitterrand elected President of France.

- **ITQ** Scientific socialism propounded Marx beliefs that:
 - A. it was the material conditions of individuals that determined their consciousness and actions
 - B. African socialism sought to portray socialism as being native to Africa.
 - C. that the driving force of socialism was no longer humanitarianism or concern for the poor *per se*.
 - D. in achieving political power through active participation in elections instead of than revolution or violence.

Feedback on ITQs answers

- The correct answer was A
- It was not B, because Marx was not involved in African socialism.
- It was not C because socialism underscored by humanitarianism was before Marx.
- It was not D because Marx did not believe in participatory political elections.

Another development that was witnessed from the 1950s was the emergence of a socialist movement known as African Socialism. Beginning from Senegal's Leopold Sedar Senghor and spreading to Tanzania's Julius Nyerere. Proponents of African socialism tended to be heads of state or government in the newly independent states of Africa.



Tip

African socialism sought to portray socialism as being native to Africa. In this regard, it pointed to the age-long communalism of African society, in which the individual was adequately taken care of by the community. African socialism therefore proposed the reinforcement of these traditional practices in modern times.

It is not surprising that proponents of African socialism have come under attack not only from non socialists but also from socialists alike. They are accused of trying to resuscitate practices that are better left dead. They are also accused of trying to paint idyllic picture of such a past in



order to encourage crisis-free political cultures in their own domain. All this has not dampened the convictions of those who believe in African socialism. Socialism has, thus, developed from the doctrine upheld by a few in 17th and 18th century in Europe to an idea upheld in various forms all over the world in the 20th century.

- **ITQ** African socialism was adopted to achieve
 - A. independence for African nations
 - B. political stability and legitimacy and of economic development for African states and as a means of asserting non-alignment (neutrality) in the struggle between two world ideological blocs – Western capitalism versus Marxist – Socialist fast.
 - C. established brotherhood for the people of Africa
 - D. strengthen economic growth for African nations

Feedback on ITQ answers

- The correct answer was B.
- It was not A, because socialism was not adopted in Africa to achieve independence for Africa.
- It was not C because socialism was not meant to establish brotherhood for African states.
- It was not D because socialism was not embraced in Africa to strengthen economic growth in the new independence states.

Study Session Summary



Summary

This study session observed that socialism is a political doctrine that insists that ownership and control of the means of production and distribution should be vested in the community and utilized for all members of the community. Its three major propositions, therefore, are that:

- 1 there be public ownership and control of the means of production;
- 2 the distribution of what is so produced be subject to state control; and
- 3 the state pledge itself to the eradication of poverty and want.

The study session also noted that as a body of ideas, socialism emerged from the writing of Rousseau. It has since developed along several lines. For instance, in the period during the French Revolution, there emerged a brand of socialism that was anarchic and which re-emerged later in the works of Proudhon and Bakunin. Another brand, which sought to found idyllic egalitarian communities in real life, was followed by the scientific socialism of Marx which spawned not only scientific laws but also the First to the Third internationals. Developments after the Second World War have created socialist movements in Western Europe and Africa with their own peculiarities.



Assessment



Assignment

TMA 9.1 Compare the development of fascism in any two States.

TMA 9.2 Explain the origin of anarchic socialism.

Forward your response to your tutor at Study Session 9 Assignment Page on Course Website.

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Study Session 10

Marxism: Origins, Sources and General Legacy of Marx

Introduction

This study session will examine the origin and sources of Marxism, that body of knowledge that Karl Marx bestowed on the world in the 19th century. The study session will discuss the general aspect of Marx's legacy with regard to specific areas of academic interest.

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:



Learning Outcomes

- *define* and use correctly the key words printed in **bold**.
- *describe* the context in which Marx began to write what later became known as Marxism.
- *describe* the context in which Marx began to write what later became known as Marxism.
- *outline* the various sources from which Marx drew his material.
- *identify* the general legacy that Marx left behind as a philosopher.
- *outline* Marx's contribution to the study of economics, sociology, philosophy and politics.

Marxism

You might wonder why we have to give this special study session on Marxism, especially in the wake of the last study session which focused on socialism. The reason is quite simple. While it is true that there is a brand of socialism, namely scientific socialism, often associated with Karl Marx, most of Karl Marx's works cannot be subsumed under that brand of socialism. He developed another body of ideas which, though not contradictory to his contributions to socialism, was far beyond. It is this other body of ideas that we now call **Marxism** after Marx, the originator.

10.1 Marxism: Origin and Sources

Like several other political ideas that emerged in the 19th century, Marxism emerged out of Karl Marx's attempt to make sense of the capitalist society that had emerged out of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution had created a situation in which production could go on at a pace hitherto unmatched, thus creating the possibility of banishing poverty once and for all. Ironically, however, this same revolution had created a society in which economic and social hardships and political repression not only persisted but worsened. It was all this that prompted Marx to want to study the logic of **industrialization** and **capitalism**.

Industrialization the process by which traditionally nonindustrial society (such as agrarian nation) transforms



into a manufacturing one.

Capitalism system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit.

We are sure that you have noted, therefore, that the newly emerging industrial society of the 1840s to the 1980s formed the historical and social context in which Marx, a German, wrote until his death in 1883. This new industrial (capitalist) society had emerged, following the industrial revolution (from the 1750s), from the ashes of feudal society.

Industrialization had created new classes in the form of the **bourgeoisie** (owners of capital used in industrial production as against the nobility of the feudal era whose wealth was in land) and the **proletariat** (the working class who worked in the factory as wage earners as against the serfs who under **feudalism** lived off land rented to them by the nobility). The new material forces (i.e. industrialization and the attendant urbanization, the creation of bourgeois and working classes) undermined feudalism and in the process transformed feudal society into capitalist society. The transformation throughout Europe took either of two forms. In those areas in which the monarchs and feudal lords were not ready to make concessions to the new forces, the change was violent. It took the form of the 1789 French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars up to about 1812. In countries where the monarchs and the feudal lords were ready to make gradual concessions, the change was largely peaceful. An example was Britain, where there was a gradual extension of the franchise to the lower classes.

In trying to understand this transition from feudal to capitalist society and then study the emergent capitalist society, Marx drew material inspiration from at least three sources, namely:

- a. French political thinkers, especially Rousseau;
- b. Several political economists, especially Adam Smith and David Ricardo; and
- c. Hegel's political philosophy.

From Rousseau, Marx borrowed the idea that the purpose of government was to articulate and realize the general will of the people. Much of the data detailing the economic and social aspects of the rise and essence of capitalism had earlier been unearthed in detailed studies by political economists like Smith and Ricardo. From Hegel, Marx had borrowed the methodology of the dialectic. This was a method in which change was seen as occurring as a result of the resolution of the conflict between two opposing forces. Thus, at the initial stage, you have a thesis, which then leads to its opposite, an anti-thesis. The conflict between thesis and anti-thesis is then resolved at a higher stage of development when a synthesis (which brings elements from both thesis and anti-thesis) emerges. Shortly after, at this higher stage, a new thesis emerges, followed by another antithesis, and then another resolution in another synthesis, and so on. In his analysis of the origin of capitalism, for instance, he saw capitalism as having emerged from a conflict between the landed aristocracy in feudal society and the new bourgeois class.

These are the three basic sources from which Marx derived his initial data and inspiration.

The picture of man that emerges from his work is threefold:

- a. man is a product of his environment;
- b. man is also a creator of his environment; and



- c. man is conscious: he not only acts, but is aware that he is acting.

Within the contexts of his view about the future of man, we can separate two levels in the works of Marx, namely:

- i. Historical inevitability: this relates to the argument that man will inevitably seek to bring about a classless communist society which will be better than any pre-existing society. Such communist society, to Marx, represents the height of the evolution of human history.
- ii. Social desirability: According to him, communist society is desirable because it will enable all men to develop freely their individual and social capacities.

Against this background, we will outline to you the general aspect of the legacy that Marx left behind in the next section.

- **ITQ** The industrialization revolution, according to Marx, created two classes of people called:
- A. the feudal and the proletariats
 - B. the bourgeois and the proletariat
 - C. the bourgeois and the philosophers
 - D. the philosopher and the proletariats

Feedback on ITQ answers

- The correct answer was B
- It was not A, because the feudal lord where the primitive land owners before industrialization era.
- It was not C because the philosophers were political and social thinkers that he took inspiration from, people like Rousseau and David Ricardo.
- It was not D because while the proletariats are the working class in the industries the philosophers are social thinkers

10.2 General Legacy of Karl Marx

The Marxism that Marx left behind can be divided into two, namely:

- a. Marxism as an ideology, the religion of the oppressed, and as a call to revolutionary action to overthrow an unjust system; and
- b. Marxism as a scientific and profound academic tool for the study of political, economic and social issues.

In this section and the next, we will concentrate on the second sense of Marxism as a scientific body of ideas.

In a general sense, what Marx does is to outline the relationship among several aspects of society. In doing this, he emphasizes the importance of material factors and forces. He outlines what he calls relations of production. According to him, this refers to the way men organize their production. The relations of production, along with the forces of production (i.e. the instruments used in production) constitute the real basis of society.



Marx believes that it is on material basis – instruments of production –that elements which he calls legal and political superstructures are built. In other words, according to Marx, political, legal and intellectual life is influenced by how men earn their living.

Having established this relationship, Marx then shows how society changes as a result of conflict between relations of production and forces of production. At one stage of human development in any particular epoch, according to him, the relations of production become a shackle to the further development of the forces of production. In other words, the productivity and development of the instruments of production is hindered by the manner in which production is organized. At this stage, a revolutionary situation is created.

What Marx then does is to trace the development of human society against the background of this dialectic. In this, he outlines the stages of development of various historical eras from the first era of primitive communism to slave society through feudalism to the contemporary era of bourgeois society. He then identifies bourgeois society as the final stage of divided society. According to him, the society will end in a revolution which will usher in a classless communist society after an initial period of dictatorship of the proletariat (the working class).

- **ITQ** In Marx's scientific body of ideas he identified relations of production to the way men organize their production while the forces of production referred to as:
 - A. the instruments used in production.
 - B. the political superstructures.
 - C. production and forces of production.
 - D. productivity and development.

Feedback on ITQ answers

- The correct answer was A.
- It was not B, because the combination of the relations of production and, the forces of production constitute the real basis of society upon which superstructures are built.
- It was not C, because production refers to the finished goods while forces refers to the instruments use in production.
- It was not D because this refers to goods and the effect of the industrial revolution on the society.

10.3 The Other Legacies of Marx

In this section, we will examine the legacy that Marx left behind in four specific areas of analysis, namely:

- i. Economic thought
- ii. Sociology
- iii. Philosophy
- iv. Politics



10.3.1 Legacy in Economic Thought

Here, Marx made two specific contributions:

- i. he propounded a labour theory of value; and
- ii. he gave a concise analysis of the origin and dynamics of capitalism.

In the labour theory of value, Marx sought to identify the value of a product with the value of labour expended on its production. With regard to his analysis of capitalism, it is wrong to say that Marx was anti-capitalist in the sense that he saw capitalism was to a large extent a positive thing. For him, capitalism had made possible the emergence of greater productive forces than man had ever before experienced. For this reason, Marx saw capitalism as a revolutionary force which had made it possible to create abundance and abolish poverty and wretchedness once and for all.

However, Marx saw the need to transcend capitalism and move on to a higher state of political organization which he called communism. For him, therefore, economic systems were neither natural nor eternal. Rather, they gave way to others according to some laws. Thus, he was very clear on the point that the collapse of the capitalist system was inevitable. However, he was not clear on several other questions, such as: how would all societies first have to become capitalist before they become communist?

There is no doubt that Marx paid very little attention to non-capitalist societies in his writings. This is not surprising, since the major focus of his study was the capitalist mode of production. What he did contribute to economic analysis was a method that insisted that bourgeois economics and its laws were neither eternal, infallible, nor the highest level of human development that man could attain.

10.3.2 Legacy in Sociology

A very important legacy of Marx in the area of sociological analysis is his class analysis. It is true, of course, that Marx failed to present a coherent definition of class in his analysis. However, he did identify certain criteria that could be used in determining an individual's location in the class structure of society. These criteria include:

- i. the individual's location within the mode of production, i.e. whether he belongs to the class of owners of capital or the means of production (i.e. the bourgeoisie) or to class of non-owners of capital who live by selling their wage labour (i.e. the proletariat).
- ii. the consciousness of an individual that he belongs to one particular class. In other words, the individual must not just belong to a class by definition but he must be aware that he belongs to that class.

Marx thus distinguished between two types of classes: a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself. For him, it is not the demographic fact of being a member of a class-in-itself that creates real classes in society. Rather, it is the process of an individual being aware of his class situation that creates a class-for-itself and thus, a revolutionary situation. As he put it in a lengthy statement in his Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte:



In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among those small-holding peasants and the identification of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name.

Now, you might want to ask: in what specific areas did Marx make specific contributions to class analysis? Definitely, it was not Marx that discovered either the existence of classes or class struggle in modern society. Several historians and economists before him had done this.

Marx's specific contributions include the following:

- i. in defining classes, he used the individual's location within the mode of production and introduced the element of consciousness. In this, he discarded with existing practice of using indices such as income, style of living, status, education, occupation, etc.
- ii. he showed that particular classes were linked to particular historical periods in the development of production. While there were no classes or division of labour under primitive communism, for instance, the nobility and serfs were two classes specific to feudal society while the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were specific to capitalist (bourgeois society).
- iii. He saw in the class struggle the agent of change from one particular epoch to a higher one. While it was a conflict between relations and forces of production that created the opportunity for change, such an opportunity had to be seized by human beings acting within the framework of the class struggle, according to Marx. The class struggle would continue until a classless communist society, the highest form of human development, had been reached.

In at least two important areas, Marx's class analysis has drawn some criticism. First, he is said to have underestimated the ability of capitalist society to ensure that the class struggle did not degenerate into a level that would threaten the society and lead to communist society. Second, he is, again, accused of having dealt essentially with classes in contemporary capitalist systems to the utter neglect of non-capitalist societies.

10.3.3 Legacy in Philosophy

We can talk of two areas in which Marx contributed to philosophy; firstly in a negative sense and secondly in a positive sense. Marx argued against philosophy, accusing it of raising questions and issues of an ideal nature. Instead, he substituted a philosophy which he felt was more scientific and positivist. This was the philosophy of the dialectic which was mentioned earlier.



- **ITQ** Marx referred to political power as
 - A. a classless society
 - B. a society without classes,
 - C. the organized power of one class for oppressing another
 - D. a communist society

Feedback on ITQ answers

- The correct answer was C.
- It was not A, because classless society was the proposed society of Marx called communism.
- It was not B, because classless society is not political power but communist society
- It was not D because communist society was yet to be attained at the time of writing, at the time of writing it was capitalism that was in place.

10.3.4 Legacy in Politics

Marx wrote every illuminating analysis of contemporaneous events in the Europe of his time. Beyond this, however, he failed to develop a systematic theory of politics comparable to his legacy in the area of economics. Nevertheless, his notion of politics is clear enough. For him, political power is the organized power of one class for oppressing another. In fact, Marx believed that the state emerged following the emergency of classes in society'. In other words, without classes, there would be no need for a state. As he put it, a society without classes, is a society with no need for a state. In such classless society as the proposed communist society therefore,

“there will no longer be any political power because political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society”

In comparing this new perspective with others, Ralph Miliband in his *Marxism and Politics* argues that “at the core of Marxist politics, there is the notion of conflict. But this is not what makes it specific and distinct. All concepts of politics are about conflict... (for most others, however) conflict is ‘functional’, a stabilizing rather than a disruptive force.” According to him therefore, the Marxism conflict “is not a matter of ‘problems’ to be ‘solved but of a state of domination and subjection to be ended by a total transformation of the conditions which give rise to it ... The antagonists are irreconcilable...”

ITQ

Identify the odd one out of these statements:

- a. Marx propounded a labour theory of value.
- b. Marx distinguished between a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself.
- c. For Marx, philosophy needed to be scientific and positivist.
- d. Marx believed that violence was an end in itself.
- e. For Marx, class antagonism could not be resolved in capitalist society.



Study Session Summary



Summary

This study session examined the origin and development of Marxism. It also discusses the legacies in the areas of scientific analyses of economic; social, philosophical and political issues.

Assessment



Assignment

TMA 10.1 For Marx, social change occurs as a result of Clashes between relations of production and forces of production. Explain.

TMA 10.2 Describe Marxism as a scientific and profound academic tool for the study of political, economic and social issues.

Forward your response to your tutor at Study Session 10 Assignment Page on Course Website. You may see course website for submission date.

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Revision Session

Introduction

In this course, we have tried to introduce you to major political ideas. In this concluding session, we bring together the major highlights of the preceding sessions.

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- *recall* the major highlights of our discussions in all the 10 study sessions that we discussed.



Write a 400-word essay on what you have gained in the course of going through the previous study sessions on political ideas. After doing that, you can then continue with this revision note.

Summary

As we said at the beginning of this course, political ideas arose out of attempts to make sense of political and social life, especially with regard to the origin of the state and the nature of authority and legitimacy. We also pointed out that, while political ideas have differed with regard to the kind of answers that they offer to common political problems and powers, they all share one thing in common: namely, they are all concerned with the nature of power, authority and legitimacy.

Against this general background, we went ahead to introduce you to various political ideas ranging from democracy, classical and modern liberalism to monarchical absolutism, conservatism, fascism, anarchism, socialism and Marxism.

We noted that although democracy is not a controversial term, it first developed in ancient Greece where it took the form of direct ‘town meeting’ democracy in which all citizens met to discuss issues in order to arrive at joint decisions. In this ancient form, democracy involved the direct (not indirect or mediated) participation of all in the conduct of the affairs of the polity.

In its modern form, however, especially as it is practiced in America, France, Britain among others, it is only the indirect or representative type of democracy that is practiced. Here, people do not participate directly in



government. Rather, they are empowered to periodically elect representatives to run the government for them.

The controversy that surrounds the term ‘democracy’ in recent times emanates from discussions as to which of the several brands of democracy as practiced in modern times is better than the others: namely, direct democracy, representative democracy, liberal democracy, and social democracy. While proponents of direct democracy consider it the most form of democracy, proponents of representative (or indirect) democracy argue that given the size of the average modern state, the direct democracy of ancient Greece is now impracticable and that, rather, the most reasonable type of democracy in the modern day is representative democracy. At another level, there are often series of arguments between liberal democrats, who emphasize constitutional guarantees of the rights and duties of citizens, and social democrats, who emphasize the need to meet the economic needs of majority of the citizens.

While democracy sees the people as the source of political power, monarchical absolutism, another political idea, argues that the monarch should be the absolute and unrestricted ruler over his subjects. Similarly, conservatism stresses the importance of tradition and traditional institutions, believes that men are naturally unequal, and recommends that only the enlightened, who tend to be in the minority, should govern.

You will further recall that we also talked about classical liberalism and modern liberalism. As we indicated then, classical liberalism as a political idea focused on such things as equality and liberty, sanctity of private property, supremacy of parliament over monarchy, and the right of people to remove a government deemed to be oppressive. On its own part, modern liberalism emerged in the wake of attempts to make liberalism more relevant to recent developments. In a nutshell, modern liberalism has attempted to extend the ideas of classical liberalism with regard to freedom to hitherto.

At the other extreme of the political spectrum is fascism which extols totalitarianism, personal dictatorship, repression, centralized economic planning, nationalism and militarism. Fascism is the religion of state terrorism which holds that the interest of the nation and the ruling party supersedes all other interests. In the course of the study sessions, we also defined anarchism and traced its development as a political idea. Anarchism preaches that government and other regulatory institutions should either be abolished or have their powers drastically curtailed because such institutions prevent the full development of the individual. What it does, then, is to condemn the present and offer the outlines of an alternative in an idyllic future without government and regulatory institutions.

We also introduced you to socialism and the Marxism of Karl Marx. Socialism, you will recall, is a political doctrine that proposes public ownership and control of the means of production and distribution and which urges the state to pledge itself to the eradication of poverty and want.

Marxism refers to the body of ideas left behind by Karl Marx, a German philosopher and writer of the 19th century. Marx’s analyses led him to



argue that the emergence of a classless communist society from the present capitalist class society was not only inevitable but also desirable. He then examined the march of history towards this goal, indicating how changes at the material level led to changes in the society.

It is hoped that we have got across to you.

In this revision session, we have attempted to summarise the 10 study sessions.



Appendix A

The Nature of the State and the Relation between the State and the Individual I

This article considers 6 important theories which try to explain the nature of the state and the relation between the state and the individual citizen:

1. Monistic Theory

This argues that individuals who compose the state have no independent existence, “but are now automatic units in the whole mass each dependent, on the other and upon the whole for its continued existence.

2. Monadistic Theory

This theory conceives society as a mere aggregation of individuals “each in large measure living in isolation and independent of his associates, capable of surviving and even flourishing without the help of the state beyond a mere minimum of collective restraint the protection of the weak against the aggression of the strong.” There is virtually no interdependence of one on the other. The need for and the necessity of the state is only found in giving protection to the weak against the strong. The state is like a police, and it exists to protect and restrain, not to foster and promote.

3. The Dualistic Theory

According to this theory, every individual leads a life of his own, but each is, in a way, dependent upon others for his welfare. He is neither existing and merged in the whole nor entirely isolated from and independent of his social surroundings.

4. Organic Theory

This theory considers the state as a ‘unity’ similar to that which characterizes a biological organism.

5. The Juristic Theory

This theory represents the views of jurists who seek to explain the state in terms of legal concepts. They view the state as an organ or legal personality for the creation, interpretation and the enforcement of law, and for the protection of all legal rights.

6. The Marxian Theory

The state according to this theory is a superstructure. “Its form is determined by the exigencies of class struggle and the demands of the underlying material situation. Denied as an instrument of exploitation and coercion, the state is regarded as the product and manifestation of the irreconcilable class antagonism. At every stage of the development of the state, a single class is dominant and this dominant class controls the state and uses its machinery to further its exploitation of the exploited class. This theory finds full expression in the philosophy of Karl Marx.



Appendix B

The Nature of the State and the Relation between the State and the Individual II

Word on Niccolo Machiavelli

Let us consider briefly a word on Machiavelli's postulations on the state. Machiavelli's thesis is that any means that will assure the preservation of the state are legitimate. However, it is necessary to reiterate that Machiavelli approves the immoral acts of the prince or ruler only as a means of saving the state. But this philosophy has been used to justify all forms of political villainy for self-centered reasons. Although some of his observations are shocking, they help to underline the level of deception and decadence into which men can sink in order to acquire power and sustain themselves in authority.

A word on the State of Nature

Hobbes conceives of a State of Nature within which men lived before the formation of civil society. You should note that Hobbes does not establish that an actual state of nature ever existed. He used the notion as a philosophical premise for his formulations and to advance the contractual origin of the state. The authority in the Hobbesian State is concentrated in the political sphere not in all spheres of life. The Hobbesian State is therefore, authoritarian and not totalitarian.

John Locke on the State of Nature and Limited Government

Like Hobbes, Locke thought of a State of Nature before the formation of civil society. However, while the Hobbesian State of Nature is that of strife, the Lockean state of nature is moral and social in character. In it, man has rights and acknowledged duties. Although, life is not satisfactory in the state of nature because peace is constantly upset by corrupt men. It lacks "established, settled known law" of a "known and indifferent judge" and the lack of an executive power to enforce just decisions.

In order to get out of the state of nature, men enter into a social contract – this is a contract of all with all. It is not a contract with government. It is a contract to which all must submit and through which all agree to submit to the determination of the majority. "Under the contract everyone surrenders only a part of his natural rights. The community is both the creator and beneficiary of the trust. The end of government is the good of the community. It is also the people who retain the supreme power. Government must be constitutional. It must remain limited and not absolute.

In conceiving government as a trust and locating ultimate sovereignty in the people, Locke helped to refute the case for absolute government and like Hobbes, the divine right of kings to rule. According to Locke, if a government is not for the people's good, or if it does not depend on their consent or if it exceeds its authority, such a government can legitimately be overthrown. Locke is widely recognized as one of the political philosophers whose theories have had identifiable impact on the organization of actual modern states. As noted by Ebenstein the text of the (American) Declaration of Independence is pure Locke, and the main



elements of the American Political system, particularly the principles of inviolability of property, limited government, and the inalienable rights of individuals-are all directly traceable to Locke.